

**Special Flight Permits**

(h) 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 April 11, 2001.

**Donald L. Riggan,**

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

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

[Docket No. 2000-NM-346-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

**Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747-100 and -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 747-100 and -200 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections for cracking of the station 800 frame assembly, and repair, if necessary. This action is necessary to find and fix fatigue cracks that could extend and fully sever the frame, which could result in development of skin cracks that could lead to rapid depressurization of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by June 4, 2001.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-NM-346-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. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227-1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: 9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2000-NM-346-AD" in the subject line and need

not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 for Windows or ASCII text.

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:** Rick Kawaguchi, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-1153; 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 action may be changed in light of the comments received.

Submit comments using the following format:

- Organize comments issue-by-issue. For example, discuss a request to change the compliance time and a request to change the service bulletin reference as two separate issues.
- For each issue, state what specific change to the proposed AD is being requested.
- Include justification (e.g., reasons or data) for each request.

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 action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 2000-NM-346-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. 2000-NM-346-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

**Discussion**

The FAA has received reports that operators have found fatigue cracks in the strap and inner chord angle at the station 800 frame, between stringers 14 and 18, on certain Boeing Model 747-100 and -200 series airplanes. The cracks can initiate at certain fastener holes. Fatigue cracks in this area, if not found and fixed, can extend and fully sever the frame. If the frame is severed, skin cracks could occur, which could result in rapid depressurization of the airplane.

**Explanation of Relevant Service Information**

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-53A2451, including Appendix A, dated October 5, 2000, which describes procedures for repetitive inspections for cracking of the station 800 frame assembly between stringers 14 and 18. The procedures involve removal of fasteners; detailed visual, surface high frequency eddy current (HFEC), and open hole HFEC inspections, as applicable, for cracking of the inner chord strap, angles, and exposed web at station 800; and installation of new or serviceable fasteners. If any cracking is detected, the service bulletin says to contact Boeing for repair instructions.

**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 accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below.

**Differences Between Service Bulletin and Proposed AD**

Operators should note that, although the service bulletin specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for repair instructions, this proposed AD would require repair according to a method approved by the FAA, or according to data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company Designated Engineering Representative

who has been authorized by the FAA to make such findings.

### Cost Impact

There are approximately 258 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 139 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take up to 14 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspections, 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 as much as \$116,760, or \$840 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

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 proposed AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

### 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:

**Boeing:** Docket 2000–NM–346–AD.

*Applicability:* Model 747–100 and –200 series airplanes, as listed in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2451, including Appendix A, dated October 5, 2000, 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 find and fix fatigue cracks of the station 800 frame assembly that could extend and fully sever the frame, which could result in development of skin cracks that could lead to rapid depressurization of the airplane, accomplish the following:

#### Repetitive Inspections

(a) Do detailed visual, surface high frequency eddy current (HFEC), and open hole HFEC inspections, as applicable, for cracking of the station 800 frame assembly (including the inner chord strap, angles, and exposed web) between stringers 14 and 18, according to Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2451, including Appendix A, dated October 5, 2000. Except as provided by paragraph (b) of this AD, do the inspection at the applicable time specified in Table 1 below, and repeat the inspections thereafter at least every 3,000 flight cycles: Table 1 is as follows:

TABLE 1.—COMPLIANCE TIMES

Total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD—	Do the inspection in paragraph (a) at this time—
Fewer than 19,000.	Before the accumulation of 19,000 total flight cycles, or within 1,500 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever comes later.
19,000 or more but 24,250 or fewer.	Within 1,500 flight cycles or 12 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever comes first.
24,251 or more.	Within 750 flight cycles or 12 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever comes first.

**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."

#### Adjustments to Compliance Time: Cabin Differential Pressure

(b) For the purposes of calculating the compliance threshold and repetitive interval for the actions required by paragraph (a) of this AD, the number of flight cycles in which cabin differential pressure is at 2.0 pounds per square inch (psi) or less need not be counted when determining the number of flight cycles that have occurred on the airplane, provided that flight cycles with momentary spikes in cabin differential pressure above 2.0 psi are included as full pressure cycles. For this provision to apply, all cabin pressure records must be maintained for each airplane: NO fleet-averaging of cabin pressure is allowed.

#### Repair

(c) If any cracking is detected during any inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, before further flight, repair the cracking according to a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA; or according to data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company Designated Engineering Representative who has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle ACO, to make such findings. For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO, as required by this paragraph, the approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

#### Alternative Methods of Compliance

(d) 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.

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

#### Special Flight Permits

(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 April 12, 2001.

**Donald L. Riggan,**

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

[FR Doc. 01-9668 Filed 4-18-01; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000-NM-337-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 superseding of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplanes, that currently requires a revision of the Airplane Flight Manual to alert the flightcrew that both flight management computers (FMC) must be installed and operational. This action would require an inspection to verify if a certain modification is on the front and rear identification plates of the FMC's; and applicable follow-on and corrective actions. This proposal is prompted by the FAA's determination that further rulemaking action is necessary to ensure that all affected airplanes are inspected for suspected defective multiplexers. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent loss of airspeed and altitude indications on both primary flight displays in the cockpit, and/or loss or degradation of the autopilot functionality, and consequent failure of the data busses.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by June 4, 2001.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-NM-337-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. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227-1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: 9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2000-NM-337-AD" in the subject line and need not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 for Windows or ASCII text.

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: Data and Service Management, Dept. C1-L5A (D800-0024). This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the FAA, 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, 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 action may be changed in light of the comments received.

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- For each issue, state what specific change to the proposed AD is being requested.

- Include justification (e.g., reasons or data) for each request.

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 action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 2000-NM-337-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. 2000-NM-337-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

#### Discussion

On July 10, 1998, the FAA issued AD 98-15-14, amendment 39-10665 (63 FR 38464, July 17, 1998), applicable to certain McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplanes, to require a revision of the Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) to alert the flightcrew that both flight management computers (FMC) must be installed and operational. That action was prompted by a report indicating that, due to incorrect multiplexers that were installed in the FMC's during production, certain data busses failed simultaneously during a ground test. The requirements of that AD are intended to prevent loss of airspeed and altitude indications on both primary flight displays in the cockpit, and/or loss or degradation of the autopilot functionality, and consequent failure of the data busses.

#### Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

In the preamble of AD 98-15-14, the FAA indicated that the actions required by that AD were considered "interim action" and that further rulemaking action was being considered. The FAA now has determined that further rulemaking action is indeed necessary, and this proposed AD follows from that determination.