

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2003–NM–43–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC–10–10, DC–10–10F, DC–10–15, DC–10–30, DC–10–30F, DC–10–30F (KC–10A–and KDC–10), DC–10–40, DC–10–40F, MD–10–10F, and MD–10–30F Airplanes; and Model MD–11 and MD–11F Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain McDonnell Douglas transport category airplanes. For certain airplanes, this proposal would require a general visual inspection to detect cracking in the nuts on the lower attach bolt assemblies of the forward attach bracket of the inboard flap outboard hinge, replacement of both upper and lower attach bolt assemblies with new bolts and nuts made from Inconel material, and replacement of certain preload-indicating (PLI) washers with new washers. For certain other airplanes, this proposal would require replacement of the lower attach bolt assemblies of the inboard forward attach bracket of the inboard flap outboard hinge with new bolts and nuts made from Inconel material, and replacement of PLI washers with new washers. These actions are necessary to prevent separation of the inboard flap outboard hinge from the wing structure and consequent reduced controllability of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

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

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2003–NM–43–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. 2003–NM–43–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 the 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; or at the FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ronald Atmur, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM–120L, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712–4137; telephone (562) 627–5224; 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 2003–NM–43–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. 2003–NM–43–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The FAA received a report of an incident in June 2002, involving a McDonnell Douglas Model MD–11 airplane on which the left-hand inboard flap outboard hinge pulled away from the wing structure where a bracket attaches it with two upper and two lower bolts. Preliminary investigation indicated that the two lower attach bolt assemblies likely failed first. When the bracket separated, it caused an asymmetrical condition for the inboard flaps, additional structural damage to the wing, and loss of one hydraulic system. The flightcrew applied full right-hand aileron to level the wings, and during emergency landing, the tail of the airplane scraped the runway. The affected airplane had accumulated 37,439 flight-hours and 9,241 landings.

Following the incident reported above, on July 10, 2002, we issued AD 2002–14–03, amendment 39–12803 (67 FR 47254, July 18, 2002), which required, for certain MD–11 and MD–