

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-156-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 Airplane Group, PO 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:**

Keith Ladderud, Aerospace Engineer, Cabin Safety and Environmental Systems Branch, ANM-150S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 917-6435; fax (425) 917-6590.

**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-156-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-156-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

**Discussion**

An operator reported that the cable on a door mounted escape slide had disconnected from the latch block assembly on a Boeing Model 737 series airplane. Investigation revealed that a production change had increased the size of the latch cable loops, which could allow the latch cable assembly to disconnect from the latch block assembly. This condition, if not corrected, could result in an escape slide not deploying in an emergency situation, and consequent reduction in the number of exits available in an evacuation.

**Related Rulemaking**

On November 29, 1985, the FAA issued AD 85-25-04, amendment 39-5179 (50 FR 49923, December 6, 1985). That AD required inspecting the escape slides and modifying the escape slide containers; and, on certain airplanes, the AD required inspecting, modifying escape slide installations, and functional testing; in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 737-25A1182, Revision 2, Parts I, III and IV, dated November 12, 1985.

On February 25, 1986, the FAA issued AD 86-05-04, amendment 39-5249 (51 FR 7433, March 4, 1986). That AD required installing retaining straps for the escape slide covers on the aft doors, in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 737-25A1182, Revision 2, Part II, dated November 12, 1985.

**Explanation of Relevant Service Information**

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Special Attention Service Bulletin 737-25-1434, dated March 22, 2001, which describes procedures for replacing the existing screw, nut, and washers that attach the latch cable assembly to the latch block assembly of the door mounted escape slides, with the new, improved screw, nut, and washers. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is

intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

The service bulletin also specifies installation of the double loop escape slide latch cable assembly as described in Boeing Service Bulletin 737-25A1182, dated September 18, 1985, as a concurrent requirement. (See "Related Rulemaking" above.)

**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, except as described below.

**Differences Between Service Bulletin and Proposed Rule**

Although the service bulletin recommends accomplishing the replacement "at the next scheduled maintenance period when manpower, materials, and facilities are available," the FAA has determined that such an imprecise compliance time would not address the identified unsafe condition in a timely manner. In developing an appropriate compliance time for this proposed action, the FAA considered not only the manufacturer's recommendation, but the degree of urgency associated with addressing the subject unsafe condition, the average utilization of the affected fleet, and the time necessary to perform the replacement. In light of all of these factors, the FAA finds that a compliance time of 18 months for completing the proposed actions to be warranted, in that it represents an appropriate interval of time for affected airplanes to continue to operate without compromising safety.

**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.

**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