

contact we have with the public that concerns the substantive parts of this proposed AD.

How can I be sure FAA receives my comment? If you want FAA to acknowledge the receipt of your mailed comments, you must include a self-addressed, stamped postcard. On the postcard, write "Comments to Docket No. 2003-CE-12-AD." We will date stamp and mail the postcard back to you.

Discussion

What events have caused this proposed AD? The Federal Office for Civil Aviation (FOCA), which is the airworthiness authority for Switzerland, recently notified FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on all Pilatus Model PC-6 airplanes. The FOCA reports an incident where cracks have been found in the ribs of the inboard integral fuel tanks in the left and right wings of a Model PC-6 airplane. Investigation revealed that the cracks can occur when there are excessive pressure differentials between the ambient air pressure and that of the fuel tanks. The effect of this differential can be to compress the wing in the area of the fuel tank and cause distortion of the related structure. This distortion may result in fatigue cracks on ribs within the wing.

What are the consequences if the condition is not corrected? These fatigue cracks on the ribs within the wing could lead to wing failure during flight.

Is there service information that applies to this subject? Pilatus has issued the following:

- Service Bulletin (SB) No. 57-002, dated November 27, 2002; and
- SB No. 118, dated December 1972.

What are the provisions of this service information? The service bulletins include procedures for:

- Inspecting the ribs in the left and right inboard fuel tanks;
- Repairing a rib;
- Inspecting to determine if the inboard fuel tank vent system is installed; and
- Installing the inboard fuel tank vent system.

What action did the FOCA take? The FOCA classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued Swiss AD Number HB 2003-092, dated February 17, 2003, in order to ensure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in Switzerland.

Was this in accordance with the bilateral airworthiness agreement? This airplane model is manufactured in Switzerland and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of § 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement.

Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the FOCA has kept FAA informed of the situation described above.

The FAA's Determination and an Explanation of the Provisions of This Proposed AD

What has FAA decided? The FAA has examined the findings of the FOCA; reviewed all available information, including the service information referenced above; and determined that:

—The unsafe condition referenced in this document exists or could develop on other Pilatus Model PC-6 airplanes of the same type design that are on the U.S. registry;

—The actions specified in the previously-referenced service information should be accomplished on the affected airplanes; and

—AD action should be taken in order to correct this unsafe condition.

What would this proposed AD require? This proposed AD would require you to incorporate the actions in the previously-referenced service bulletins.

How does the revision to 14 CFR part 39 affect this proposed AD? On July 10, 2002, FAA published a new version of 14 CFR part 39 (67 FR 47997, July 22, 2002), which governs FAA's AD system. This regulation now includes material that relates to special flight permits, alternative methods of compliance, and altered products. This material previously was included in each individual AD. Since this material is included in 14 CFR part 39, we will not include it in future AD actions.

Cost Impact

How many airplanes would this proposed AD impact? We estimate that this proposed AD affects 35 airplanes in the U.S. registry.

What would be the cost impact of this proposed AD on owners/operators of the affected airplanes? We estimate the following costs to accomplish this proposed inspection:

Labor cost	Parts cost	Total cost per airplane	Total cost on U.S. operators
5 workhours × \$60 per hour = \$300	Not applicable	\$300	\$300 × 35 = \$10,500.

We estimate the following costs for each rib to accomplish any necessary rib repair that would be required based on

the results of this proposed inspection. We have no way of determining the

number of airplanes that may need such repair.

Labor cost	Parts cost	Total cost per rib per airplane
3 workhours × \$60 per hour = \$180 per rib	\$50 per rib	\$230 per rib.

We estimate the following costs to install any inboard fuel tank vent system that would be required based on

the results of this proposed inspection. We have no way of determining the

number of airplanes that may need such installation.

Labor cost	Parts cost	Total cost per airplane
12 workhours × \$60 per hour = \$720	\$200	\$920