

adjusting/replacing the seat locking pin with a new pin and/or adjusting/repairing/replacing the seat track with a new track.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(c) In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, the Manager, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, FAA, is authorized to approve alternative methods of compliance for this AD.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on November 21, 2003.

Kalene C. Yanamura,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2001-NM-376-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Aerospatiale Model ATR72 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the superseding of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Aerospatiale Model ATR72 series airplanes, that currently requires initial and repetitive inspections to detect fatigue cracking in certain areas of the fuselage, and corrective actions if necessary. For certain airplanes, this action would require a new inspection for oversized fastener holes and cracking, and repair if necessary. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent fatigue cracking of the fuselage and the passenger and service doors, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by December 29, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2001-NM-376-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-nprmcment@faa.gov*. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2001-NM-376-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 Aerospatiale, 316 Route de Bayonne, 31060 Toulouse, Cedex 03, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tony Jopling, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2190; fax (425) 227-1149.

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-376-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-376-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

On February 17, 2000, the FAA issued AD 2000-04-13, amendment 39-11596 (65 FR 10381, February 28, 2000), applicable to certain Aerospatiale Model ATR72 series airplanes, to require initial and repetitive inspections to detect fatigue cracking in certain areas of the fuselage, and corrective actions if necessary. That action was prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The requirements of that AD are intended to prevent fatigue cracking of the fuselage and the passenger and service doors, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

Since the issuance of AD 2000-04-13, the Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may continue to exist on certain ATR72 series airplanes on which Aerospatiale Modification 3191 (specified in Service Bulletin ATR72-52-1018, dated May 18, 1995, which is required by the existing AD) has not been done, but Aerospatiale Modification 3184 (accomplished during production and unrelated to the actions of the existing AD) has been done. Investigation revealed that during fatigue testing of these airplanes, damage was found at the attachment holes at the hinge fitting of the cargo compartment door outer skin due to oversized fastener holes drilled during incorporation of Modification 3184.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued Avions de Transport Regional Service Bulletin ATR72-52-1018, Revision 1, dated March 13, 2001. The original issue of the service bulletin was referenced as the appropriate source of service information for the accomplishment of certain inspections and corrective actions specified in the existing AD. For