

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

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

Authority: 49 USC 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

Grob Luft-Und Raumfahrt, GMBH. (GROB):
Docket No. 96-CE-40-AD.

Applicability: Models G 109 and G 109B sailplanes, all serial numbers, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each sailplane 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 sailplanes 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 (e) 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 in the body of this AD, unless already accomplished.

To prevent failure of the landing gear legs and possible loss of the sailplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Within the next 120 calendar days after the effective date of this AD, inspect the retaining bars chamfer on both landing gear legs for a minimum of 3.0 millimeters (mm) radius in accordance with the "Actions" section, paragraph A3 in Grob Service Bulletin (SB) 817-39, dated January 4, 1994.

(1) If the chamfer radius is 3.0 mm or greater, prior to further flight, glue a reinforcing plastic strip (part number (P/N) 109-5000.07) to the retaining bar in accordance with the "Actions" section, paragraph A4 in Grob SB 817-39, dated January 4, 1994.

(2) If the chamfer radius is less than 3.0 mm, prior to further flight, replace with a new improved retaining bar (P/N 109-5000.02), and install the plastic strip (P/N 109-5000.07) in accordance with the "Actions" section, paragraph A5 in Grob SB 817-39, dated January 1994.

(b) For sailplanes not equipped with landing gear legs, P/N 109B-5001.01/1, within the next 2,000 sailplane landings or 1,000 hours TIS after the effective date, whichever occurs first, inspect the landing gear legs for cracks (using the magnetic particle or X-ray analysis method) in accordance with the "Actions" section, paragraph B9 in Grob SB 817-39, dated January 4, 1994.

Note 2: Landing gear legs (P/N 109B-5001.01/1) have a "0" stamped on the front side of the leg for easy identification.

(1) If there are cracks less than or equal to 0.5 mm, prior to further flight, polish the existing legs or replace the legs with P/N 109B-5001.01/1 in accordance with the "Actions" section, paragraph B10 in Grob SB 817-39, dated January 4, 1994.

(2) If the polished landing gear legs measures less than 13.0 mm, prior to further flight, replace the landing gear legs with P/N 109B-5001.01/1 in accordance with the "Actions" section, paragraph B10 in Grob SB 817-39, dated January 4, 1994.

(3) If no cracks are found, or the cracks are less than 0.5 mm, and the thickness of the landing gear legs is equal to or greater than 13.0 mm, repetitively inspect the landing gear legs for cracks every 1,000 landings or 500 hours TIS, whichever occurs first, in accordance with the "Actions" section, paragraph B12 in Grob SB 817-39, dated January 4, 1994.

(4) If during any of the repetitive inspections, the legs have previously been polished and new cracks are found, prior to further flight, replace the legs with P/N 109B-5001.01/1 in accordance with the "Actions" section, paragraph B12 in Grob SB 817-39, dated January 4, 1994.

(c) Replacement of the landing gear legs with P/N 109B-5000.01/1 terminates the repetitive inspections required by this AD and Grob SB 817-39, dated January 4, 1994.

(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 sailplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(e) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the initial or repetitive compliance times that provides an equivalent level of safety may be approved by the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, 1201 Walnut, suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. The request shall be forwarded through an appropriate FAA Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Small Airplane Directorate.

(f) All persons affected by this directive may obtain copies of the documents referred to herein upon request to Grob Luft-und Raumfahrt, GmbH., D-8939, Mattsies-am Flugplatz, Germany or may examine these documents at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on February 10, 1997.

Henry A. Armstrong,

Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-CE-69-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; The New Piper Aircraft, Inc. (Formerly Piper Aircraft Corporation) PA-31, PA-31P, PA-31T, and PA-42 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM).

SUMMARY: Recently, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) that applied to The New Piper Aircraft, Inc. (Piper) PA-31, PA-31P, and PA-31T series airplanes. The NPRM would have required incorporating a main landing gear (MLG) inboard door hinge and attachment angle assembly, part number (P/N) 47529-32, as terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirement of Airworthiness Directive (AD) 80-26-05. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has received a comment to the NPRM that specifies fatigue cracking of the P/N 47529-32 MLG inboard door hinge and attachment angle assembly on the affected airplanes. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reviewed manufacturer's service history and service difficulty reports in the FAA database associated with the P/N 47529-32 main landing gear hinge assembly, and has determined that more information and analysis are needed to propose any AD action. The purpose of this ANPRM is to seek comments from interested persons regarding the service history of P/N 47529-32 hinge assemblies. All comments will be evaluated by the FAA and the FAA will research the situation to decide whether additional rulemaking is needed.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 16, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-CE-69-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. Comments may be inspected at this location between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, holidays excepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Christina Marsh, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Atlanta Aircraft Certification Office, Campus Building, 1701 Columbia Avenue, suite 2-160, College Park, Georgia 30337-2748; telephone (404) 305-7362; facsimile (404) 305-7348.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Comments Invited**

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of any proposed rulemaking actions that may occur as a result of this ANPRM by submitting such written data or views 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 any proposed rulemaking is initiated.

