

Issued in Renton, Washington, on May 28, 2003.
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[FR Doc. 03-14337 Filed 6-5-03; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39
[Docket No. 2002-CE-53-AD; Amendment 39-13176; AD 2003-11-17]
RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. Models PC-12 and PC-12/45 Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.
ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that applies to certain Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. (Pilatus) Models PC-12 and PC-12/45 airplanes. This AD requires you to inspect the front and rear surfaces of the pressure dome for damage and cracks, and, if necessary, accomplish repairs. This AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for Switzerland. The actions specified by this AD are intended to detect and correct damage and cracks to the pressure dome, which could lead to rapid decompression.

DATES: This AD becomes effective on July 28, 2003.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations as of July 28, 2003.

ADDRESSES: You may get the service information referenced in this AD from Pilatus Aircraft Ltd., Customer Liaison Manager, CH-6371 Stans, Switzerland; telephone: +41 41 619 63 19; facsimile: +41 41 619 6224; or from Pilatus Business Aircraft Ltd., Product Support Department, 11755 Airport Way, Broomfield, Colorado 80021; telephone: (303) 465-9099; facsimile: (303) 465-6040. You may view this information at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the

Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-CE-53-AD, 901 Locust, Room 506, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Doug Rudolph, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone: (816) 329-4059; facsimile: (816) 329-4090.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

What Events Have Caused This 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 certain Pilatus Models PC-12 and PC-12/45 airplanes. The FOCA reports that drill and/or rivet tool damage could have occurred in areas around the edges of the rear pressure dome during assembly of the Models PC-12 and PC-12/45 airplanes.

Pilatus has received 19 reports of damaged pressure domes. The reported damage included nicks and scratches. This type of damage could also occur on the forward surface of the pressure dome.

Has FAA Taken Any Action to This Point?

We issued a proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an AD that would apply to certain Pilatus Models PC-12 and PC-12/45 airplanes. This proposal was published in the **Federal Register** as a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on January 14, 2003 (68 FR 1802). The NPRM proposed to require you to inspect the front and rear surfaces of the pressure dome for damage and cracks, and, if necessary, accomplish repairs.

What Is the Potential Impact if FAA Took No Action?

The damage to the pressure dome could result in cracks in the pressure dome and lead to rapid decompression.

Was the Public Invited To Comment?

The FAA encouraged interested persons to participate in the making of this amendment. The following presents

the comment received on the proposal and FAA's response to the comment:

Comment Issue: How To Obtain a Repair Scheme Is Unclear

What Is the Commenter's Concern?

The commenter states that the current wording in the proposed AD is incorrect and implies that the repair scheme will come from FAA. Additionally, the commenter states that the repair scheme will come from the manufacturer; FAA will provide approval of the repair.

What Is FAA's Response to the Concern?

We do not concur that the current wording of the proposed AD is incorrect. Since the service information, which is referenced in the proposed AD, does not address repairs for this type of damage, FAA has to individually approve each repair as needed. This gives the manufacturer the option to develop other generic repair procedures, which were not developed at the time of the NPRM, for this type of damage and submit them to FAA for approval. Therefore, we have not changed the final rule AD based on this comment.

FAA's Determination

What Is FAA's Final Determination on This Issue?

We carefully reviewed all available information related to the subject presented above and determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed except for the changes discussed above and minor editorial questions. We have determined that these changes and minor corrections:

- Provide the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for correcting the unsafe condition; and
- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM.

Cost Impact

How Many Airplanes Does This AD Impact?

We estimate that this AD affects 280 airplanes in the U.S. registry.

What Is the Cost Impact of This AD on Owners/Operators of the Affected Airplanes?

We estimate the following costs to accomplish the inspection:

Labor cost	Parts cost	Total cost per airplane	Total cost on U.S. operators
8 workhours × \$60 per hour = \$480	No parts required	\$480	\$480 × 280 = \$134,400.