Explanation of the Provisions of the Proposed AD

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop in other Pilatus PC–12 and PC–12/45 airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the FAA is proposing AD action. The proposed AD would require modifying the passenger seats and seat rail covers. Accomplishment of the proposed action would be required in accordance with Pilatus Service Bulletin No. 25–006, dated April 7, 1998.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 11 airplanes in the U.S. registry would be affected by the proposed AD, that it would take approximately 8 workhours per airplane to accomplish the proposed modification, and that the average labor rate is approximately $60 an hour. Parts would be provided by the manufacturer at no cost to the owners/operators of the affected airplanes. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $5,280, or $480 per airplane.

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 action (1) is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a ''significant rule'' under 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 has been placed 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 a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

Pilatus Aircraft Ltd.: Docket No. 98–CE–69–AD.

Applicability: Models PC–12 and PC–12/45 airplanes, manufacturer serial numbers (MSN) 101 through MSN 230, certificated in any category, that are equipped with the ''corporate commuter cabin layout.''

Note 1: This ''corporate commuter cabin layout'' is a Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. designation only and the affected airplanes are not certificated for commuter operation.

Note 2: 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 in the body of this AD, unless already accomplished.

To prevent passenger injuries because the passenger seat configuration does not fully meet current head injury criteria regulations, accomplish the following:

(a) Within the next 100 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD, modify the passenger seats and seat rail covers in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions section of Pilatus Service Bulletin No. 25–006, dated April 7, 1998.

(b) As of the effective date of this AD, no person may install, on any affected airplane, passenger seats and seat rail covers that are not modified in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions section of Pilatus Service Bulletin No. 25–006, dated April 7, 1998.

(c) 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.

(d) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance times that provides an equivalent level of safety may be approved by the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, 1201 Walnut, suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. The request shall be forwarded through an appropriate FAA Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Small Airplane Directorate.

(e) Questions or technical information related to Pilatus Service Bulletin No 25–006, dated April 7, 1998, should be directed to Pilatus Aircraft Ltd., Customer Liaison Manager, CH–6371 Stans, Switzerland; telephone: +41 41 619 62 33; facsimile: +41 41 610 33 51. This service information may be examined at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in Swiss AD HB 98–179, dated June 15, 1998.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on July 23, 1998.

Michael Gallagher,

Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–20441 Filed 7–30–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–CE–65–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Fairchild Aircraft, Inc. SA226 and SA227 Series 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 Fairchild Aircraft, Inc. (Fairchild) SA226 and SA227 series airplanes. The proposed AD would require repetitively inspecting the wing spar center web cutout on both wings for cracks between Wing Station (WS) 8 and WS 17.5, and immediately repairing any area found cracked. This repair would eliminate the need for the repetitive inspections on that particular wing spar. The proposed AD is the result of reports of cracks in the wing spar center web cutout caused by fatigue due to airplane maneuvering and wind gusts. The

actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the wing spar center web cutout area, which could result in structural failure of the wing spar to the point of failure with consequent loss of control of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before September 30, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98–CE–65–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 Field Support Engineering, Fairchild Aircraft, Inc., P.O. Box 790490, San Antonio, Texas 78279–0490; telephone: (210) 824–9421; facsimile: (210) 820–8609. This information also may be examined at the Rules Docket at the address above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Hung Viet Nguyen, FAA, Airplane Certification Office, 2601 Meacham Boulevard, Fort Worth, Texas 76193–0150; telephone: (817) 222–5155; facsimile: (817) 222–5960.

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. 98–CE–65–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. 98–CE–65–AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Discussion

The FAA has received several reports of cracks in the center web of the wing main spar on Fairchild SA226 and SA227 series airplanes. In a recent occurrence, cracks were found during a regular maintenance inspection in the area between Wing Station (WS) 8 and WS 17.5. The cracks initiated from the corners of the String #13 cutout with one crack running towards the upper spar cap, and another heading in the opposite direction.

Analysis of the areas that are cracking on the referenced airplanes indicates that gust loads and normal airplane maneuvering are the cause of the cracks.

This condition, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in structural failure of the wing spar to the point of failure with consequent loss of control of the airplane.

