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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2003-NM-90-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### **Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737-100, -200, -200C, -300, -400, and -500 Series 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 Boeing Model 737-100, -200, -200C, -300, -400, and -500 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections for corrosion and cracking of the pivot hinge pins of the horizontal stabilizer, certain follow-on inspections, and replacement of the hinge pins with new or serviceable pins if necessary. This action is necessary to prevent failure of the outer and inner hinge pins due to corrosion or cracking, which could allow the pins to migrate out of the joint and result in intermittent movement of the horizontal stabilizer structure and consequent loss of controllability of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by January 22, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2003-NM-90-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](mailto:9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov). Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2003-NM-90-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:** Nancy Marsh, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 917-6440; 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 Alert 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-90-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-90-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

##### **Discussion**

The FAA has received reports of corrosion in the pivot hinge pins that attach the horizontal stabilizer center section to the Body Station 1156 support bulkhead on certain Boeing Model 737-300, -400, and -500 series airplanes. Corrosion has been found on outer primary pins and inner failsafe pins made from both 4330 steel and 15-5 PH corrosion-resistant steel (CRES). Investigation has revealed the presence of heavy corrosion on areas of the outer pin not protected by chrome plating and of heavy corrosion on all areas of the inner pin. Such corrosion or cracking could lead to pin failure and allow the pins to migrate out of the joint, resulting in intermittent movement of the horizontal stabilizer structure and consequent loss of controllability of the airplane.

##### **Similar Airplanes**

The pivot hinge pins of the horizontal stabilizer on certain Boeing Model 737-100, -200, and 200C series airplanes are identical to those on the affected Model 737-300, -400, and -500 series airplanes. Therefore, all of these models may be subject to the same unsafe condition.

##### **Explanation of Relevant Service Information**

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737-55A1077, dated December 6, 2001, which describes procedures for performing repetitive detailed and magnetic particle inspections for corrosion and cracking of the hinge pin joints of the horizontal stabilizer. The alert service bulletin also describes procedures for replacing the hinge pins with new or serviceable pins if necessary. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the alert 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 this same type design, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the alert service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below.