

in the existing AD.) The procedures specify a one-time inspection of the seal assemblies for correct diameter seal inserts on slat numbers 4, 5, 10, and 11; if the correct diameter insert was installed and the insert has receded into the ends of the seal assembly, install an insert segment into the ends of the seal assembly; if incorrect diameter seal inserts are installed or the inspection was inconclusive, replace the seal assembly with a new seal assembly. If the correct diameter insert is installed and the insert has not receded into the ends of the seal assembly, no further action is specified for Part 5.

Part 6—Seal Insert Gap Inspection and Seal Assembly Replacement: Describes procedures for all airplanes on which the seal insert installation has been done. The procedures specify a one-time inspection of the seal assemblies for missing or gapped inserts.

If the assembly insert is not missing and no gaps are found, the procedures in the service bulletin recommend eventual replacement of the seal assembly with a new seal assembly as specified in Figure 8 of the service bulletin at the time specified in Figure 1 of the service bulletin, regardless of apparent condition.

If the seal assembly insert is missing or gaps are found, the procedures specify doing the following:

For airplanes on which the installation specified in Part 4 has been done: Do a cove skin inspection for cracking as specified in Part 1 of the service bulletin. If no cracking is found, repeat the inspection at the intervals specified. If any cracking is found, the procedures in the service bulletin specify the applicable actions as specified below:

- For any crack that is 1.5 inches in length or less, the follow-on actions include stop-drilling the cracking, doing an internal inspection for cracking as specified in Part 2 of the service bulletin, repairing any cracking found, doing a slat adjustment check, and repeating the cove skin and internal inspections at the intervals specified.

- For any crack that is more than 1.5 inches in length, the follow-on actions include doing an internal inspection for cracking as specified in Part 2 of the service bulletin, repairing any cracking found, doing a slat adjustment check, and repeating the cove skin and internal inspections at the intervals specified.

- As an alternative for all cracks: Replace the slat and do a slat adjustment check, then repeat the cove skin and internal inspections at the intervals specified.

If any cracking exceeds certain limits specified in the 777 Structural Repair Manual, or if internal cracking is found, the service bulletin specifies contacting the manufacturer for repair instructions.

For airplanes on which the seal insert installation was done during production, the procedures also include eventual replacement of the seal assembly with a new seal assembly as specified in Figure 8 of the service bulletin, at the time specified in Figure 1 of the service bulletin, regardless of apparent condition.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

Explanation of the Requirements of the Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design, this AD is being issued to find and fix discrepancies of the seal assemblies of the outboard leading edge slats on the wings, which could result in cracking of the slats, subsequent separation of the cove skin, structural damage or loss of the trailing edge wedge, and consequent reduced controllability of the airplane. This AD requires inspections of the outboard leading edge slats on the wings for installation of seal assemblies with undersized (incorrect diameter) seal inserts and missing or gapped inserts, and follow-on and corrective actions if necessary. This AD also provides for an optional replacement of the seal assembly in lieu of the inspections. The actions are required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below.

Interim Action

At this time we are considering a separate rulemaking action to supersede this AD to address the procedures for long-term follow-on inspections to find additional cracking, and repair of any cracking found, as described in the service bulletin. Due to the urgency of the need to inspect the fleet and repair any cracking found, this AD will address only the sections in the service bulletin that pertain to the inspections and follow-on and corrective actions specified in Part 5 and Part 6 of the service bulletin.

In addition to superseding this AD, that rulemaking action would also supersede AD 2002–11–06 to mandate replacement of the seal assemblies with new seal assemblies for all 777 series airplanes. However, the planned compliance time for these actions is

sufficiently long so that prior notice and time for public comment will be practicable.

Differences Between This AD and the Service Bulletin

The service bulletin specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of certain repair conditions; however, this AD requires the repair of those conditions to be accomplished per a method approved by the FAA, or per data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company Designated Engineering Representative who has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, to make such findings.

Clarification of Part Numbers for Installation

Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 777–57A0034, Revision 7, dated May 22, 2003, contains certain incorrectly identified part numbers (P/N) in the “Existing Part Number” and “New Part Number” columns of the table under Appendix A, rows 20 and 27 of page 79, and rows 8 and 10 of page 80; respectively. We have been advised that the manufacturer will issue a revision to this alert service bulletin to correct the error. The part numbers are corrected in the tables below:

TABLE: PART NUMBERS

Existing P/N	Name	Correct P/N
114W4140–21	Slat Assy— No. 11.	114W4140–22
114W4705–42	Seal	114W4705–41

TABLE: PART NUMBERS

New P/N	Name	Correct P/N
114W4150–23	Slat Assy— No. 5.	114W4150–29
114W4150–24	Slat Assy— No. 10.	114W4150–30

Changes to 14 CFR Part 39/Effect on the 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. Because we have now included this material in part 39, we no longer need to include it in each individual AD; however, this AD identifies the office authorized to approve alternative methods of compliance.