Note 4: Accomplishment of Boeing Service Bulletin 737–52–1100, Revision 2, dated March 31, 1994, does not supersede the requirements of AD 90–06–02, amendment 39–6489.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(e) 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 ACO. 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 5: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

Special Flight Permits

(f) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 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 August 16, 1999.

D. L. Riggin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99–21687 Filed 8–19–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99–NM–88–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747–100 and –200 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 and –200 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections of the upper and lower chords of the wing front spar for cracks, and corrective action, if necessary. For airplanes on which no cracking is detected, this proposal would also provide optional terminating action in lieu of repetitive inspections. This proposal is prompted by reports of cracks in the upper chord of the wing front spar. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the upper and lower chords of the wing front spar, which could result in reduced structural capability and possible fuel leakage onto an engine and a resultant fire.

DATES: Comments must be received by October 4, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99–NM–88–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: Tamara L. Anderson, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM–120S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–2771; 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 99–NM–88–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. 99–NM–88–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports of cracks in the upper chord of the wing front spar at the fastener holes in the area of the number 2 and number 3 strut outboard upper link fitting. The cracks are believed to initiate by fatigue on the forward surface of the chord and propagate into the thickness of the part. The lower chord of the wing front spar is similar in design to the upper chord; therefore, the lower chord may be subject to the same unsafe condition. This condition, if not corrected, could result in reduced structural capability and possible fuel leakage onto an engine and resultant fire.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Service Bulletin 747–57–2305, Revision 1, dated January 21, 1999, which describes procedures for repetitive ultrasonic inspections of the upper and lower chords of the wing front spar for cracks, and corrective action, if necessary. The corrective action involves accomplishment of a terminating action that includes a high frequency eddy current inspection of the upper and lower chords of the spar, repair of cracks, and installation of oversized fasteners. For airplanes on which cracking is not detected, accomplishment of the terminating action is optional, and eliminates the need for the repetitive inspections.

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 accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below. This proposed AD also would provide optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections for airplanes on which no cracking is detected.

Operators should note that the FAA has determined that the repetitive inspections proposed by this AD can be

allowed to continue in lieu of accomplishment of a terminating action. In making this determination, the FAA considers that, in this case, long-term continued operational safety will be adequately assured by accomplishing the repetitive inspections to detect fatigue cracking of the upper and lower chords of the wing front spar before it represents a hazard to the airplane.

Differences Between the Proposed Rule and Service Bulletin

Boeing Service Bulletin 747–57–2305, Revision 1, specifies accomplishment of the actions that would be required by paragraphs (a) and (b) of this AD in accordance with either the Boeing-specified manuals or ''operator's equivalent procedure.'' However, this proposed AD would require that the ultrasonic inspection and high frequency eddy current inspection actions required by those paragraphs be accomplished in accordance with the procedures specified in the Boeing 747 NDT Manual D6–7170. ''Operator's equivalent procedures'' may be used for Boeing-specified manuals with the exception of the Boeing 747 NDT Manual D6–7170. ''Operator's equivalent procedures'' to the Boeing 747 NDT Manual D6–7170 may be used only if approved as an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (c) of this AD.

Operators should note that, although the service bulletin specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of certain repair conditions, this proposed AD would require the repair of those conditions to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the FAA, or in accordance with data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company Designated Engineering Representative who has been authorized by the FAA to make such findings. For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, as specified by paragraph (a)(3) of this proposed AD, the Manager's approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 332 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 137 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 inspection, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $16,440, or $120 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

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.

Should an operator elect to accomplish the optional terminating action rather than continue the repetitive inspections, it would take approximately 37 work hours per airplane to accomplish the modification, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately $5,000 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this optional terminating action is estimated to be $7,220 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 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 99–NM–88–AD.

Applicability: Model 747–100 and –200 series airplanes, listed in Boeing Service Bulletin 747–57–2305, Revision 1, dated January 21, 1999, 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 detect and correct fatigue cracking of the upper and lower chords of the wing front spar, which could result in reduced structural capability and possible fuel leakage onto an engine and a resultant fire, accomplish the following:

Inspections and Corrective Action

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 12,000 total flight cycles, or within 24 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, accomplish an ultrasonic inspection for cracking of the upper and lower chord of the wing front spar, in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 747–57–2305, Revision 1, dated January 21, 1999.

(1) If no cracking is found, repeat this inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 6,000 flight cycles, until the requirements of paragraph (c) of this AD have been accomplished.

(2) If any cracking is found, prior to further flight, accomplish ''Part 2—Terminating Action'' of the Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin, except as provided by paragraph (b) of this AD. Accomplishment of this action constitutes terminating action for the requirements of this AD.

(b) During accomplishment of the terminating action required by paragraph (a)(2) of this AD, if any crack is found in the upper chord that is outside the limits specified in Boeing Service Bulletin 747–57–2305, Revision 1, dated January 21, 1999; or if any crack is found in the lower chord; prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate; or in

accordance with data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company Designated Engineering Representative who has been authorized by the FAA to make such findings. For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO, as required by this AD, the Manager's approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

Optional Terminating Action

(c) Accomplishment of ''Part 2—Terminating Action'' of the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Service Bulletin 747–57–2305, Revision 1, dated January 21, 1999, constitutes terminating action for the requirements of this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

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

Special Flight Permits

(e) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 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 August 16, 1999.

D.L. Riggin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99–21686 Filed 8–19–99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99–NM–125–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 757 Series Airplanes Equipped With Rolls Royce Engines

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 757 series airplanes. This proposal would require modification of the nacelle strut and wing structure of certain Boeing Model 757 series airplanes equipped with Rolls Royce RB211 engines. This proposal is prompted by reports indicating that the actual operational loads applied to the nacelle are higher than the analytical loads that were used during the initial design. Such an increase in loading can lead to fatigue cracking in primary strut structure prior to an airplane's reaching its design service objective. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent fatigue cracking in primary strut structure and consequent reduced structural integrity of the strut.

DATES: Comments must be received by October 4, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99–NM–125–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: Rick Kawaguchi, Aerospace Engineer,Airframe Branch, ANM–120S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–1153; 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 99–NM–125–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. 99–NM–125–D, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports indicating that the manufacturer has accomplished a structural reassessment of the damage tolerance capabilities of the Boeing Model 757 series airplane, equipped with Rolls Royce engines. This reassessment indicates that the actual operational loads applied to the nacelle strut and wing structure are higher than the analytical loads that were used during the initial design. Subsequent analysis and service history, which includes numerous reports of fatigue cracking on certain strut and wing structure, indicate that fatigue cracking can occur on the primary strut structure before an airplane reaches its design service objective of 20 years or 50,000 flight cycles. Analysis also indicates that such cracking, if it were to occur, would grow at a much greater rate than originally expected. Fatigue cracking in primary strut structure would result in reduced structural integrity of the strut.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Boeing recently has developed a modification of the strut-to-wing attachment structure installed on Model 757 series airplanes equipped with Rolls Royce Model RB211 series engines. This modification significantly improves the load-carrying capability and durability of the strut-to-wing attachments. Such improvement also will substantially reduce the possibility of fatigue cracking and corrosion developing in the attachment assembly.

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Service Bulletin 757–54–0035, dated July 17, 1997, which describes procedures to modify the nacelle strut