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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-NM-336-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (EMBRAER) Model EMB-135 and -145 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 EMBRAER Model EMB-135 and -145 series airplanes. This proposal would require operators to inspect the pitot-true air temperature (TAT) relays and the full authority digital engine control (FADEC) electronic interface resistor modules to detect contamination; perform corrective action if necessary; clean the relay/connector pins and sockets; modify the seal between the cockpit console panels and the storm window; and/or install a new protective frame (protective sheets) at the cockpit relay supports. This action is necessary to detect and correct oxidation of the pitot-TAT relay, which could result in increased resistance and overheating of the relay and consequent smoke in the cockpit; and to detect and correct oxidation of the FADEC electronic interface resistor modules, which could result in in-flight uncommanded engine power roll back to idle. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 31, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-336-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-336-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 the proposed rule may be obtained from Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (EMBRAER), P.O. Box 343—CEP 12.225, Sao Jose dos Campos—SP, Brazil. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert D. Breneman, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-1263; 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-336-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-336-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Departamento de Aviacao Civil (DAC), which is the airworthiness authority for Brazil, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain EMBRAER Model EMB-135 and -145 series airplanes. The DAC reports several occurrences of smoke in the cockpit during flight, due to oxidation in the pitot-true air temperature (TAT) #2 relay caused by water leakage from the storm window located above the relay console. This condition, if not corrected, could result in increased resistance and overheating of the relay and consequent smoke in the cockpit.

In addition, the DAC reports a related incident in which oxidation at the connections of the full authority digital engine control (FADEC) interface resistor modules caused an in-flight uncommanded engine power back to idle. The oxidation was caused by water leakage from the storm window located above the console panel. This condition, if not corrected, could result in in-flight uncommanded engine power roll back to idle.

The cockpit design on Model EMB-135 and -145 series airplanes is identical; therefore, both airplane models are subject to the identified unsafe condition.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued EMBRAER Service Bulletin 145-30-0032, Change 02, dated December 3, 2001, which describes procedures for inspecting the pitot-TAT relays to detect contamination; cleaning the relay pins and sockets; replacing any contaminated relay, relay socket, or relay socket contact with a new part; modifying the seal between the cockpit console panels and the storm window; and installing new protective sheets at the relay supports.

The manufacturer has also issued EMBRAER Service Bulletin 145-76-