

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 9, 1999.

John J. Hickey,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-NM-06-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 757-200 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 Boeing Model 757-200 series airplanes. This proposal would require modification of the off-wing emergency evacuation slide system. This proposal is prompted by reports that a certain type of off-wing escape slide aboard several airplanes deployed and separated from the airplane during flight. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent separation of the emergency evacuation slide from the airplane, which could result in damage to the fuselage and unavailability of an escape slide during an emergency evacuation.

DATES: Comments must be received by April 5, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-NM-06-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: Keith Ladderud, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle

Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2780; 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 99-NM-06-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. 99-NM-06-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports indicating that in-flight deployment and separation of the off-wing emergency evacuation slide occurred on several Boeing Model 757-200 series airplanes. In each of these incidents, the slide compartment door opened, the slide carrier rotated out, and the slide deployed. In addition, the deployed slide was torn off by the airstream and caused damage to the fuselage located aft of the slide compartment. In one incident, the inboard flaps also were damaged. These deployments are attributed to the fact that, during maintenance, the slide compartment door was not properly latched following

replacement of the slide. Further analysis revealed that a visual inspection of the door latch to verify that the latch is fastened is difficult; the aft location of the door sensor may not show that the door is not latched; and incorrect installation of the lockbase retainer on the door latch tube can prevent locking the door in the latched position. These conditions, if not corrected, could result in in-flight deployment and separation of the emergency evacuation slide from the airplane, damage to the fuselage, and unavailability of an escape slide during an emergency evacuation.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0182, Revision 1, dated June 12, 1997; and Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0200, dated January 21, 1999; which describe procedures for modification of the left and right off-wing emergency evacuation slide systems.

The modification described in Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0182, Revision 1, includes replacement of the bearings and lockbase retainer in the compartment door latch assembly with new bearings and a new lockbase retainer, relocation and adjustment of the sensor target and the sensor proximity switch to forward locations on the evacuation slide compartment doors, and a functional test following modification.

The modification described in Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0200 includes installation of a bumper assembly on the off-wing slide carrier and installation of new placards in the area of the maintenance access door.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

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 require modification of the off-wing emergency evacuation slide system. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletins described previously, except as discussed below.

Difference Between Proposed Rule and Service Bulletins

Operators should note that, although the service bulletins recommend accomplishment of the modification at the next scheduled maintenance, or as

soon as manpower and materials are available, the FAA has determined that an 18-month compliance time would address the identified unsafe condition in a timely manner. In developing an appropriate compliance time for this AD, the FAA considered not only the manufacturer's recommendation, but the degree of urgency associated with addressing the subject unsafe condition, the average utilization of the affected fleet, and the time necessary to perform the modification. In light of all of these factors, the FAA finds an 18-month compliance time for completion of the proposed modification to be warranted, in that it represents an appropriate interval of time allowable for affected airplanes to continue to operate without compromising safety.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 497 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 435 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

For airplanes identified in Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0182, Revision 1 (301 U.S.-registered airplanes), it would take approximately 40 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed modification of the door latch system, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$1,450 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed modification on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$1,158,850, or \$3,850 per airplane.

For airplanes identified in Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0200 (435 U.S.-registered airplanes), it would take approximately 4 work hours to accomplish the proposed installation of the bumper assembly and placards, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$457 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed installation on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$303,195, or \$697 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are 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:

Boeing: Docket 99-NM-06-AD.

Applicability: Model 757-200 series airplanes equipped with off-wing emergency evacuation slides, as listed in Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0182, Revision 1, dated June 12, 1997, or Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0200, dated January 21, 1999; 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 (b) 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 separation of the emergency evacuation slide from the airplane, which could result in damage to the fuselage and unavailability of an escape slide during an emergency evacuation, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 18 months after the effective date of this AD: Modify the left and right off-wing emergency evacuation slide systems by accomplishment of paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) For airplanes listed in Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0182, Revision 1, dated June 12, 1997: Modify the door latch system of the left and right off-wing emergency evacuation slide systems in accordance with the service bulletin.

Note 2: Modification of the door latch system of the off-wing emergency evacuation slide system, prior to the effective date of this AD, in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0182, dated October 10, 1996, is considered acceptable for compliance with paragraph (a)(1) of this AD.

(2) For airplanes listed in Boeing Service Bulletin 757-25-0200, dated January 21, 1999: Install a bumper assembly on the bottom of the left and right off-wing escape slide carriers, and install new placards in the area of the maintenance access door, in accordance with the service bulletin.

(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, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), 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, Seattle ACO.

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

(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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 9, 1999.

John J. Hickey,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.
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