

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 25**

[Docket No. FAA-2003-14193; Notice No. 03-01]

RIN 2120-AH34

Design Standards for Fuselage Doors on Transport Category Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to amend the design standards for fuselage doors, hatches, and exits on transport category airplanes. This action would improve door integrity by providing design criteria that would ensure that doors remain secure under all circumstances that service experience has shown can happen. Adopting this proposal also would relieve a certification burden on industry by eliminating regulatory differences between the airworthiness standards and related guidance material of the United States and Europe.

DATES: Send your comments on or before April 14, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Address your comments to the Docket Management System, U.S. Department of Transportation, Room Plaza 401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. You must identify the docket number FAA-2003-14193 at the beginning of your comments, and you should submit two copies of your comments. If you wish to receive confirmation that the FAA received your comments, include a self-addressed, stamped postcard. You also may submit comments through the Internet to: <http://dms.dot.gov>.

You may review the public docket containing comments to proposed regulations in person in the Dockets Office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The Dockets Office is on the plaza level of the NASSIF Building at the Department of Transportation at the above address. Also, you may review public dockets on the Internet at <http://dms.dot.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jeff Gardlin, Federal Aviation Administration, Airframe/Cabin Safety Branch (ANM-115), Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056;

telephone (425) 227-2136; facsimile (425) 227-1320.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
How Do I Submit Comments to This NPRM?

The FAA invites interested persons to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written comments, data, or views. We also invite comments relating to the economic, environmental, energy, or federalism impacts that might result from adopting the proposals in this document. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. We ask that you send us two copies of written documents.

We will file in the docket all comments we receive, as well as a report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerning this proposed rulemaking. The docket is available for public inspection before and after the comment closing date. If you wish to review the docket in person, go to the address in the **ADDRESSES** section of this preamble between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. You may also review the docket using the Internet at the web address in the **ADDRESSES** section.

Before acting on this proposal, we will consider all comments we receive on or before the closing date for comments. We will consider comments filed late if it is possible to do so without incurring expense or delay. We may change this proposal in light of the comments we receive.

If you want the FAA to acknowledge receipt of your comments on this proposal, include with your comments a pre-addressed, stamped postcard on which the docket number appears. We will stamp the date on the postcard and mail it to you.

How Can I Obtain a Copy of This NPRM?

You can get an electronic copy using the Internet by:

- (1) Searching the Department of Transportation's electronic Docket Management System (DMS) web page (<http://dms.dot.gov/search>);
- (2) Visiting the Office of Rulemaking's web page at <http://www.faa.gov/avr/arm/nprm.cfm?nav=nprm>; or
- (3) Accessing the **Federal Register's** web page at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html.

You can also get a copy by submitting a request to the Federal Aviation Administration, Office of Rulemaking, ARM-1, 800 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20591, or by

calling (202) 267-9680. Be sure to identify the docket number, notice number, or amendment number of this rulemaking.

Background
What Prompted this Proposed Rule?

Following a major accident in 1974, which involved the opening of a fuselage door on a transport category airplane during flight, the FAA amended the applicable safety standards to provide a higher level of safety for fuselage doors. In 1980, the FAA issued amendment 25-54 to Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), part 25 (45 FR 60172, September 11, 1980). The objective of this amendment was to provide a level of safety in doors that would be consistent with the level of safety required for other critical systems on the airplane, such as primary flight controls. This was achieved by:

- Requiring redundancy and fail-safe features in the door operating systems, and
- Providing protection from anticipated human errors.

In 1989, another wide-body transport category airplane lost a lower lobe cargo door during flight, along with a portion of fuselage structure above the door. Because of this accident and other similar accidents, the Air Transport Association (ATA) of America formed an industry task force to review door designs on transport category airplanes. This group was chartered to review the design and operation of doors on the current fleet of transport airplanes, and to recommend actions that would prevent any further unintended opening of outward opening doors. The group also reviewed relevant current regulations and advisory material, and provided recommendations to the FAA for necessary rule changes. The ATA submitted its recommendations to the FAA in a report entitled, "ATA Cargo Door Task Force Final Report," dated May 15, 1991.

What NTSB Safety Recommendations are Related to this Proposed Rule?

As a result of its investigation of the airplane accidents associated with fuselage doors opening during flight, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) also issued several Safety Recommendations concerning doors on transport category airplanes. The NTSB asked the FAA to consider the following recommendations:

Safety Recommendation A-89-092:

"Issue an airworthiness directive to require that the manual drive units and electrical actuators for the Boeing 747 cargo doors have torque-limiting devices