Relevant Service Information

Fairchild Aircraft has issued the following documents:

—Airframe Airworthiness Limitations Manual ST–UN–M001, Rev. No. C–6, dated April 7, 1998, which specifies, among other things, procedures for inspecting the wing spar center web cutout for cracks between WS 8 and WS 17.5 in the area of Stringer 13 on Models SA227–TT, SA227–AT, SAA227–AC, and SA227–BC airplanes;

—Airframe Inspection Manual ST–UN–M002, Rev. No. A–6, dated December 8, 1997, which specifies, among other things, procedures for inspecting the wing spar center web cutout for cracks between WS 8 and WS 17.5 in the area of Stringer 13 on Models SA226–T, SA226–T(B), SA226–AT, and SA226–TC airplanes;

—Airframe Airworthiness Limitations Manual ST–UN–M003, Rev. No. 5, dated April 7, 1998, which specifies, among other things, procedures for inspecting the wing spar center web cutout for cracks between WS 8 and WS 17.5 in the area of Stringer 13 on Models SA227–CC and SA227–DC airplanes;

—SA226/227 Series Structural Repair Manual, part number (P/N) 27–10054–079, pages 57 through 90; Initial Issue: March 1, 1983; Revision 28, dated June 24, 1998. This document specifies procedures for repairing cracks at the wing spar center web cutout between WS 8 and WS 17.5 in the area of Stringer 13 on Models SA226–T, SA226–T(B), SA226–AT, SA226–TC, SA227–TT, SA227–AT, SA227–AC, and SA227–BC airplanes; and

—SA227 Series Structural Repair Manual, P/N 27–10054–127, pages 47 through 60; Initial Issue: December 1, 1991; Revision 7, dated June 24, 1998. This document specifies procedures for repairing cracks at the wing spar center web cutout between WS 8 and WS 17.5 in the area of Stringer 13 on Models SA227–CC and SA227–DC airplanes.

The FAA's Determination

After examining the circumstances and reviewing all available information related to the incidents described above, the FAA has determined that AD action should be taken to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the wing spar center web cutout area. A cracked wing spar center web cutout area could result in structural failure of the wing spar to the point of failure with consequent loss of control of the airplane.

Explanation of the Provisions of the Proposed AD

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop in other Fairchild SA226 and SA227 series airplanes of the same type design, the FAA is proposing AD action. The proposed AD would require repetitively inspecting the wing spar center web cutout on both wings for cracks between WS 8 and WS 17.5, and immediately repairing any area found cracked. This repair would eliminate the need for the repetitive inspections on that particular wing spar. Accomplishment of the proposed actions would be required in accordance with the service information previously referenced.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 490 airplanes in the U.S. registry would be affected by the proposed AD, that it would take approximately 5 workhours per airplane to accomplish the proposed initial inspection, and that the average labor rate is approximately $60 an hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the initial inspection specified

in the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $147,000, or $300 per airplane.

These figures only take into account the costs of the proposed initial inspection and do not take into account the costs of repetitive inspections and the costs associated with any repair that would be necessary if corrosion or delamination damage is found. The FAA has no way of determining the number of repetitive inspections an owner/operator will incur over the life of the airplane, or the number of airplanes that will need repairs.

If an affected airplane would have cracks in both wing spar center webs, the repair would take 400 workhours to accomplish at an average labor rate of $60 per hour. Parts to accomplish this repair cost approximately $400 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost to repair cracked wing spar center webs on both sides of the airplane would be approximately $24,400 per airplane.

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 action (1) is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a ''significant rule'' under 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 has been placed 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 a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

Fairchild Aircraft, Inc.: Docket No. 98–CE–65–AD.

Applicability: The following model airplanes and serial numbers, certificated in any category:

Model	Serial No.
SA226–AT	AT001 through AT074.
SA226–TC	TC201 through TC419.
SA226–T	T201 through T291.
SA226–T(B)	T(B)276 and T(B)292 through T(B)417.
SA227–TT	TT421 through TT541.
SA227–TT(300)	TT(300)447, TT(300)465, TT(300)471, TT(300)483, TT(300)512, TT(300)518, TT(300)521, TT(300)527, TT(300)529, and TT(300)536.
SA227–AC	AC406, AC415, AC416, and AC420 through AC785.
SA227–AT	AT423 through AT631 and AT695.
SA227–BC	BC762, BC764, BC766, and BC770 through BC789.
SA227–CC/DC	CC/DC784 and CC/DC790 through CC/DC878.

