

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 39**

[Docket No. 2002–NM–55–AD; Amendment 39–13234; AD 2003–14–15]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747–100, 747–100B, 747–100B SUD, 747–200B, 747–200F, 747–200C, 747–300, 747–400, 747–400D, 747–400F, and 747SR Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment supersedes an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Boeing Model 747 series airplanes, that currently requires inspections for cracking of the forward end clevis lugs of the flap track, and replacement of the flap track with a new flap track if necessary. That AD also currently provides for an optional modification of the forward end clevis lugs, which terminates the required inspections. This amendment expands the applicability of the existing AD, and requires new repetitive inspections for evidence of rotation or migration of the bushings or cracking of the lugs of the forward end clevis of the flap tracks that support the wing trailing edge flaps, corrective actions if necessary, and eventual accomplishment of a terminating action. These actions are necessary to prevent cracking and fracture of the forward end clevis of the flap track, which could result in reduced structural capability of the flap and reduced controllability of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Effective August 25, 2003.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of August 25, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124–2207. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary Oltman, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM–120S, FAA, Seattle

Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 917–6443; fax (425) 917–6590.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) by superseding AD 90–24–09, amendment 39–6815 (55 FR 48228, November 20, 1990), which is applicable to certain Boeing Model 747 series airplanes, was published in the **Federal Register** on December 2, 2002 (67 FR 71497). The action proposed to continue to require inspections for cracking of the forward end clevis lugs of the flap track, and replacement of the flap track with a new flap track if necessary. The action also provided for an optional modification of the forward end clevis lugs, which would terminate the required inspections. The action proposed to expand the applicability of the existing AD, require new repetitive inspections for evidence of rotation or migration of the bushings or cracking of the lugs of the forward end clevis of the flap tracks that support the wing trailing edge flaps, and require corrective actions if necessary. The action also proposed to require eventual accomplishment of a terminating action.

Comments

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. The FAA has given due consideration to the single comment received.

Request To Clarify Corrective Action

One commenter notes that the procedures for the Terminating Action in part 2 of Boeing Service Bulletin 747–57–2307, Revision 1, dated January 17, 2002, include a magnetic particle inspection of the clevis bore of a machined flap track assembly. The commenter points out that no corrective action is specified if a crack is found, though the commenter assumes that the flap track must be replaced. The commenter states that both the service bulletin and proposed AD should specify a corrective action.

We partially agree with the commenter. We note that, where the service bulletin specifies a magnetic particle inspection, the service bulletin refers to Boeing Standard Overhaul Practices Manual 20–20–01, Class A, Critical, for information pertaining to the inspection. We note that the acceptance criteria in that document do not allow cracking. Thus, a cracked flap track may not be used and must be replaced with a new flap track.

However, we agree that we could clarify the need to replace the existing

flap track with a new flap track if any cracking is found during the magnetic particle inspection that is included in the procedures for the terminating action required by this AD. Therefore, we have revised paragraph (h) of this final rule to specify that, if a crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (d), (i), or (j) of this AD (or paragraph (e), (f), or (g)(2)(i) of this AD, as specified in paragraph (h) of the proposed AD), the cracked flap track must be replaced with a new flap track before further flight.

Explanation of Editorial Change

We have revised paragraph (f) of this AD to make it clear that accomplishment of the terminating modification in paragraph (d) or (i) of this AD ends the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (f) of this AD.

Conclusion

After careful review of the available data, including the comment noted above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule with the changes previously described. The FAA has determined that these changes will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

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 included this material in part 39, we no longer need to include it in each individual AD. However, for clarity and consistency in this final rule, we have retained the language of the NPRM regarding that material.

Explanation of Change to Cost Impact

After the proposed AD was issued, we reviewed the figures we use to calculate the labor rate to do the required actions. To account for various inflationary costs in the airline industry, we find it appropriate to increase the labor rate used in these calculations from \$60 per work hour to \$65 per work hour. The economic impact information, below, has been revised to reflect this increase in the specified hourly labor rate.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 1,002 Model 747–100, 747–100B, 747–100B SUD, 747–200B, 747–200F, 747–200C, 747–