

FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2003-NM-31-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports of loose external power ground wires at the ground stud located in the lower nose left tunnel at fuselage station Y=110.00 bulkhead on certain McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9-82 airplanes. The cause of such loose wires has been attributed to ground stud buildup loosening due to normal airplane vibration. This condition, if not corrected, could result in arcing and overheated wire insulation and consequent smoke/fire in the cockpit.

Other Relevant Rulemaking

We have previously issued AD 2001-24-19, amendment 39-12536 (66 FR 64125, December 12, 2001), applicable to certain McDonnell Douglas airplane models, as follows:

McDonnell Douglas Models
DC-9-10, DC-9-20, DC-9-30, DC-9-40, and DC-9-50 series airplanes
C-9 airplanes
DC-9-81, DC-9-82, DC-9-83, and
DC-9-87 airplanes
MD-88 airplanes

That AD requires an inspection to detect chafing or overheat damage of the electrical wires located at fuselage station Y=110.000 bulkhead of the lower nose left tunnel; and corrective actions, if necessary. That AD also requires replacing the external power ground stud with a new ground stud using new attaching parts, torquing new attachments, and installing a nameplate. That AD was prompted by reports of loose external power ground wires at the ground stud located in the lower nose left tunnel at fuselage station Y=110.00 bulkhead on McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9-82 series airplanes. The actions specified by that AD are intended to prevent loose external power ground wires, which could cause arcing and overheated wire insulation and consequent smoke/fire in the cockpit.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

Since issuance of that AD, the FAA was advised that one Model DC9-15 airplane (fuselage number 0097) was omitted inadvertently from the applicability of AD 2001-24-19 because the airplane had been excluded inadvertently from the effectivity of Section I.A. of McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin DC9-24A135, Revision 01, dated May 1, 2000, as cited in AD 2001-24-19. Therefore, the additional airplane is also subject to the same

unsafe condition addressed in AD 2001-24-19.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin DC9-24A135, Revision 02, dated January 7, 2003, which describes procedures that are essentially the same as those procedures included in McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin DC9-24A135, Revision 01, dated May 1, 2000. This revision also adds an additional airplane fuselage number to the effectivity. No more work is necessary on airplanes changed as shown in Revision 01 of the service bulletin. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in AD 2001-24-19 is acceptable for compliance with the requirements of this proposed AD.

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.

Since this proposed AD expands the applicability of AD 2001-24-19, the FAA has considered a number of factors in determining whether to issue a new AD or to supersede the existing AD. The FAA has considered the entire fleet size that would be affected by superseding AD 2001-24-19 and the consequent workload associated with revising maintenance record entries. In light of this, the FAA has determined that a less burdensome approach is to issue a separate AD applicable only to the additional airplane. This proposed AD would not supersede AD 2001-24-19; airplanes listed in the applicability of AD 2001-24-19 are required to continue to comply with the requirements of that AD. This proposed AD is a separate AD action, and is applicable to only one McDonnell Douglas Model DC9-15 airplane (fuselage number 0097), certificated in any category.

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 to increase the labor rate used in these calculations from \$60 per work hour to \$65 per work hour. The cost impact information, below, reflects this increase in the specified hourly labor rate.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 1 Model DC-9-15 airplane, having fuselage number 0097, of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 2 work hours to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$65 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$35. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on the U.S. operator is estimated to be \$165.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this proposed AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative,