

800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(f) This amendment becomes effective on April 4, 2003.

**Note 4:** The subject of this AD is addressed in Transport Canada (Canada) AD No. CF-2001-05R1, dated February 13, 2002.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 14, 2003.

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-NM-353-AD; Amendment 39-13073; AD 2003-04-24]

**RIN 2120-AA64**

#### **Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model 717-200 Airplanes**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Final rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain McDonnell Douglas Model 717-200 airplanes. This action requires a one-time inspection for cracking of the support fitting assemblies and stop pads of the main spoiler actuators, and follow-on actions. This action is necessary to find and fix cracking of the support fitting assemblies of the main spoiler actuator, which could result in damage of adjacent structure such as the rear spar or upper skin panel, and consequent reduced structural integrity of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

**DATES:** Effective March 17, 2003.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 17, 2003.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before April 29, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-353-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-iarcomment@faa.gov](mailto:9-anm-iarcomment@faa.gov). Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2002-NM-353-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 for Windows or ASCII text.

The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Aircraft Group, Long Beach Division, 3855 Lakewood Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90846, Attention: Data and Service Management, Dept. C1-L5A (D800-0024). This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; at the FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Maureen Moreland, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120L, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712-4137; telephone (562) 627-5238; fax (562) 627-5210.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The FAA has received reports indicating that cracking has been found on a support fitting assembly for the main spoiler actuators on several McDonnell Douglas Model 717-200 airplanes. On one airplane, a crack completely separated a forward attachment lug from the support fitting. This allowed the lug to move forward and contact and damage the rear spar of the wing, which resulted in cracking of the spar and fuel seepage. On another airplane, the support fitting cracked laterally across the center of the fitting. Investigation revealed that the stop pad had been broken off at the pad's aft attachment hole, and contact occurred between the spoiler actuator and fitting. While the root-cause of these cracks is unknown, one possibility is improper rigging of the spoiler hold-down actuator, which could cause additional loading and fatigue in the support fitting. Cracking of a support fitting assembly for a main spoiler actuator, if not corrected, could result in damage of adjacent structure such as the rear spar or upper skin panel, and consequent reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

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

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 717-57A0013, dated December 20, 2002. That service bulletin describes procedures for a one-time visual inspection for cracking of the support fitting assemblies and stop pads of the main spoiler actuators. For support fitting assemblies on which no cracking is found, the service bulletin describes procedures for a follow-on test of the rigging of the spoiler hold-down actuators to ensure that the actuators are rigged correctly. For cracked support fitting assemblies or stop pads, the service bulletin specifies to contact Boeing for instructions for repair and additional inspections.

#### **Explanation of the Requirements of the Rule**

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design, this AD is being issued to find and fix cracking of the support fitting assemblies of the main spoiler actuator, which could result in damage of adjacent structure such as the rear spar or upper skin panel, and consequent reduced structural integrity of the airplane. This AD requires accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously, except as discussed under the heading "Differences Between This AD and the Service Bulletin." This AD also requires that operators report results of inspection findings to the FAA and to Boeing.

#### **Interim Action**

This is considered to be interim action. The inspection reports that are required by this AD will enable the manufacturer to obtain better insight into the nature, cause, and extent of the cracking, and eventually to develop final action to address the unsafe condition. Once final action has been identified, the FAA may consider further rulemaking.

#### **Clarification of Inspection Type**

The service bulletin identifies the inspection for cracking or other discrepancy as a "visual" inspection. We have determined that the inspection described in the service bulletin constitutes a "detailed" inspection. Note 2 of this AD defines such an inspection.

#### **Differences Between This AD and the Service Bulletin**

Operators should note that, although the service bulletin specifies that the