

where the requirements of this AD can be done.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in CAA airworthiness directive AD 002-01-2000, dated October 9, 2002.

Issued in Burlington, Massachusetts, on February 10, 2003.

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Acting Manager, Engine and Propeller Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-NE-32-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; NARCO Avionics Inc. AT150 Transponders

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain serial numbers (SN's) of NARCO Avionics Inc. AT150 transponders. This proposal would require modification to the transponder by adding a resistor and transistor to the circuit board. This proposal is prompted by reports of AT150 transponders not recognizing and responding properly to Mode S interrogations from Mode S ground stations and Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAS-II) airborne equipment. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent loss of aircraft airspace separation and the possibility of mid-air collision.

DATES: Comments must be received by April 21, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NE-32-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299. Comments may be inspected at this location, by appointment, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: "g-ane-adcomment@faa.gov". Comments sent via the Internet must contain the docket number in the subject line.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from NARCO Avionics Inc., 270 Commerce Drive, Fort Washington, PA 19034; telephone (215) 643-2905; fax (215) 643-2007. This information may be examined, by appointment, at the FAA, New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Balam Rambrich, Aerospace Engineer, New York Aircraft Certification Office, FAA, Engine and Propeller Directorate, 10 Fifth Street, 3rd floor, Valley Stream, NY 11581-1200; telephone (516) 256-7507; fax (516) 256-2716.

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 should 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.

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-NE-32-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRM's

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, New England Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NE-32-AD, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803-5299.

Discussion

On March 20, 2002, the FAA was made aware of twelve AT150

transponders that failed to recognize and respond to Mode S interrogations from Mode S ground stations and TCAS-II airborne equipment during random testing performed by FAA Flight Standards safety inspectors. Subsequently, the manufacturer determined that "Chassis Level A" AT150 transponders have a design error, which causes the P4 pulse not to be presented, causing the transponders to shut down. This condition, if not corrected, could result in loss of aircraft airspace separation, and the possibility of mid-air collision. This proposal is only applicable to NARCO Avionics Inc. AT150 transponders with "Chassis Level A", serial numbers 10000 through 12598 inclusive.

Manufacturer's Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved the technical contents of NARCO Avionics Inc. service bulletin (SB) AT150 No. 6, dated January 31, 2003, that describes procedures for modification of the affected transponders, by adding a resistor and transistor to the circuit board to allow proper operation and changing them to "Chassis Level B". The SB also describes procedures for transponder testing after the modification is complete.

FAA's Determination of an Unsafe Condition and Proposed Actions

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other NARCO Avionics Inc. AT150 transponders of the same type design, the proposed AD would require:

- For transponders not modified in accordance with NARCO Avionics Inc. service bulletin (SB) AT150 No. 1, dated July 29, 1977, modification of "Chassis Level A" transponders, serial numbers 10000 through 12598 inclusive, by adding a resistor and transistor to the circuit board, changing transponder to "Chassis Level B", and transponder testing after the modification; AND
- For transponders modified in accordance with NARCO Avionics Inc. SB AT150 No. 1, dated July 29, 1977, changing transponder to "Chassis Level B", and transponder testing.

The actions would be required to be done in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

Economic Analysis

The FAA estimates that 2,598 NARCO Avionics Inc. "Chassis Level A" AT150 transponders could be affected by this proposal if all were installed in aircraft of U.S. registry. Approximately one work hour per transponder will be needed to perform the proposed actions,