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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this document 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 No. 96-CE-69-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of ANPRM

Any person may obtain a copy of this ANPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-CE-69-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Discussion

A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an AD that would apply to Piper Models PA-31, PA-31-325, PA-31-350, PA-31P, PA-31T1, and PA-31T airplanes was published in the Federal Register as a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on December 7, 1995 (60 FR 62774). The action proposed to supersede AD 80-26-05, Amendment 39-3994, with a new AD that would (1) retain the requirement of repetitively inspecting the MLG inboard door hinges and attachment angles for cracks, and replacing any cracked MLG inboard door hinge or attachment angle; and (2) require incorporating a MLG inboard door hinge and attachment angle assembly of improved design (part number 47529-32) or FAA-approved hinges and angles made of steel as terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirement.

Accomplishment of the proposed inspections would be in accordance with Piper Service Bulletin (SB) No. 682, dated July 24, 1980.

Explanation of Comments Received

The comment received on the NPRM contained information that the improved hinge assemblies, part number (P/N) 47529-32, are also susceptible to fatigue cracking, and that installing this assembly should not eliminate the need for the repetitive inspections currently required by AD 80-26-05. The commenter states that its airplane fleet has experienced three failures and three incidents related to fatigue cracking of the P/N 47529-32 hinge assemblies.

The FAA conducted a review of the manufacturer's service history and service difficulty reports in the FAA database associated with the P/N 47529-32 main landing gear hinge assembly. Based on a review of this information, including the information received from the commenter, the FAA has determined that more information and analysis are needed before hinge assembly replacements are mandated through an AD as terminating action for the repetitive inspections currently required by AD 80-26-05.

FAA's Determination of the Best Action To Take

With the above information in mind, the FAA is issuing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) to provide an opportunity for the general public to participate in the decision as to what course of rulemaking the FAA should take. Interested persons are encouraged to provide information that describes what they consider the best action (if any) to be taken regarding the P/N 47529-32 main landing gear hinge assembly. The FAA is especially interested in comments and viewpoints on the following:

1. What is the Model designation of your airplane, serial number, and total hours time-in-service (TIS)?
2. What P/N MLG inboard door hinge assemblies are installed in the airplane?
3. How many hours TIS are on the MLG inboard door hinge assemblies?
4. Have you ever had to replace a P/N 47529-32 MLG inboard door hinge assembly on the airplane? If so, what was the reason and approximately how many hours TIS were on each replaced assembly?

Additional Helpful Information

The following information shows the part numbers (P/N) for MLG inboard door hinge assemblies that each Piper

PA-31, PA-31P, PA-31T, and PA-42 series airplane was equipped with at manufacture:

Airplanes Equipped With Piper P/N 46653-00 (embossed forging number 46652)

Models PA-31, PA-31-300, and PA-31-325 airplanes, serial numbers 31-2 through 31-8012077;

Model PA-31-350 airplanes, serial numbers 31-5001 through 31-8052168;

Model PA-31P airplanes, serial numbers 31P-3 through 31P-7730012;

PA-31T airplanes, serial numbers 31T-7400002 through 31T-8020076; and

PA-31T1 airplanes, serial numbers 31T-7804001 through 31T-8004040.

Airplanes Equipped With Piper P/N 47529-32 (embossed forging number 46652-2)

Models PA-31, PA-31-300, and PA-31-325 airplanes, serial numbers 31-8012078 through 31-8312019;

Model PA-31-350 airplanes, serial numbers 31-8052169 through 31-8553002;

Model PA-31T airplanes, serial numbers 31T-8020077 through 31T-8120104;

Model PA-31T1 airplanes, serial numbers 31T-8004041 through 31T-8104073, 31T-8104101; 31T-8304001 through 31T-8304003; and 31T-1104004 through 31T-1104017;

Model PA-31T2 airplanes, serial numbers 31T-8166001 through 31T-8166076, and 31T-1166001 through 31T-1166008;

Model PA-31T3 airplanes, serial numbers 31T-8275001 through 31T-8475001, and 31T-5575001;

Model PA-31P-350 airplanes, serial numbers 31P-8414050;

Models PA-42 and PA-42-720 airplanes, serial numbers 42-7800001 through 42-8301002, and 42-5501003 through 42-5501060; and

Model PA-42-1000 airplanes, serial numbers 42-5527001 through 42-5527040.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on February 11, 1997.

Henry A. Armstrong,
*Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.*

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