

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 39**

[Docket No. 2001–NM–88–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737–300, –400, and –500 Series Airplanes**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.**ACTION:** Supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking; reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: This document revises an earlier proposed airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Boeing Model 737–300, –400, and –500 series airplanes, that would have required replacement of the hinge assemblies on certain escape slide compartments of the forward doors with new, stronger hinge assemblies. This new action revises the proposed rule by adding an inspection for incorrectly crimped hinge assemblies, and corrective action if necessary, for certain airplanes. The actions specified by this new proposed AD are intended to prevent forward door escape slides from falling out of their compartments into the airplane interior and inflating, which could impede an evacuation in the event of an emergency. 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. 2001–NM–88–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–88–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, 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: 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–88–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–88–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to add an airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Boeing Model 737–300, –400, and –500 series airplanes, was published as a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) in the **Federal Register** on July 9, 2002 (67 FR 45412). That NPRM (the “original NPRM”) would have required replacement of the hinge assemblies on certain escape slide compartments of the forward doors with new, stronger hinge assemblies. The original NPRM was prompted by an investigation that revealed that the soft aluminum hinge assemblies on the escape slide compartments on affected airplanes are susceptible to deformation. That condition, if not corrected, could result in forward door escape slides falling out of their compartments into the airplane interior and inflating, which could impede an evacuation in the event of an emergency.

Comments

Due consideration has been given to the comments received in response to the original NPRM.

Support for the Original NPRM

Several commenters support the original NPRM. One commenter adds that accomplishment of the proposed actions will help eliminate unintended slide deployments on affected airplanes.

Request To Cite Revised Service Bulletin

The manufacturer states that Boeing Service Bulletin 737–25–1430, dated February 22, 2001, misidentifies certain part numbers in the Existing Parts Accountability table. (That service bulletin was cited as the appropriate source of service information for the actions specified in the original NPRM.) The manufacturer advises of the revision of that service bulletin to correct the part number discrepancy, and requests that the original NPRM be revised to cite the revised service bulletin.

The FAA agrees with the request. Revision 1 of the service bulletin, dated April 10, 2003, was issued to correct the part numbers and to add an inspection for incorrectly crimped hinge assemblies for airplanes already modified by the original issue of the service bulletin, which may have not ensured that all hinge assemblies are crimped at one or both ends. An incorrectly crimped hinge assembly may not hold the hinge pin correctly. In this supplemental NPRM: