

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-NM-273-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 737-200C Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the superseding of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to all Boeing Model 737-200C series airplanes, that currently requires a one-time external detailed visual inspection to detect cracks of the fuselage skin in the lower lobe cargo compartment; repetitive internal detailed visual inspections to detect cracks of the frames in the lower lobe cargo compartment; and repair of cracked parts. That AD also provides for an optional preventative modification that constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections. This action would require accomplishment of the previously optional terminating modification. This proposal is prompted by reports of cracking in the body frames between stringers 19 left and 25 left and at body stations 360 to 500B. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent opening or loss of the cargo door during flight, and consequent rapid decompression of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 18, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-273-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 Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nenita Odesa, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2557; fax (425) 227-1181.

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 98-NM-273-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.

98-NM-273-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

On June 25, 1993, the FAA issued AD 93-13-02, amendment 39-8615 (58 FR 36863, July 9, 1993), applicable to all Boeing Model 737-200C series airplanes, to require a one-time external detailed visual inspection to detect cracks of the fuselage skin in the lower lobe cargo compartment; repetitive internal detailed visual inspections to detect cracks of the frames in the lower lobe cargo compartment; and repair of cracked parts. That AD also provides for an optional preventative modification that constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections. That action was prompted by reports of cracking in the body frames between stringers 19 left and 25 left and at body stations 360 to 500B. The requirements of that AD are intended to prevent a cargo door from opening while the airplane is in flight, which could result in rapid decompression of the airplane.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

When AD 93-13-02 was issued, it contained a provision for an optional preventative modification that involves installation of doublers on the frames located between stringers 19 left and 25 left and at body stations 360 to 500B, which, if accomplished, constitutes terminating action for the required repetitive inspections. This action proposes to require accomplishment of the previously optional terminating modification in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 737-53A1160, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1993. (That service bulletin was referenced as the appropriate source of service information in AD 93-13-02 for accomplishment of the modification.)

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other products of this same type design, the proposed AD would supersede AD 93-13-02 to continue to require a one-time external detailed visual inspection to detect cracks of the fuselage skin in the lower lobe cargo compartment; repetitive internal detailed visual inspections to detect cracks of the frames in the lower lobe cargo compartment; and repair of cracked parts. In addition, the proposed

AD would require accomplishment of the previously optional terminating modification.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Service Bulletin

Operators should note that this AD proposes to require the modification of certain fuselage frames, as described in Boeing Service Bulletin 737-53A1160, Revision 1, as terminating action for the repetitive inspections. Incorporation of this modification was classified as optional in that service bulletin.

The FAA has determined that long-term continued operational safety will be better assured by design changes to remove the source of the problem, rather than by repetitive inspections. Long-term inspections may not be providing the degree of safety assurance necessary for the transport airplane fleet. This, coupled with a better understanding of the human factors associated with numerous continual inspections, has led the FAA to consider placing less emphasis on inspections and more emphasis on design improvements. The proposed modification requirement is in consonance with these conditions.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 90 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 18 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

The inspections that are currently required by AD 93-13-02, and retained in this proposed AD, take approximately 12 work hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the currently required inspections on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$12,960, or \$720 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

The new modification that is proposed in this AD action would take approximately 160 work hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$5,500 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the modification proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$271,800, or \$15,100 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the current or 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 removing amendment 39-8615 (58 FR 36863, July 9, 1993), and by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD), to read as follows:

Boeing: Docket 98-NM-273-AD. Supersedes AD 93-13-02, Amendment 39-8615.

Applicability: All Model 737-200C 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 (d)(1) 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 opening or loss of the cargo door during flight, and consequent rapid decompression of the airplane, accomplish the following:

Restatement of Requirements of AD 93-13-02

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 29,000 flight cycles or within 250 flight cycles after August 9, 1993 (the effective date AD 93-13-02, amendment 39-8615), whichever occurs later, accomplish an external detailed visual inspection to detect cracks of the fuselage skin between stringers 19 left and 25 left and at body stations 360 to 540, in accordance with Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737-53A1160, dated October 24, 1991; or Boeing Service Bulletin 737-53A1160, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1993. If any crack is found, prior to further flight, accomplish the requirements of paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this AD.

(1) Perform an internal detailed visual inspection to detect cracks of the frames between stringers 19 left and 25 left and at body stations 360 to 500B, in accordance with either service bulletin.

(2) Repair all cracks in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

(b) Within 3,000 flight cycles after completing the requirements of paragraph (a) of this AD, unless accomplished within the last 6,000 flight cycles prior to August 9, 1993, perform an internal detailed visual inspection to detect cracks of the frames between stringers 19 left and 25 left and at body stations 360 to 500B, in accordance with Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737-53A1160, dated October 24, 1991; or Boeing Service Bulletin 737-53A1160, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1993. Thereafter, repeat the internal detailed visual inspection at intervals not to exceed 9,000 flight cycles. If any crack is found, prior to further flight, accomplish the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) If any crack is found that does not exceed the limits specified in the Boeing 737 Structural Repair Manual (SRM), repair the crack in accordance with the Boeing 737 SRM. Repeat the internal detailed visual inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 9,000 flight cycles.

(2) If any crack is found that exceeds the limits specified in the Boeing 737 SRM, repair the crack in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO. Repeat the internal detailed visual inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 9,000 flight cycles.

New Requirements of This AD

(c) Prior to the accumulation of 75,000 total flight cycles, or within 3,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, install doublers on the frames located between stringers 19 left and 25 left

and at body stations 360 to 500B, in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 737-53A1160, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1993. Accomplishment of this modification constitutes terminating action for the requirements of this AD.

(d)(1) 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, Seattle ACO. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

(d)(2) Alternative methods of compliance approved previously in accordance with AD 93-13-02, amendment 39-8615, are approved as alternative methods of compliance with this AD.

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

(e) 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 26, 1999.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-2271 Filed 1-29-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 71

[Airspace Docket No. 99-AAL-1]

Proposed Revision of Class D Airspace; Fairbanks, Eielson Air Force Base (AFB), AK; Proposed Revision and Establishment of Class E Airspace; Fairbanks, Eielson AFB, AK

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: This action proposes to revise Class D airspace operational times, revise current Class E airspace, and establish additional Class E airspace at Eielson AFB, AK. The United States Air Force (USAF) has requested this action in response to a critical Air Traffic Control (ATC) controller shortage throughout the USAF and an airspace review after redesigning their instrument approaches. Adoption of this proposal would result in the provision of a part time operation of the Class D airspace; revision of the current Class E airspace; and when the tower is closed, establishment of additional Class E

airspace for Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) and Special Visual Flight Rules (VFR) operations at Eielson AFB, AK.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before March 18, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Send comments on the proposal in triplicate to: Manager, Operations Branch, AAL-530, Docket No. 99-AAL-1, Federal Aviation Administration, 222 West 7th Avenue, Box 14, Anchorage, AK 99513-7587.

The official docket may be examined in the Office of the Regional Counsel for the Alaskan Region at the same address.

An informal docket may also be examined during normal business hours in the Office of the Manager, Operations Branch, Air Traffic Division, at the address shown above and on the Internet at Alaskan Region's homepage at <http://www.alaska.faa.gov/at> or at address <http://162.58.28.41/at>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Derril Bergt, Operations Branch, AAL-535, Federal Aviation Administration, 222 West 7th Avenue, Box 14, Anchorage, AK 99513-7587; telephone number (907) 271-2796; fax: (907) 271-2850; email: Derril.Bergt@faa.gov. Internet address: <http://www.alaska.faa.gov/at> or at address <http://162.58.28.41/at>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested parties are invited to participate in this proposed rulemaking by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Comments that provide the factual basis supporting the views and suggestions presented are particularly helpful in developing reasoned regulatory decisions on the proposal. Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, aeronautical, economic, environmental, and energy-related aspects of the proposal. Communications should identify the airspace docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address listed above. Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments on this notice must submit with those comments a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Airspace Docket No. 99-AAL-1." The postcard will be date/time stamped and returned to the commenter. All communications received on or before the specified closing date for comments will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposal contained in this notice may be changed in light of comments received. All comments submitted will be available for

examination in the Operations Branch, Air Traffic Division, Federal Aviation Administration, 222 West 7th Avenue, Box 14, Anchorage, AK, both before and after the closing date for comments. A report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerned with this rulemaking will be filed in the docket.

Availability of NPRM's

Any person may obtain a copy of this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) by submitting a request to the Operations Branch, AAL-530, Federal Aviation Administration, 222 West 7th Avenue, Box 14, Anchorage, AK 99513-7587. Communications must identify the notice number of this NPRM. Persons interested in being placed on a mailing list for future NPRM's should also request a copy of Advisory Circular No. 11-2A which describes the application procedure.

Internet users may reach the **Federal Register's** web page for access to recently published rulemaking documents at http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces/aces140.html.

An electronic copy of this document may be downloaded, using a modem and suitable communications software, from the FAA regulations section of the Fedworld electronic bulletin board service (telephone: 703-321-3339) or the **Federal Register's** electronic bulleting board service (telephone: 202-512-1661).

The Proposal

The FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 71 by revising the Class D airspace operational times at Eielson AFB, AK, due to a critical ATC controller shortage. Currently, the Class D airspace is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This action proposes to decrease the physical dimensions of the Class D airspace from a 5.2 mile radius to a 4.7 mile radius. The following phraseology would be added to the end of the Class D airspace description: "This Class D airspace area is effective during the specific dates and times established in advance by a Notice to Airmen. The effective date and time will thereafter be continuously published in the Airport/Facility Directory." This action would allow part time operation of the Airport Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) at Eielson AFB, AK. The USAF has proposed the Eielson AFB tower be closed between 2300 and 0700 (local times). During this closure, the Class D airspace would convert to Class E airspace which this proposal is establishing for IFR and Special VFR operations. The existing Class E airspace