

Parts Installation

(d) As of the effective date of this AD, no person may install, on any airplane, an outer cylinder of the wing landing gear if the outer cylinder has P/N 65B01212-() (where "()" is any dash number of that part number), 65B01430-3, or 65B01430-4.

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 Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA. 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

(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 April 23, 2003.

Ali Bahrami,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000-NM-326-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Lockheed Model 382G 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 Lockheed Model 382G series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive general visual inspections of certain bearings located in the emergency exit door for evidence of excessive wear; and repair of certain bearings, which would terminate the repetitive inspections. These actions are necessary to prevent failure of the latch mechanism, which could result in the inability to open the emergency exit door in an emergency. This action is

intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by June 13, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-NM-326-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. 2000-NM-326-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 Lockheed Martin Corporation/Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company, Airworthiness Office, Dept. 6A0M, Zone 0252, Column P-58, 86 S. Cobb Drive, Marietta, Georgia 30063. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the FAA, Atlanta Aircraft Certification Office, One Crown Center, 1895 Phoenix Boulevard, suite 450, Atlanta, Georgia.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William Herderich, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe and Propulsion Branch, ACE-117A, FAA, Atlanta Aircraft Certification Office, One Crown Center, 1895 Phoenix Boulevard, suite 450, Atlanta, Georgia 30349; telephone (770) 703-6082; fax (770) 703-6097.

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 2000-NM-326-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. 2000-NM-326-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA received a report from an operator that, during an inspection, an emergency exit door could not be opened on a Lockheed Model 382G series airplane. Further investigation revealed that the latch mechanism failed due to excessive wear of the latch bearings in the door. The excessive wear was caused by steel roll pins rubbing against aluminum bearings and creating grooves, which consequently inhibited the rotation of the tube that retracts the door latches. The same operator also reported that excessive bearing wear was found in nine additional airplanes. Failure of the latch mechanism, if not corrected, could result in the inability to open the emergency exit door in an emergency.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Hercules Service Bulletin 382-52-9, dated July 5, 2000, which describes procedures for repetitive general visual inspections of certain bearings located in the emergency exit door for evidence