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 (e) 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 in the body of this AD, unless already accomplished.

To detect and correct fatigue cracking of the wing spar center web cutout area, which could result in structural failure of the wing spar to the point of failure with consequent loss of control of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Upon accumulating 6,500 hours time-in-service (TIS) on each wing spar or within the next 500 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, unless already accomplished, and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 2,000 hours TIS, inspect each wing spar center web cutout for cracks between Wing Station (WS) 8 and WS 17.5. Accomplish this inspection in accordance with one of the following, as applicable:

(1) *For Models SA227–TT, SA227–AT, SAA227–AC, and SA227–BC airplanes:* In accordance with Fairchild Airframe Airworthiness Limitations Manual ST–UN–M001, Rev. No. C–6, dated April 7, 1998;

(2) *For Models SA226–T, SA226–T(B), SA226–AT, and SA226–TC airplanes:* In accordance with Fairchild Airframe Inspection Manual ST–UN–M002, Rev. No. A–6, dated December 8, 1997; or

(3) *For Models SA227–CC and SA227–DC airplanes:* In accordance with Fairchild Airframe Airworthiness Limitations Manual ST–UN–M003, Rev. No. 5, dated April 7, 1998.

(b) If any crack(s) is/are found during any inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, prior to further flight, repair the crack(s) in accordance with one of the following, as applicable. This repair eliminates the repetitive inspections (2,000 hours TIS intervals) required in paragraph (a) of this AD for that particular wing spar.

(1) *For Models SA226–T, SA226–T(B), SA226–AT, SA226–TC, SA227–TT, SA227–AT, SA227–AC, and SA227–BC airplanes:* In accordance with Fairchild SA226/227 Series Structural Repair Manual, part number (P/N) 27–10054–079, pages 57 through 90; Initial Issue: March 1, 1983; Revision 28, dated June 24, 1998; or

(2) *For Models SA227–CC and SA227–DC airplanes:* In accordance with Fairchild SA227 Series Structural Repair Manual, P/N 27–10054–127, pages 47 through 60; Initial Issue: December 1, 1991; Revision 7, dated June 24, 1998.

(c) The repetitive inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD may be terminated if the wing spar center web repair specified in paragraph (b) of this AD has been accomplished on both the left and right wing spar. If one wing spar center web has been repaired, then repetitive inspections are still required on the other one if the repair has not been incorporated.

(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.

(e) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the initial or repetitive compliance times that provides an equivalent level of safety may be approved by the Manager, FAA, Airplane Certification Office (ACO), 2601 Meacham Boulevard, Fort Worth, Texas 76193–0150. The request shall be forwarded through an appropriate FAA Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Forth Worth ACO.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Fort Worth ACO.

(f) All persons affected by this directive may obtain copies of the documents referred to herein upon request to Field Support Engineering, Fairchild Aircraft, Inc., P.O. Box 790490, San Antonio, Texas 78279–0490; or may examine these documents at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on July 23, 1998.

Michael Gallagher,

Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–20440 Filed 7–30–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–NM–206–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 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 Airbus Model A300 series airplanes. This proposal would require modification of the struts for the stowage box located forward of galley 2. 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 failure of the struts, which could result in displacement of the stowage box, and possible injury to passengers and flight crew.

DATES: Comments must be received by August 31, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98–NM–206–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 Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. 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 98–NM–206–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. 98–NM–206–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The Direction Gónórale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Airbus Model A300 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that recalculations of stress analyses have indicated that the securing struts for the stowage box located forward of galley 2 do not meet the required load carrying capacity. The inadequate load carrying capacity could allow the struts to fail in the event of an emergency landing. Such failure of the struts, if not corrected, could result in displacement of the stowage box, and possible injury to passengers and flight crew.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued Airbus Service Bulletin A300–25–395, dated March 22, 1984, as revised by Change Notices OB, dated June 2, 1985, and OC, dated June 20, 1988, which describes procedures for modification of the struts for the stowage box located forward of galley 2. The modification includes removal of the existing struts, and replacement with improved struts that have been reinforced by installing stiffening plates at the attach points. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 97–359–233(B), dated November 19, 1997, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

FAA's Conclusions

This airplane model is manufactured in France 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 DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, 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.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 24 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed modification, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Required