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Kalene C. Yanamura,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-NM-169-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Aerospatiale Model ATR42-500 and ATR72 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 Aerospatiale Model ATR42-500 and ATR72 series airplanes. This proposal would require inspecting the wire bundle in the area of electrical rack 90VU to detect damage, verifying that the conduit around the wire bundle is in the proper position, and installing a clamp between the wire bundles and the carbon shelves structure. This action is necessary to prevent chafing of a wire bundle, which could result in an electrical short and potential loss of several functions essential for safe flight. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by July 18, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-169-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-169-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 or 2000 or ASCII text.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Aerospatiale, 316 Route de Bayonne, 31060 Toulouse, Cedex 03, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer; International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2125; fax (425) 227-1149.

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-169-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-169-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Aerospatiale Model ATR42-500 and ATR72 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that, after parking a Model ATR42-500 series airplane with the right-hand engine on, the flightcrew tried unsuccessfully to start the left-hand engine. Investigation revealed wire chafing on electrical rack 90VU between the carbon structure of the 95VU shelf and the main wire bundle. This chafing led to a short circuit, which burned several wires of the bundle (including the left-hand engine ignition circuits) and the protective sheath (conduit). It was determined that the chafing and subsequent electrical short circuit probably occurred when the wire bundle on the shelf was mispositioned during maintenance, and that this wire bundle is susceptible to such mispositioning. This created a direct contact between the wire bundle and the carbon shelf (an abrasive structure). This condition could also exist on shelves 93VU and 94VU and, if not corrected, could result in the loss of several functions essential for safe flight.

The design of the wire bundle routing is the same on Model ATR42-500 and ATR72 series airplanes; therefore, these airplane models are subject to the identified unsafe condition.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued Avions de Transport Regional Service Bulletins ATR42-92-0007 (for Model ATR42-500 series airplanes) and ATR72-92-1007 (for Model ATR72 series airplanes), both dated January 25, 2002. These service bulletins describe procedures for inspecting the wire bundles in the area of electrical rack 90VU to detect damage, verifying that the conduit around the wire bundles is in the proper position, and installing a clamp between the wire bundles and the carbon shelves structure (93VU, 94VU, 95VU). Accomplishment of the actions specified in the applicable service bulletins is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directives 2002-090-092(B) and 2002-091-066(B), both