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

**Special Flight Permits**

(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 January 21, 2000.

**Vi L. Lipski,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-2007 Filed 1-31-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 39**

[Docket No. 99-NM-268-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

**Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 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 MD-11 series airplanes. This proposal would require a detailed visual inspection of the external power feeder cables in the forward cargo compartment between certain stations to detect chafing or damage; repair, if necessary; and installation of spiral wrap. This proposal is prompted by reports of failure of the external power feeder cable due to being chafed during maintenance. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent chafing and damage to external ground power feeder cables, which could result in electrical arcing and consequent structural damage and

smoke and fire in the forward cargo compartment.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by March 17, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-NM-268-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 Aircraft Group, Long Beach Division, 3855 Lakewood Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90846, Attention: Technical Publications Business Administration, Dept. C1-L51 (2-60). This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Brett Portwood, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM-130L, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712-4137; telephone (562) 627-5350; fax (562) 627-5210.

**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 99-NM-268-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-268-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

**Supplementary Information**

As part of its practice of re-examining all aspects of the service experience of a particular aircraft whenever an accident occurs, the FAA has become aware of reports of failure of the external ground power feeder cable on McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplanes. Investigation revealed that the cables were chafed during removal of the sump panels of the cargo floor during prior maintenance visits. This condition, if not corrected, could result in chafing and damage to external ground power feeder cables, which could result in electrical arcing and consequent structural damage and smoke and fire in the forward cargo compartment.

This incident is not considered to be related to an accident that occurred off the coast of Nova Scotia involving a McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplane. The cause of that accident is still under investigation.

**Other Relevant Rulemaking**

The FAA, in conjunction with Boeing and operators of Model MD-11 series airplanes, is continuing to review all aspects of the service history of those airplanes to identify potential unsafe conditions and to take appropriate corrective actions. This proposed airworthiness directive (AD) is one of a series of actions identified during that process. The process is continuing and the FAA may consider additional rulemaking actions as further results of the review become available.

**Explanation of Relevant Service Information**

The FAA has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD11-24A008, Revision 01, dated December 2, 1999, which describes procedures for a detailed visual inspection of the external power feeder cables in the forward cargo compartment between stations

Y=879.000 and Y=1019.000 left of centerline to detect chafing or damage; repair, if necessary; and installation of spiral wrap. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin 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, this proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously.

### Cost Impact

There are approximately 38 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 14 airplanes (3 airplanes identified as Group 1 and 11 airplanes identified as Group 2) of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

For Group 1 airplanes, the FAA estimates that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, and approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed installation of spiral wrap, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$140 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators of Group 1 airplanes is estimated to be \$960, or \$320 per airplane.

For group 2 airplanes, the FAA estimates that it would take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, and approximately 3 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed installation of spiral wrap. Required parts would cost approximately \$140 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators of Group 2 airplanes is estimated to be \$4,840, or \$440 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 a substantial direct effect 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,

it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

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 99-NM-268-AD.

**Applicability:** Model MD-11 series airplanes, as listed in McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD11-24A008, Revision 01, dated December 2, 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 chafing and damage to external ground power feeder cables, which could result in electrical arcing and consequent structural damage and smoke and fire in the forward cargo compartment, accomplish the following:

### Inspection and Modification

(a) Within 12 months after the effective date of this AD, perform a detailed visual inspection of the external ground power feeder cables in the forward cargo compartment between stations Y=879.000 and Y=1019.000 left of centerline to detect chafing or damage, in accordance with McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD11-24A008, Revision 01, dated December 2, 1999.

**Note 2:** For the purposes of this AD, a detailed visual inspection is defined as: "An intensive visual examination of a specific structural area, system, installation, or assembly to detect damage, failure, or irregularity. Available lighting is normally supplemented with a direct source of good lighting at intensity deemed appropriate by the inspector. Inspection aids such as mirror, magnifying lenses, etc., may be used. Surface cleaning and elaborate access procedures may be required."

(1) If any chafing or damage is detected, prior to further flight, repair and install spiral wrap, in accordance with the service bulletin.

(2) If no chafing or damage is detected, prior to further flight, install spiral wrap in accordance with the service bulletin.

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**BILLING CODE 4910-13-U**