

would require repetitive inspections of the aft pressure bulkhead web, and corrective action, if necessary. This action is necessary to detect and correct fatigue cracks in the aft pressure bulkhead web, which could result in uncontrolled rapid decompression. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by November 20, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2003-NM-49-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-49-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: Suzanne Masterson, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 917-6441; 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 2003-NM-49-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-49-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports of fatigue cracks at the aft pressure bulkhead web on Boeing Model 737 and 747 series airplanes. This condition, if not detected and corrected, could result in uncontrolled rapid decompression.

The aft pressure bulkhead web on Boeing Model 767-200, -300, and -300F series airplanes is almost identical to that on the affected Boeing Model 737 and 747 series airplanes. Therefore, those Boeing Model 767-200, -300, and -300F series airplanes may be subject to the unsafe condition revealed on the Boeing Model 737 and 747 series airplanes.

Other Relevant Rulemaking

The FAA has previously issued AD 1999-08-23, amendment 39-11132 (64 FR 19879, May 10, 1999), applicable to certain Boeing Model 737 series airplanes. That AD requires repetitive inspections to detect cracking in the web of the aft pressure bulkhead at body station 1016 at the aft fastener row attachment to the "Y" chord; and corrective actions, if necessary. This

proposed AD would not affect the current requirements of that AD.

The FAA has also previously issued AD 2000-15-08, amendment 39-11840 (65 FR 47255, September 6, 2000), applicable to certain Boeing Model 747 series airplanes. That AD requires repetitive inspections for damage or cracking of the aft pressure bulkhead; cracking of the bulkhead web-to-Y-ring lap joint area; cracking of the upper segment of the bulkhead web; and cracking of the upper and lower segments of the aft bulkhead web. This proposed AD would not affect the current requirements of that AD.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 767-53A0087, dated October 21, 1999, which describes procedures for performing repetitive high frequency eddy current inspections for fatigue cracking of the aft pressure bulkhead web and contacting Boeing for repair or inspection instructions. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other products of similar type design, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Service Bulletin

Operators should note that, although the service bulletin specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of certain repair conditions, this proposal would require 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 FAA to make such findings.

Operators should also note that, although the service bulletin specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for certain inspection details, this proposal would require an alternative method of compliance to be approved as required by sections 39.15, 39.17, and 39.19 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR 39.15, 39.17, 39.19).

Operators should also note that, although the service bulletin does not