

Request To Change Compliance Time

Two commenters ask that the compliance time for the repetitive replacement of the O-rings and retaining rings, as specified in paragraph (d) of the proposed AD, be changed, as follows: One commenter states that it performs the repetitive replacement of the O-rings and retaining rings every 5 years.

We infer that the commenter wants to continue the replacement every 5 years, in lieu of the compliance time of every 21,000 flight hours or 5 years, whichever is earlier (unless a coupling is disassembled).

The same commenter states that it performs the fuel pressure leak check every 5 years when it replaces the O-rings and retaining rings, and would like to be allowed to continue at that interval in lieu of the 3-year interval specified in Boeing Service Bulletin 747-28-2230, dated September 30, 1999 (referenced in the proposed AD as the source of service information for accomplishment of the fuel leak check and strut drain inspection).

We acknowledge that the service bulletin specified recommends repeating the leak check every 3 years; however, the proposed AD does not require repetitive fuel pressure leak checks; only a one-time check within 12 months after the effective date of the AD.

Another commenter states that it performs the repetitive replacement of the O-rings and retaining rings during its D-check, and asks that all operators be allowed to perform the replacement at that time. The commenter also provides some statistics on cases of fuel

leakage found and the corrective actions taken; and noted that there were more fuel leaks that occurred after maintenance of the fuel line coupling O-rings if specially trained mechanics did not do the maintenance, due to the necessity of using delicate installation procedures that are specific to that type of couplings.

We do not agree with the requests to extend the compliance time. The chronological age of the O-rings combined with flight hours produces the deterioration and fuel leaks. With regard to extending the compliance time to allow the replacement to be accomplished at a D-check or every 5 years, we have already considered factors such as operators' maintenance schedules in setting a compliance time for the required replacement and determined that 21,000 flight hours or 5 years, whichever is earlier (unless a coupling is disassembled), is an appropriate compliance time in which the replacement may be accomplished during scheduled airplane maintenance for the majority of affected operators. Since maintenance schedules vary from operator to operator, it would not be possible to guarantee that all affected airplanes could be modified during scheduled maintenance. In any event, we find that the specified compliance time represents the maximum time wherein the affected airplanes may continue to operate without compromising safety. No change to the final rule is necessary in this regard.

Conclusion

After careful review of the available data, including the comments 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. This regulation now includes material that relates to altered products, special flight permits, and AMOCs. Because we have now included this material in part 39, only the office authorized to approve AMOCs is identified in each individual AD. However, for clarity and consistency in this final rule, we have retained the language of the NPRM regarding that material.

Change to Labor Rate Estimate

We have reviewed the figures we have used over the past several years to calculate AD costs to operators. To account for various inflationary costs in the airline industry, we find it necessary to increase the labor rate used in these calculations from \$60 per work hour to \$65 per work hour. The cost impact information, below, reflects this increase in the specified hourly labor rate.

Cost Impact

The following table provides the cost estimates to accomplish the required actions:

Boeing service information for required actions	Work hours per airplane	Hourly labor rate	Parts cost per air-plane	Per-air-plane cost	Number of U.S. airplanes affected	U.S. fleet cost
Service Bulletin 747-36-2111	10	\$65	\$0	\$650	32	\$20,800
Service Bulletin 747-28-2230	4	65	0	260	32	8,320
Service Letter 747-SL-28-052-B	4	65	0	260	32	8,320
Service Bulletin 747-36-2118	10	65	1,269	1,919	32	61,408
Service Bulletin 747-54-2137	48	65	3,047	6,167	30	185,010
Service Bulletin 747-54-2122	56	65	2,590	6,230	30	186,900

The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include

incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various

levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) will not have a significant economic