

Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-116-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. 2002-NM-116-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 2002-NM-116-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-116-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Aerospatiale Model ATR42 and ATR72 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that several cases of fatigue cracking have been found on the swinging lever spacers in the main landing gear (MLG). The fatigue cracking is located at the intersection base of the spacer, and is due to a stress concentration. Propagation of such cracking could result in failure of the spacer base and could affect the symmetrical functioning of the braking system. Asymmetrical braking could result in the airplane overrunning the runway during takeoff or landing.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued Avions de Transport Regional Service Bulletins ATR42-32-0094 and ATR72-32-1042, both dated November 26, 2001. The Avions de Transport Regional Service Bulletins reference Messier-Dowty Service Bulletins 631-32-166, dated November 28, 2001 (for Model ATR42 series airplanes); and 631-32-165, dated November 27, 2001 (for Model ATR72 series airplanes) for accomplishment of the replacement of the swinging lever spacers of the MLG. The Messier-Dowty service bulletins describe procedures for replacement of the swinging lever spacers in the left and right leg assemblies of the MLG with new, improved spacers. The new spacers were manufactured using 7175 material,

which is stronger than the 2024 and 7010 material used in the existing spacers. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified the Avions de Transport Regional service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directives 2001-614-089(B) and 2001-615-062(B), both dated December 26, 2001, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

FAA's Conclusions

These airplane models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept us informed of the situation described above. We have examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed AD

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

Differences Among French Airworthiness Directive, Service Information, and Proposed AD

The applicability specified in French airworthiness directive 2001-614-089(B) includes Aerospatiale Model ATR42-400; however, this proposed AD does not include that model because no U.S. type certificate has been issued for that airplane.

Paragraph 1.C.(4) of service bulletin ATR42-32-0094 references Messier-Dowty Service Bulletin No. 631-32-165 for the replacement of the swinging lever spacers of the MLG; however, the correct number for that service bulletin is No. 631-32-166. The manufacturer has been notified of this typographical error and will be issuing a revised service bulletin.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 133 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take about