

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration****Advisory Circular (AC) 91-MA, Continued Airworthiness of Older Small Transport and Commuter Airplanes; Establishment of Damage-Tolerance-Based Inspections and Procedures**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the availability of and request for comments on proposed AC 91-MA, which provides information and guidance to manufacturers and operators for use in developing contained structural integrity programs to ensure the safe operation of small transport and commuter airplanes throughout their operational usage. The material provides an acceptable means, but not the only means, of showing compliance with the operational requirements of the Federal Aviation Regulations applicable to the establishment of a damage-tolerance-based inspections and procedures.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before August 2, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Send all comments on the proposed AC to: Bobby Sexton, ACE-102, Aging Airplane Program Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Central Region, Federal Aviation Administration, 601 East 12th Street, Kansas, Missouri, 64106; telephone number (816) 426-3241.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Bobby Sexton, ACE-102, Aging Airplane Program Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Central Region, Federal Aviation Administration, 601 East 12th Street, Kansas, Missouri, 64106; telephone number: (816) 426-3241.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Comments Invited**

A copy of the draft AC may be obtained by accessing the FAA's webpage at <http://www.faa.gov/avr/arm/nprm/nprm.htm>. Interested parties are invited to submit comments on the proposed AC. Commenters must identify AC 91-MA, and submit comments to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered by the FAA before issuing the final AC.

**Discussion**

Service experience has revealed a need to assess the continuing

airworthiness of small transport and commuter sized airplanes as they age. The structural integrity of these airplanes should be assessed on the basis of the most modern tools of analyses, testing, and nondestructive inspections in conjunction with the gathering of operational service experience. Fatigue cracking is usage dependent and, if left uncorrected, will degrade the integrity of the airframe to unsafe levels. Additional inspections, component modification, or structural component replacement may be essential to maintain the required level of safety.

Increased utilization, longer operation, and the high safety demands imposed on airplanes currently operating in air transportation service indicates that there is a need for a program to provide a high level of structural integrity for all airplanes in the commuter air transportation fleet. Accordingly, the program outlined in the draft AC is intended to describe a structural integrity assessment of each airplane type, to be accomplished by its manufacturer or other competent engineering organization have access to design data; and the adaptation of the results of that assessment into each operator's maintenance program.

Issued in Washington, DC on March 19, 1999.

**L. Nicholas Lacey,**

*Director, Flight Standards Service.*

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**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration****Advisory Circular (AC) 120-XX, Aging Airplane Records Reviews and Inspections**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This notice announces the availability of and request for comments on proposed AC 120-XX, which provides guidance pertaining to aging airplane records reviews and inspections that are accomplished to satisfy the requirements of the final rule entitled Aging Aircraft Safety which was enacted in response to a statutory requirement, the Aging Aircraft Safety Act of 1991.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before August 2, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Send all comments on the proposed AC to: Frederick Sobeck,

AFS-300, Aging Airplane Program Manager, Flight Standards Service, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20591; telephone number: (202) 267-7355.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Frederick Sobeck, AFS-300, Aging Airplane Program Manager, Flight Standards Service, Federal Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20591; telephone number: (202) 267-7355.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Comments Invited**

A copy of the draft AC may be obtained by accessing the FAA's webpage at <http://www.faa.gov/avr/arm/nprm/nprm.htm>. Interested parties are invited to submit comments on the proposed AC. Commenters must identify AC 120-XX, and submit comments to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered by the FAA before issuing the final AC.

**Discussion**

To address aging aircraft concerns, in October 1991, Congress enacted Title IV of Public Law 102-143, known as the Aging Aircraft Safety Act of 1991, which was subsequently codified as 49 U.S.C. 44717. The law instructed the Administrator to prescribe regulations that would ensure the continued airworthiness of aging aircraft. The law also instructed the Administrator to conduct inspections and review the maintenance and other records of each aircraft an air carrier uses to provide air transportation. These inspections and records reviews were intended to enable the Administrator to decide whether aging aircraft are in a safe condition and maintained properly for operation in air transportation. The law also required the Administrator to establish procedures to be followed for performing such inspections.

In addition to imposing obligations on the Administrator, the law stated that air carriers must demonstrate that the maintenance of their aircraft's age-sensitive parts and components has been adequate and timely, and operators must make their aircraft and aircraft records available for inspection.

Issued in Washington, DC, on March 19, 1999.

**L. Nicholas Lacey,**

*Director, Flight Standards Service.*

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