

assembly of the NLG, which could result in failure of the NLG to extend following a gear-down selection, and consequent gear-up landing, structural damage, and possible injury to passengers and crew. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by October 14, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-105-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. 2002-NM-105-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 or 2000 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike Lee, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120L, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712; telephone (562) 627-5325; 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 2002-NM-105-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-105-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received a report indicating that an operator of a Model DC-9-82 (MD-82) airplane was unable to extend the nose landing gear (NLG) during landing. As a result of this problem, the operator landed with the nose gear up, which caused moderate damage to the nose gear doors, avionics door, and adjacent structure. Investigation of the damage revealed that the upper lock link of the NLG was completely fractured. Boeing has determined that tool marks and/or rough surface finish across the parting plane can cause stress concentration and cracking along the forged parting plane of the upper lock link. The Component Maintenance Manual is being revised to incorporate minimum surface finish and height requirements for the upper lock link. Fracture of the upper lock link assembly of the NLG could result in failure of the NLG to extend following a gear-down selection, and consequent gear-up landing,

structural damage, and possible injury to passengers and crew.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

We have reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin DC9-32A340, dated November 14, 2001, which describes procedures for a visual inspection of the upper lock link assembly of the NLG to determine if the part was manufactured by Ready Machine and Manufacturing Company, and (regardless of manufacturer) repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections for cracking of the assembly, and modification or replacement of the assembly with a new assembly if cracking is found. The modification includes chemically stripping the lock link assembly, verifying the distance between the machined surface and lower surface parting line, doing a fluorescent dye penetrant inspection for cracking, doing another HFEC inspection for cracking, shotpeening the machined surface, reidentifying the reworked upper link, and refinishing. The service bulletin also describes an adjustment and test for the nose gear linkages, and provides for optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections if no cracking is found. 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. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously, except that the proposed AD does not require submitting Appendix A (report of inspection findings), and except as discussed below.

Difference Between Proposed AD and Service Bulletin

The Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin describe procedures for completing a sheet to record and report negative inspection findings. However, this proposed AD would not require a report; we do not need this information from operators.

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