

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-85-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747-100, -200, and -300 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Boeing Model 747-100, -200, and -300 series airplanes. This proposal would require the replacement of certain switches located in the cabin attendant's panel at doors 1 and 3 right with new, improved switches. This proposal is prompted by reports indicating that fires have occurred on some airplanes due to the internal failure of some of these switches. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent the installation and use of switches that could short circuit when they fail, and consequently cause fire and smoke aboard the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by July 11, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-85-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. This information may be

examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Forrest Keller, Senior Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM-130S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; telephone (425) 227-2790; fax (425) 227-1181.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 97-NM-85-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-85-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received several reports indicating that fires and smoke have occurred aboard Model 747-100 series

airplanes behind the cabin attendant's panel at doors 2 right, 3 right, and 4 right. These incidents, reported by six operators, occurred during flight or after landing.

Investigation revealed that the fires were the result of internal failures in switches S4 and/or S5, or switches S7 and S8 at door 4 right, and equivalent switches at the other doors. These failures caused a short circuit between the switch and its ground.

Equivalent switches are also located in the cabin attendant's panel at door 1 right although no incidents of fire from the failure of those switches have been reported. In addition, switches of this type are found on Model 747-200 and -300 series airplanes.

The installation and use of a switch that could short circuit when it fails, if not corrected, could result in fire and smoke aboard the airplane.

Related AD Actions

On April 2, 1997, the FAA issued AD 97-08-05, amendment 39-9993 (62 FR 17534, April 10, 1997), applicable to certain Boeing Model 747-100, -200, and -300 series airplanes, that requires replacement of certain switches in the cabin attendant's panel at doors 2 right and 4 right with new improved switches. That AD was prompted by reports indicating that fires have occurred on some airplanes due to the internal failure of some of these switches. The actions specified by that AD are intended to prevent the installation and use of switches that could short circuit when they fail, and consequently cause fire and smoke aboard the airplane.

When that AD was issued, the FAA, in response to a comment during the making of that rule, acknowledged that certain switches at doors 1 right and 3 right also are subject to the same unsafe condition as the switches at doors 2 and 4. The FAA, however, determined that delaying the issuance of that AD in order to include those switches was not appropriate because of the urgency associated with correcting the unsafe condition at doors 2 right and 4 right, and in light of the time that had elapsed since the original proposed rule had been issued. The FAA pointed out, however, that it was considering additional rulemaking action to address doors 1 right and 3 right. This proposed action is the result of the FAA's review.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-33A2252, dated August 1, 1996, as revised by Boeing Notice of Status Change 747-33A2252 NSC 01, dated October 10, 1996. That alert service bulletin describes procedures for the replacement of switches S4 and/or S5, or switches S7 and S8 that are installed in the cabin attendant's panel at door 4 right with new, improved switches. Those same procedures can be used (and are just as effective) for replacing the equivalent switches installed in the cabin attendant's panel at doors 1 right and 3 right.

In the event that an improved switch fails internally, there will be no short circuit between the switch and its ground; therefore, the potential for fire or smoke to occur is reduced.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other products of this same type design, the proposed AD would require replacement of the switches at doors 1 right and 3 right that are equivalent to the S4 and/or S5, or S7 and S8 switches installed in the cabin attendant's panel at door 4 right. These switches would be replaced with new, improved switches. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the Boeing alert service bulletin, as revised, described previously.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 648 Boeing Model 747-100, -200, and -300 series airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet.

The FAA estimates that 167 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD. It would take approximately 10 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$2,600 per airplane (\$1,300 per panel). Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$534,400, or \$3,200 per airplane.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption

ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Boeing: Docket 97-NM-85-AD.

Applicability: Model 747-100, -200, and -300 series airplanes; as listed in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-33A2252, dated August 1, 1996, as revised by Boeing Notice of Status Change 747-33A2252 NSC 01, dated October 10, 1996; certificated in any category.

Note 1. This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified,

altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (c) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent the installation and use of switches in the cabin attendant's panel at doors 1 right and 3 right that could short circuit when they fail, and consequently cause fire and smoke aboard the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 10 months after the effective date of this AD, replace the switches located at doors 1 right and 3 right that are equivalent to switches S4 and/or S5, or S7 and S8 installed in the cabin attendant's panel at door 4 right with new, improved switches, in accordance with Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-33A2252, dated August 1, 1996, as amended by Boeing Notice of Status Change 747-33A2252 NSC 01, dated October 10, 1996.

Note 2: Although the procedures in this alert service bulletin, as revised, pertain to the replacement of the switches located at door 4 right, these procedures can be used (and are just as effective) for replacing the equivalent switches located at doors 1 right and 3 right.

(b) As of 10 months from the effective date of this AD, no person shall install at doors 1 right and 3 right of any airplane a cabin attendant's panel having a part number identified in the "Old Switch" column of any table contained in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-33A2252, dated August 1, 1996, as revised by Boeing Notice of Status Change 747-33A2252 NSC 01, dated October 10, 1996.

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

Note 3. Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on May 23, 1997.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.
[FR Doc. 97-14184 Filed 5-29-97; 8:45 am]

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