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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-NM-27-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747 Series Airplanes Equipped With Pratt & Whitney JT9D-3 or JT9D-7 Series Engines (Except JT9D-70 Series 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 Boeing Model 747 series airplanes equipped with Pratt & Whitney JT9D-3 or JT9D-7 series engines (except JT9D-70 series engines). This proposal would require detailed inspections of the upper and lower surface of the forward lower spar of the nacelle strut for cracking or other damage, and for any loose or damaged fasteners. This proposal would also require replacement of loose or damaged fasteners and, if necessary, associated repair of the forward lower spar. This action is necessary to detect and correct cracking or other damage to the upper or lower surface of the forward lower spar and any loose or damaged fasteners, which could result in reduced structural capability of nacelle struts one through four, and possible separation of a strut and engine from the airplane during flight. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by July 14, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-27-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. 2002-NM-27-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 2002-NM-27-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. 2002-NM-27-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports of multiple loose and damaged fasteners and lower spar web damage of the No. 4 strut on two Boeing Model 747 series airplanes equipped with Pratt & Whitney JT9D-7 engines. This damage was observed at approximately 1,900 and 2,900 flight cycles after incorporation of the strut modification described in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-54A2159, dated November 3, 1994. That modification was made mandatory by AD 95-10-16, amendment 39-9233 (60 FR 27008, May 22, 1995). Analysis by Boeing indicates that the loose fasteners were the result of incorrect installation of the fasteners or the collars. Multiple loose fasteners allow out-of-plane web deflection and damage to the lower spar web and fasteners. The resulting damage could cause cracking and the loss of the lower spar. This condition, if not corrected, could result in reduced structural capability of the strut, and possible separation of the strut and engine from the airplane during flight.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-54A2209, dated November 8, 2001, including Evaluation Form, which describes procedures for the following actions:

Part 1: A detailed inspection of (a) the upper surface of the forward lower spar for cracking and fretting damage to the web, forward bulkhead channel, and stiffeners; and (b) the fasteners in that area for missing heads, damage, and evidence of looseness, such as cracked or broken sealant and fretting or galling around the collars, nuts, or fastener heads.

Part 2: A detailed inspection of (a) the lower surface of the forward lower spar for cracking and fretting damage to the web, c-channel, chords, and stiffener; and (b) the fasteners in that area for missing heads, damage, and evidence of