

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 39****[Docket No. 2002–NM–305–AD]****RIN 2120–AA64****Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 777 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 777 series airplanes. This proposal would require replacing four socket contacts on the four boost pumps of the main fuel tanks with new, high-quality gold-plated contacts, and sealing the backshell of the connector with potting compound. This action is necessary to prevent a possible source of ignition in a flammable leakage zone, which could result in an undetected and uncontrollable fire in the wheel well or wing trailing edge, and a possible fuel tank explosion. 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. 2002–NM–305–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. 2002–NM–305–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:** Margaret Langsted, Aerospace Engineer, Propulsion Branch, ANM–140S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; telephone (425) 917–6500; 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 2002–NM–305–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. 2002–NM–305–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

**Discussion**

The FAA has received reports indicating that a number of boost pumps

in the main fuel tanks of certain Boeing Model 777 series airplanes have been removed due to evidence of severe heat damage to the main electrical power connector. The boost pumps are installed on the rear spar and in the wheel well. The wing trailing edge and the wheel well compartments may have flammable vapor, and do not have fire detection or extinguishing systems. Heat damaged boost pump electrical connectors, if not corrected, are a possible source of ignition in a flammable leakage zone, which could result in an undetected and uncontrollable fire in the wheel well or wing trailing edge, and a possible fuel tank explosion.

**Explanation of Relevant Service Information**

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Special Attention Service Bulletin 777–28–0028, dated October 24, 2002, which describes procedures for replacing the socket contacts in certain positions for all four boost pumps of the main fuel tanks with high-quality gold-plated contacts; and sealing the backshell of the connector with potting compound. 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 this same type design, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously.

**Cost Impact**

There are approximately 400 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 133 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 4 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$65 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$19 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$37,107, or \$279 per airplane.

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