

prevent arcing of the wire assembly connectors of the overhead storage bin, and service module and bin extension assemblies, and consequent smoke/fire in the cabin. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by September 8, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2001-NM-167-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. 2001-NM-167-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 for Windows or ASCII text.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Aircraft Group, Long Beach Division, 3855 Lakewood Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90846, Attention: Data and Service Management, Dept. C1-L5A (D800-0024). This information may be 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: Brett Portwood, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM-130L, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712-4137; telephone (562) 627-5350; 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-167-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-167-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

As part of its practice of re-examining all aspects of the service experience of a particular aircraft whenever an accident occurs, the FAA has become aware of incidents of arcing and smoke from the electrical connectors of the ceiling lights on McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 and -11F airplanes. It was determined that the cause of the connector failure was due to moisture intrusion into the mated connectors through the backshell. This condition, if not corrected, could result in arcing of the wire assembly connectors of the overhead storage bin, and service module and bin extension assemblies, and consequent smoke/fire in the cabin.

Other Related Rulemaking

The FAA, in conjunction with Boeing and operators of Model MD-11 and -11F airplanes, has reviewed all aspects of the service history of those airplanes to identify potential unsafe conditions

and to take appropriate corrective actions. This proposed airworthiness directive (AD) is one of a series of corrective actions identified during that process. We have previously issued several other ADs and may consider further rulemaking actions to address the remaining identified unsafe conditions.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

We have reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin MD11-33A064, dated March 6, 2002, which describes procedures for replacement of the wire assembly connectors of the bag rack lighting with new, moisture-resistant connectors and reidentification of the bag racks. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin 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 accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously.

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 (AMOCs). Because we have now included this material in part 39, only the office authorized to approve AMOCs is identified in each individual AD.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 111 Model MD-11 and -11F airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 26 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

For Group 1 airplanes identified in the referenced service bulletin, it would take approximately 11 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, at an average labor rate of \$65 per work hour. Required parts would cost between \$1,140 and \$1,406 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$1,855 and \$2,121 per airplane.

For Group 2 airplanes identified in the referenced service bulletin, it would