

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Groves, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-1503; 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-60-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-60-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Luftfahrt-Bundesamt (LBA), which is the airworthiness authority for

Germany, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Dornier Model 328-100 and -300 series airplanes. The LBA advises that operators have reported severely corroded bolts on the landing gear, including actuator bolts on the main landing gear (MLG). In another case, an inspection revealed that a brace assembly bolt on the nose landing gear (NLG) was missing. Corrosion of the bolts may lead to bolt failure, which may lead to loss of one or more of the bolts in the landing gear assemblies. The bolts secure connection pins; with the bolts missing or failed, the connection pins will migrate due to vibration and eventually fall out. This condition, if not corrected, could result in failure of the NLG or MLG due to corroded or missing bolts, which could cause loss of connection pins, and consequent collapse of the landing gear during ground maneuvers or upon landing.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Dornier has issued Service Bulletins SB-328-32-414 (for Model 328-100 series airplanes) and SB-328J-32-147 (for Model 328-300 series airplanes), both dated December 3, 2001, which describe procedures for inspecting the NLG and MLG to ensure that certain bolts are in place, and replacing any bolts that are missing or out of place, with bolts having the same part number. The service bulletins also describe procedures for removing the nuts, bolts, and washers of the NLG and MLG, and inspecting for evidence of corrosion; replacing the bolt with a part having the same part number; and applying corrosion prevention compound to the bolt shaft. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The LBA classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued German airworthiness directives 2002-014/2 (for Model 328-100 series airplanes) and 2002-015/2 (for Model 328-300 series airplanes), both dated March 7, 2002, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in Germany.

FAA's Conclusions

These airplane models are manufactured in Germany and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the LBA has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has

examined the findings of the LBA, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of these type designs that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins described previously, except as discussed below.

Differences Between Proposed Rule, German Airworthiness Directives, and Relevant Service Bulletins

Operators should note that, although the German airworthiness directives and the referenced service bulletins specify inspecting for bolt placement prior to the next flight for airplanes "with more than 4,000 flight hours or 24 months since new," this proposed AD would require that inspection to be done at the later of these times: (1) Within 4,000 total flight hours, or within 24 months since the date of issuance of the original Airworthiness Certificate, or within 24 months since the date of issuance of the Export Certificate of Airworthiness, whichever occurs first; or (2) within 6 days after the effective date of the AD.

Operators should also note that, although the German airworthiness directives and the referenced service bulletins specify inspecting for corrosion on bolts at the next "A-check," this proposed AD would require that inspection to be done within 400 flight hours or 6 months after accomplishing the inspection for bolt placement.

Operators should also note that, although the German airworthiness directives require the removal, inspections, and replacement of corroded bolts and washers with new bolts and washers of the same part number to be one-time actions, this proposed AD would require that those actions be repeated at intervals not to exceed 4,000 flight hours or 24 months, whichever occurs first.

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 altered products, special flight permits, and alternative methods of compliance. Because we have now