

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. 2001–NM–228–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the superseding of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Boeing Model 747 series airplanes, that currently requires inspections to detect cracking of the front spar web of the wing, and corrective action, if necessary. This action would add one airplane to the applicability, change certain compliance times, add certain new requirements, and provide an optional modification. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the front spar web, which could result in fuel leaking onto an engine and a consequent fire. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by April 18, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2001–NM–228–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227–1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: 9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain “Docket No. 2001–NM–228–AD” in the

subject line and need not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 for Windows or ASCII text.

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 Anderson, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM–120S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 917–6421; fax (425) 917–6590.

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 action may be changed in light of the comments received.

Submit comments using the following format:

- Organize comments issue-by-issue. For example, discuss a request to change the compliance time and a request to change the service bulletin reference as two separate issues.
- For each issue, state what specific change to the proposed AD is being requested.
- Include justification (*e.g.*, reasons or data) for each request.

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 action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: “Comments to Docket Number 2001–NM–228–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. 2001–NM–228–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

On December 14, 2000, the FAA issued AD 2000–25–12, amendment 39–12047 (65 FR 81331, December 26, 2000), applicable to certain Boeing Model 747 series airplanes, to require inspections to detect cracking of the front spar web of the wing, and corrective action, if necessary. That action was prompted by a report indicating that an operator found a 24-inch-long crack in the front spar web of the right wing. The requirements of that AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the front spar web, which could result in fuel leaking onto an engine and a consequent fire.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

Since the issuance of AD 2000–25–12, an operator reported finding a crack in the front spar web during accomplishment of the modification specified in paragraph (b) of that AD on a Model 747 series airplane. The airplane had accumulated approximately 19,500 total flight cycles and 82,000 total flight hours. The crack was found outboard of the new web section at approximately front spar station inboard (FSSI) 694, common to the splice plate and upper chord. Cracking of the web in this area can result in fuel leakage into the struts, which could result in excess fuel drainage onto an engine and a consequent fire.

Additionally, it has been determined that the optional web inspections specified in paragraph (a) of the existing AD do not provide the crack detection necessary to support the compliance time for the repeat inspection intervals. Therefore, the optional web inspections have been removed from the requirements of this AD.