

(1) If the material thickness of the flanges is within the limits [Area 1: greater than or equal to 0.56 mm (0.022 inch); Area 2: greater than or equal to 0.48 mm (0.019 inch)] specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-36-0033 (for Model A300 series airplanes), A300-36-6024 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes), or A310-36-2032 (for Model A310 series airplanes), all dated October 17, 1994; as applicable: Prior to further flight, perform an inspection using a magnifying glass or appropriate gauge to detect cracks of the inner and outer surfaces of the flanges, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(i) If no crack is found, and the material thickness of all flanges is within the limits [Area 1: greater than or equal to 0.9 mm (0.035 inch)] specified in the applicable service bulletin: No further action is required by this AD.

(ii) If no crack is found, and the material thickness of any flange is outside the limits [Area 1: less than 0.9 mm (0.035 inch)] specified in the applicable service bulletin:

Repeat the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD at the time specified in the applicable service bulletin.

(iii) If any crack is found: Prior to further flight, accomplish either paragraph (a)(1)(iii)(A) or (a)(1)(iii)(B) of this AD.

(A) Replace the duct with a new or serviceable duct in accordance with the applicable service bulletin. Or

(B) Operate the airplane with the bleed air system of the APU inoperative, in accordance with the provisions and limitations specified in the operator's FAA-approved Master Minimum Equipment List (MMEL).

(2) If the material thickness of any flange is outside the limits [Area 1: less than 0.56 mm (0.022 inch); Area 2: less than 0.48 mm (0.019 inch)] specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-36-0033 (for Model A300 series airplanes), A300-36-6024 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes), and A310-36-2032 (for Model A310 series airplanes), all dated October 17, 1994; as applicable: Prior to further flight, accomplish either paragraph (a)(1)(iii)(A) or (a)(1)(iii)(B) of this AD.

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM-116.

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 95-182-184(B), dated September 27, 1995.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 2, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-477 Filed 1-7-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-72-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Turbopropeller-Powered McDonnell Douglas Model DC-3 and DC-3C 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 McDonnell Douglas Model DC-3 and DC-3C series airplanes. This proposal would require revising the Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) to modify the limitation that prohibits positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop during flight, and to provide a statement of the consequences of positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop during flight. This proposal is prompted by incidents and accidents involving airplanes equipped with turboprop engines in which the ground propeller beta range was used improperly during flight. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent loss of airplane controllability, or engine overspeed and consequent loss of engine power caused by the power levers being positioned below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 9, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-72-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Frank Hoerman, Aerospace Engineer, Flight Test Branch, ANM-160L, FAA,

Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712; telephone (562) 527-5371; fax (562) 625-5210.

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 notice 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 notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 97-NM-72-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-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-72-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

In recent years, the FAA has received reports of 14 incidents and/or accidents involving intentional or inadvertent operation of the propellers in the ground beta range during flight on airplanes equipped with turboprop engines. (For the purposes of this proposal, beta is defined as the range of propeller operation intended for use during taxi, ground idle, or reverse operations as controlled by the power lever settings aft of the flight idle stop.)

Five of the fourteen in-flight beta occurrences were classified as accidents. In each of these five cases, operation of the propellers in the beta range occurred during flight. Operation

of the propellers in the beta range during flight, if not prevented, could result in loss of airplane controllability, or engine overspeed with consequent loss of engine power.

Communication between the FAA and the public during a meeting held on June 11–12, 1996, in Seattle, Washington, revealed a lack of consistency of the information on in-flight beta operation contained in the FAA-approved Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) for airplanes that are not certificated for in-flight operation with the power levers below the flight idle stop. (Airplanes that are certificated for this type of operation are not affected by the above-referenced conditions.)

