

(1) Replace rudder trim switch, part number (P/N) 097-023-00, in the flight compartment with a new switch, P/N 097-023-01; and modify the wiring in panel 408VU; in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A310-27-2084 (for Model A310 series airplanes), and Airbus Service Bulletin A300-27-6037 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes), both dated February 12, 1997.

(2) Replace the rudder trim control knob on the rudder trim switch with a new knob in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A310-27-2058, Revision 3, dated September 26, 1996, or Revision 2, dated August 28, 1995 (for Model A310 series airplanes); and Airbus Service Bulletin A300-27-6022, Revision 3, dated September 26, 1996, or Revision 2, dated August 28, 1995 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes).

(b) As of the effective date of this AD, no person shall install in the flight compartment of any airplane a rudder trim switch having P/N 097-023-00.

(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, International Branch, ANM-116, 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, International Branch, ANM-116.

**Note 2:** Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch.

(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.

**Note 3:** The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directives 95-246-193(B), dated December 6, 1995, and 97-111-219(B), dated May 7, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 5, 1998.

**Darrell M. Pederson,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 98-3515 Filed 2-11-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-186-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### **Airworthiness Directives; Fokker F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 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 Fokker F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes. This proposal would require a modification of the lapjoint below the chine line at certain fuselage stations. This proposal is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent fatigue cracking in the lapjoint below the chine line at certain fuselage stations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by March 16, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-NM-186-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 Fokker Services B.V., Technical Support Department, P.O. Box 75047, 1117 ZN Schiphol Airport, the Netherlands. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2110; fax (425) 227-1149.

#### **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 96-NM-186-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-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-NM-186-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

#### **Discussion**

The Rijksluchtvaartdienst (RLD), which is the airworthiness authority for the Netherlands, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Fokker F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes. The RLD advises that fatigue analysis of Fokker Model F27 series airplanes has shown that the lapjoints below the chine line, between fuselage station 1400 and 16660, are vulnerable to multiple-site fatigue cracking. Such fatigue cracking occurs when the airplane is operated, or has been operated, at 5.5 pounds per square inch (psi) differential cabin pressure, and the affected bottom fuselage skin panels have a thickness of 0.6 millimeters (mm) (between fuselage station 1400 and station 12975) or 0.7 mm (between fuselage station 12975 and station 16660). This condition, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

#### **Other Relevant Rulemaking**

The FAA has previously issued AD 96-13-07, amendment 39-9675 (61 FR 34718, July 3, 1996), which currently requires repetitive inspections of the subject lapjoints below the chine line of certain fuselage stations. These inspections are conducted as part of the Fokker Model F27 Structural Integrity Program (SIP).

This proposed AD will affect items 53-30-02, 53-30-03, and 53-30-04 of the Fokker Model F27 SIP.

### Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Fokker has issued Service Bulletin F27/53-116, dated April 15, 1994, which describes procedures for modification of the lapjoint below the chine line between fuselage stations 1400 and 16660. The modification involves the installation of an external doubler on top of the lapjoint, which would eliminate the need for certain repetitive inspections required by AD 96-13-07. The RLD classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued Dutch airworthiness directive BLA 94-092 (A), dated May 25, 1994, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in the Netherlands.

### FAA's Conclusions

This airplane model is manufactured in the Netherlands and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the RLD has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the RLD, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

### Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously, except as described below.

### Differences Between the Proposed AD and the Related Dutch AD

Operators should note that, unlike the parallel Dutch airworthiness directive 94-092(A), dated May 25, 1994, the proposed AD does not provide for an option for operators to adjust the compliance time threshold for the subject modification based on the amount of time the airplane has been operating at a maximum cabin pressure differential of 5.5 psi. The proposed AD would require a fixed threshold for performing the modifications to the lapjoints. The FAA has determined that such adjustments would not address the unsafe condition in a timely manner. However, the FAA acknowledges that the duration of time that the airplane

was operated at 5.5 psi differential pressure is a contributing factor in determining the appropriate threshold. Paragraph (d) of the final rule does provide affected operators the opportunity to apply for an adjustment of the compliance time if data are presented to justify such an adjustment.

### Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 34 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

It would take approximately 140 work hours per airplane to accomplish the modification (specified as Part 1 in the referenced service bulletin), at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. The cost of required parts would be nominal. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this modification proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$8,400 per airplane.

It would take approximately 300 work hours per airplane to accomplish the modification (specified as Part 2 in the referenced service bulletin), at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. The cost of required parts would be nominal. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this modification proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$18,000 per airplane.

It would take approximately 210 work hours per airplane to accomplish the modification (specified as Part 3 in the referenced service bulletin), at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. The cost of required parts would be nominal. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this modification proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$12,600 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are 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:

**Fokker:** Docket 96-NM-186-AD.

**Applicability:** Model F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes, serial numbers 10102 through 10375 inclusive, that are operated or have been operated at a maximum cabin pressure differential of 5.5 pounds per square inch (psi), certificated in any category.

**Note 1:** This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been 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 (d) 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 fatigue cracking in the lapjoint below the chine line at certain fuselage stations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage, accomplish the following:

(a) For airplanes on which Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-68, dated July 4, 1966, or Revision 1, dated July 19, 1967, has not been

accomplished: Prior to the accumulation of 32,000 total flight cycles, or within 2 years after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, modify the lapjoint below the chine line between fuselage station 1400 and station 5050, in accordance with Part 1 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-116, dated April 15, 1994. Accomplishment of this modification and accomplishment of the requirements of paragraph (b) of this AD, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of items 53-30-02 and 53-30-03 of the Fokker Model F27 Structural Inspection Program (SIP), as required by AD 96-13-07, amendment 39-9675.

(b) For airplanes on which Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-85, dated February 16, 1970, has not been accomplished: Prior to the accumulation of 32,000 total flight cycles, or within 2 years after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, modify the lapjoint below the chine line between fuselage station 5050 and station 12975, in accordance with Part 2 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-116, dated April 15, 1994. Accomplishment of this modification and accomplishment of the requirements of paragraph (a) of this AD, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of items 53-30-02 and 53-30-03 of the Fokker Model F27 SIP, as required by AD 96-13-07.

(c) For airplanes on which Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-85, dated February 16, 1970, has not been accomplished: Prior to the accumulation of 56,000 total flight cycles, or within 2 years after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, modify the lapjoint below the chine line between fuselage station 12975 and station 16660, in accordance with Part 3 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Fokker Service Bulletin F27/53-116, dated April 15, 1994. Accomplishment of this modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of item 53-30-04 of the Fokker Model F27 SIP, as required by AD 96-13-07.

(d) 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, International Branch, ANM-116, 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, International Branch, ANM-116.

**Note 2:** Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM-116.

(e) 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.

**Note 3:** The subject of this AD is addressed in Dutch airworthiness directive BLA 94-092 (A), dated May 25, 1994.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 5, 1998.

**Darrell M. Pederson,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-CE-76-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale Model TBM 700 Airplanes

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) that would apply to certain SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale Model TBM 700 airplanes. The proposed action would require inspecting the elevator trim tab for cracks, and replacing any elevator trim tab part found to have cracks. The proposed AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for France. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent cracks in the elevator trim tab fitting, which, if not detected and corrected, could result in separation of the elevator trim tab and loss of control of the airplane.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before March 16, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, *Attention:* Rules Docket No. 97-CE-76-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. Comments may be inspected at this location between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, holidays excepted.

Service information that applies to the proposed AD may be obtained from SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale, Customer Support, Aerodrome Tarbes-Ossun-Lourdes, BP 930-F65009 Tarbes Cedex, France; telephone (33) 62.41.73.00; facsimile (33) 62.41.76.54; or the Product Support Manager, SOCATA Groupe AEROSPATIALE, North Perry Airport, 7501 Pembroke Road, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33023;

telephone (954) 964-6877; facsimile: (954) 964-1668. This information also may be examined at the Rules Docket at the address above.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Karl Schletzbaum, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 1201 Walnut Street, Suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone (816) 426-6934; facsimile (816) 426-2169.

#### 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 should 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 that summarizes 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 No. 97-CE-76-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, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, *Attention:* Rules Docket No. 97-CE-76-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

##### Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain SOCATA Groupe Aerospatiale TBM 700 airplanes. The DGAC reports that cracks in the elevator trim tab were found during routine maintenance inspections.