

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 9, 2001.

**Vi L. Lipski,**

*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-294-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### **Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9-10, -20, -30, -40, and -50 Series Airplanes and C-9 (Military) 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 DC-9-10, -20, -30, -40, and -50 series airplanes and C-9 (military) airplanes. This proposal would require an inspection to detect chafing or damage at the conduit and support bracket interface in the forward electrical power center (EPC); and repair or replacement of wires with new wires, if necessary. For certain airplanes, this proposal also would require installation of grommets on the conduits of the forward EPC. This action is necessary to prevent chafing of electrical cables in the forward EPC and a possible short within a conduit, which could result in smoke and fire in the cockpit. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by September 6, 2001.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-NM-294-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. 99-NM-294-

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, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Elvin Wheeler, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM-130L, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712-4137; telephone (562) 627-5344; 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.

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 99-NM-294-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-294-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

#### **Background**

In July 1996, a Boeing Model 747 series airplane was involved in an accident. As part of re-examining all aspects of the service experience of the airplane involved in the accident, the FAA participated in design review and testing to determine possible sources of ignition in center fuel tanks. As part of the review, we examined fuel system wiring with regard to the possible effects that wire degradation may have on arc propagation.

In 1997 in a parallel preceding, at the recommendation of the White House Commission on Aviation Safety and Security, the FAA expanded its Aging Transport Program to include non-structural systems and assembled a team for evaluating these systems. This team performed visual inspections of certain transport category airplanes for which 20 years or more had passed since date of manufacture. In addition, the team gathered information from interviews with FAA Principal Maintenance Inspectors and meetings with representatives of airplane manufacturers. This evaluation revealed that the length of time in service is not the only cause of wire degradation; inadequate maintenance, contamination, improper repair, and mechanical damage are all contributing factors. From the compilation of this comprehensive information, we developed the Aging Transport Non-Structural Systems Plan to increase airplane safety by increasing knowledge of how non-structural systems degrade and how causes of degradation can be reduced.

In 1998, an accident occurred off the coast of Nova Scotia involving a McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplane. Investigation indicates that a fire broke out in the cockpit and first class overhead area. Although the ignition source of the fire has not been determined, the FAA, in conjunction with Boeing and operators of Model MD-11, DC-8, DC-9, DC-10, and DC-9-80 series airplanes, is reviewing all

aspects of the service history of those airplanes to identify potential unsafe conditions associated with wire degradation due to various contributing factors (e.g., inadequate maintenance, contamination, improper repair, and mechanical damage) and to take appropriate corrective actions. We have issued a series of airworthiness directives (AD) that address unsafe conditions identified during that process. This process is continuing and we may consider additional rulemaking actions as further results of the review become available. The cause of the Nova Scotia MD-11 accident has not yet been determined.

In 1999, the FAA Administrator established a formal advisory committee to facilitate the implementation of the Aging Transport Non-Structural Systems Plan. This committee, the Aging Transport Systems Rulemaking Advisory Committee (ATSRAC), is made up of representatives of airplane manufacturers, operators, user groups, aerospace and industry associations, and government agencies. As part of its mandate, ATSRAC will recommend rulemaking to increase transport category airplane safety in cases where solutions to safety problems connected to aging systems have been found and must be applied. Detailed analyses of certain transport category airplanes that have been removed from service, studies of service bulletins pertaining to certain wiring systems, and reviews of previously issued airworthiness directives (AD) requiring repetitive inspections of certain wiring systems, have resulted in valuable information on the cause and prevention of wire degradation due to various contributing factors (e.g., inadequate maintenance, contamination, improper repair, and mechanical damage).

In summary, as a result of the investigations described above, the FAA has determined that corrective action may be necessary to minimize the potential hazards associated with wire degradation. Such corrective action can be addressed in future ADs to provide an acceptable level of safety for the transport airplane fleet.

#### Identification of Unsafe Condition

The FAA has become aware that, during an electrical system test, smoke and a burning smell was detected in the cockpit on a McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9 series airplane. Investigation revealed that an electrical cable in the forward electrical power center (EPC) was chafed and shorted within a conduit. This condition, if not corrected, could result in smoke and fire in the cockpit.

#### Other Related Rulemaking

This proposed AD is one of a series of actions identified as part of the ATSRAC program initiative to maintain continued operational safety of aging non-structural systems in transport category airplanes. The program 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 DC9-24A115, Revision 01, dated April 24, 2000, which describes procedures for a general visual inspection to detect chafing or damage at the conduit and support bracket interface in the forward EPC; and repair or replacement of wires with new wires, if necessary. The service bulletin also describes, for certain airplanes, procedures for installation of grommets on the conduits of the forward EPC.

#### 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.

#### Cost Impact

There are approximately 403 Model DC-9-10, -20, -30, -40, and -50 series airplanes and C-9 (military) airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 380 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

For all airplanes, it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$22,800, or \$60 per airplane.

For certain airplanes, it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed modification, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$60 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 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:

**McDonnell Douglas:** Docket 99-NM-294-AD.

**Applicability:** Model DC-9-10, -20, -30, -40, and -50 series airplanes and C-9 (military) airplanes, as listed in McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin DC9-24A115, Revision 01,

dated April 24, 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 (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 of the electrical cables in the forward electrical power center (EPC) and a possible short within a conduit, which could result in smoke and fire in the cockpit, accomplish the following:

**Inspection; Corrective Action, If Necessary; and Installation of Grommets, If Applicable**

(a) Within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, do the actions specified in paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this AD, as applicable, per McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin DC9-24A115, Revision 01, dated April 24, 2000.

(1) For Groups 1 and 2 airplanes identified in the service bulletin: Do a general visual inspection to detect chafing or damage at the conduit and support bracket interface in the forward EPC. If any chafing or damage is detected, before further flight, repair or replace wires with new wires, per the service bulletin.

**Note 2:** For the purposes of this AD, a general visual inspection is defined as "A visual examination of an interior or exterior area, installation, or assembly to detect obvious damage, failure, or irregularity. This level of inspection is made under normally available lighting conditions such as daylight, hangar lighting, flashlight, or drop-light, and may require removal or opening of access panels or doors. Stands, ladders, or platforms may be required to gain proximity to the area being checked."

(2) For Group 1 airplanes identified in the service bulletin: Install grommets on the conduits of the forward EPC.

**Alternative Methods of Compliance**

(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, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Los Angeles ACO.

**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 Permit**

(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 July 9, 2001.

**Vi L. Lipski,**

*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-295-AD]

**RIN 2120-AA64**

**Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9-10, -20, -30, -40, and -50 Series Airplanes; C-9 Airplanes; and Model DC-9-81, -82, and -83 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 DC-9-10, -20, -30, -40, and -50 series airplanes; C-9 airplanes; and Model DC-9-81, -82, and -83 series airplanes. This proposal would require modification of the light switch of the applicable cargo compartments. This action is necessary to prevent generation of smoke and fire in a cargo compartment due to an illuminated light with a missing cover contacting cargo contents for an extended period of time. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by September 6, 2001.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-NM-295-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. 99-NM-295-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.

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