

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-60-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-60-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports indicating that the repetitive x-ray inspections required by AD 85-01-02 R1, amendment 39-5241 (51 FR 6101, February 20, 1986), do not adequately detect fatigue cracks in all layers of a repaired or modified aft pressure bulkhead on certain Model DC-9 airplanes. Fatigue cracks in the corners and upper center of the door cutout of the aft pressure bulkhead, if not detected and corrected, could result in rapid decompression of the fuselage and consequent reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

Related Rulemaking

The FAA normally would issue an AD to supersede AD 85-01-02 R1 to continue to require the existing requirements, until the new proposed actions that address the identified unsafe condition are done. This

involves restating the existing requirements of AD 85-01-02 R1 in the new AD. Because of the complexity of the requirements of AD 85-01-02 R1, we previously issued AD 2002-07-06 as a "stand-alone" AD that did not supersede AD 85-01-02 R1. We included a paragraph in AD 2002-07-06 that terminates the repetitive inspection requirements of AD 85-01-02 R1.

AD 2002-07-06, amendment 39-12700 (67 FR 16987, April 9, 2002), is applicable to certain McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9-10, -20, -30, -40, and -50 series airplanes, and C-9 airplanes. That AD requires repetitive visual and x-ray inspections to detect cracks of the upper and lower corners and upper center of the door cutout of the aft pressure bulkhead; corrective actions, if necessary; and follow-on actions. The actions specified by that AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracks in the corners and upper center of the door cutout of the aft pressure bulkhead which could result in rapid decompression of the fuselage and consequent reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

Other Related Rulemaking

The FAA also has previously issued AD 96-10-11, amendment 39-9618 (61 FR 24675, May 16, 1996), applicable to McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9 and DC-9-80 series airplanes, Model MD-88 airplanes, and C-9 (military) series airplanes. That AD requires certain inspections and structural modifications. Accomplishment of the modification (reference Boeing (McDonnell Douglas) Service Bulletin DC9-53-166) required by paragraph (d) or (e) of AD 96-10-11 (which references "DC-9/MD-80 Aging Aircraft Service Action Requirements Document" (SARD), McDonnell Douglas Report No. MDC K1572, Revision A, dated June 1, 1990, or Revision B, dated January 15, 1993, as the appropriate source of service information for accomplishing the modification) terminates the repetitive inspection requirements of paragraphs (b) and (c) of this proposed AD.

Explanation of Applicability

Since issuance of AD 2002-07-06, the FAA was advised that 13 Model DC-9-15, DC-9-31, and DC-9-32 airplanes (manufacturer's fuselage numbers 0030, 0094, 0220, 0221, 0863, 0900, 0901, 0913, 0914, 0918, 0923, 0926, and 0930) were excluded inadvertently from the effectivity of paragraph 1.A. of McDonnell Douglas Service Bulletin DC9-53-137, Revision 07, dated February 6, 2001, which was referenced in the applicability of that AD as the

appropriate source of service information for determining the affected airplanes. Therefore, we have determined that the additional airplanes are also subject to the same unsafe condition addressed in AD 2002-07-06. This proposed AD follows from that determination.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas Service Bulletin DC9-53-137, Revision 09, dated January 30, 2003, which describes procedures that are essentially the same as those procedures included in McDonnell Douglas Service Bulletin DC9-53-137, Revision 07, dated February 6, 2001, as cited in AD 2002-07-06. This revision also adds 13 additional airplane fuselage numbers to the effectivity. The airplanes were inadvertently omitted from Revision 07 of the service bulletin. No more work is necessary on airplanes changed as shown in Revision 07 of the service bulletin.

The FAA also has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-165, Revision 3, dated May 3, 1989, which describes procedures for modification of the ventral aft pressure bulkhead structure (including cutting and removing flange of the upper; cutting and removing the lower flange of formers and replacing it with a clip; installing pads at the outboard end clips of formers; and replacing clearance fit bolts at the upper corner doubler angles with interference fit Hi-Lok pins and monel rivets).

In addition, the FAA has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-157, Revision 1, dated January 7, 1985, which describes, for certain airplanes, procedures for modification of the ventral aft pressure bulkhead (including encapsulating the head and nut of the attachments and applying a fillet seal of sealant around parts located on the forward and aft sides of the aft pressure bulkhead; and applying a soft film corrosion inhibiting compound to the forward and aft sides of the aft pressure bulkhead). For certain airplanes, these procedures must be done in conjunction with those in McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-165.

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

Accomplishment of the actions specified in AD 2002-07-06 is acceptable for compliance with the requirements of this proposed AD.