

examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Maureen Moreland, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120L, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712-4137; telephone (562) 627-5238; fax (562) 627-5210.

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-325-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-325-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

As service experience is accumulated on airplanes or as the result of post-certification testing and evaluation, it may become necessary to revise removal limits for removal of certain life-limited components of the airplane or revise the interval for certain structural inspections in order to ensure the continued structural integrity of the airplane. The manufacturer may revise the Airworthiness Limitations document to include more restrictive life limits or revise repetitive intervals for certain non-destructive inspection (NDI) techniques and procedures for each principal structural element (PSE). For the purposes of this airworthiness directive, a PSE is defined as an element of structure that contributes significantly to carrying flight, ground, and pressurization loads. If a failure occurs on any of those PSEs, it could adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane.

Boeing has completed analyses of certain safe-life structure on Model 717-200 airplanes. The results of these analyses indicate that removal limits of certain components of the flap system must be revised. Additionally, new data also indicate that the interval for inspections to detect fatigue cracking for certain PSEs also must be revised.

The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect fatigue cracking of certain safe-life structure and certain PSEs and to require removal of certain safe-life structure in a timely manner. Such fatigue cracking, if not detected and corrected, could adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing 717-200 Airworthiness Limitations Instructions (ALI), Boeing Report Number MDC-96K9063, Revision 3, dated August 2002. Among other things, Revision 3 contains mandatory removal limits for certain components of the flap system and revises some intervals for inspections for fatigue cracking of certain PSEs. Additionally, Revision 3 corrects certain part numbers specified in an earlier ALI revision, adds some flap idler hinge parts to the PSE removal limits, and corrects some typographical errors that appeared in an earlier ALI revision. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the ALI is intended to

adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other products of this same type design, the proposed AD would require operators to revise the Boeing 717-200 ALI to incorporate Boeing Report Number MDC-96K9063, Revision 3, dated August 2002.

Changes to 14 CFR Part 39/Effect on the Proposed AD

On July 10, 2002, the FAA issued a new version of 14 CFR part 39 (67 FR 47997, July 22, 2002), which governs the FAA's airworthiness directives system. The regulation now includes material that relates to special flight permits and alternative methods of compliance. Because we have now included this material in part 39, we no longer need to include it in each individual AD.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 133 Model 717-200 series airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 108 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$6,480, or \$60 per airplane.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this proposed AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.