FAA's Determinations

The FAA has examined the circumstances and reviewed all available information related to the incidents and accidents described previously. The FAA finds that the Limitations Section of the AFM's for certain airplanes must be revised to prohibit positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight, and to provide a statement of the consequences of positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop. The FAA has determined that the affected airplanes include those that are equipped with turboprop engines and that are not certificated for in-flight operation with the power levers below the flight idle stop. Since turbopropeller-powered McDonnell Douglas Model DC-3 and DC-3C series airplanes meet these criteria, the FAA finds that the AFM for these airplanes must be revised to include the limitation and statement of consequences described previously.

Additionally, the FAA notes that for certain airplanes on which Rolls-Royce Dart 510 engines are installed, the operations manual refers to "ground fine pitch" as well as "operations below the flight idle stop." Therefore, the FAA has included a reference to "ground fine pitch" in paragraph (a) of this proposed AD.

Explanation of the Requirements of the Proposed AD

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop in other turbopropeller-powered McDonnell Douglas Model DC-3 and DC-3C series airplanes of the same type design, the proposed AD would require revising the Limitations Section of the AFM to modify the limitation that prohibits the positioning of the power levers below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight, and to add a statement of the consequences

of positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight.

Interim Action

This is considered interim action until final action is identified, at which time the FAA may consider further rulemaking.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 21 turbopropeller-powered McDonnell Douglas Model DC3 and DC-3C series airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 5 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$300, or \$60 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 AD were not adopted.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

McDonnell Douglas: Docket 97–NM–72–AD.

Applicability: All turbopropeller-powered McDonnell Douglas Model DC-3 and DC-3C series airplanes, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (c) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent loss of airplane controllability, or engine overspeed and consequent loss of engine power caused by the power levers being positioned below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight, accomplish the following:

(a) For turbopropeller-powered McDonnell Douglas Model DC-3 and DC-3C series airplanes on which Rolls-Royce Dart 510 engines are installed: Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, revise the Limitations Section of the FAA-approved Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) to include the following statements. This action may be accomplished by inserting a copy of this AD into the AFM.

Positioning of power levers below the flight idle stop (i.e., including ground fine pitch) while the airplane is in flight is prohibited. Such positioning may lead to loss of airplane control or may result in an overspeed condition and consequent loss of engine power.

(b) For turbopropeller-powered McDonnell Douglas Model DC-3 and DC-3C series airplanes other than those identified in paragraph (a) of this AD: Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, revise the Limitations Section of the FAA-approved Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) to include the following statements. This action may be

accomplished by inserting a copy of this AD into the AFM.

Positioning of power levers below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight is prohibited. Such positioning may lead to loss of airplane control or may result in an overspeed condition and consequent loss of engine power.

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Operations Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Los Angeles ACO.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Los Angeles ACO.

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 2, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-476 Filed 1-7-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-141-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; British Aerospace (Jetstream) Model 4101 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 British Aerospace (Jetstream) Model 4101 airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive detailed visual inspections to detect cracking or other damage of certain diaphragm support structures of the forward equipment compartment; and repair, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct failure of

the two diaphragms that support the upper structure of the forward equipment compartment, which could accelerate fatigue damage in adjacent structure and result in reduced structural integrity of the airframe.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 9, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-141-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from AI(R) American Support, Inc., 13850 Mclearen Road, Herndon, Virginia 20171. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2110; 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 notice 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 notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to

Docket Number 97-NM-141-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. 97-NM-141-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which is the airworthiness authority for the United Kingdom, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain British Aerospace (Jetstream) Model 4101 airplanes. The CAA advises that, during fatigue testing, cracks were found in the two diaphragms that support the upper structure of the forward equipment compartment. This condition, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could accelerate fatigue damage in adjacent structure and result in reduced structural integrity of the airframe.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued Jetstream Alert Service Bulletin J41-A53-023, dated December 2, 1996, which describes procedures for repetitive detailed visual inspections to detect cracking or other damage of certain diaphragms that support the upper structure of the forward equipment compartment; and repair, if necessary. The CAA classified this alert service bulletin as mandatory and issued British airworthiness directive 007-12-96, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in the United Kingdom.

FAA's Conclusions

This airplane model is manufactured in the United Kingdom and is 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 CAA has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the CAA, 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.