

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2001–NM–232–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747 Series Airplanes Equipped with General Electric CF6–45 or CF6–50 Series Engines

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 Boeing Model 747 series airplanes equipped with General Electric CF6–45 and CF6–50 series engines. This proposal would require an inspection to detect chafing of the fuel line or incorrect clearance between the fuel line and pneumatic duct insulation blanket; a fuel leak check and strut drain test; corrective action if necessary; replacement of the outboard strut fuel line coupling O-rings and retaining rings with new parts; replacement of the pneumatic duct boot with a new part; and, for certain airplanes, installation of a flame arrestor and drain line entry screens. This action is necessary to prevent leaking fuel line couplings, chafed fuel lines, restricted or clogged strut drain lines, migrating fluids or vapors toward ignition sources, and flashback of external flame into the strut; these conditions could result in an uncontained engine strut fire. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 17, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket 2001–NM–232–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–232–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 Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124–2207. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dan Kinney, Aerospace Engineer, Propulsion Branch, ANM–140S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–2666; fax (425) 227–1181.

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 2001–NM–232–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 2001–NM–232–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports of fires inside and outside the outboard struts of Boeing Model 747 series airplanes equipped with General Electric CF6–45 and CF6–50 series engines. The fires were caused by leaking strut fuel line couplings, improperly installed fuel lines that chafed against a pneumatic duct insulation blanket, and clogged or restricted strut drain lines. Fuel leakage into the hot engine compartment and/or onto the hot engine case can ignite and result in a fire. In certain cases, external flame flashback through the strut drain holes has ignited fuel that had leaked and accumulated in the strut. These fires have occurred outside a designated “fire zone” where there is no means to detect, contain, or extinguish a fire. All known cases of engine strut fires have occurred on the ground during taxi-in after landing; such fires could result in airplane damage and an emergency evacuation. Leaking fuel line couplings, chafed fuel lines, restricted or clogged strut drain lines, fluids or vapors migrating to ignition sources, and flashback of external flame into the strut, if not corrected, could result in an uncontained engine strut fire.