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Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service. [FR Doc. 95–306 Filed 1–5–95; 8:45 am] BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 94-NM-175-AD]

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 MD-11 series airplanes. This proposal would require the installation of an electrically controlled slat system. This proposal is prompted by numerous incidents of inadvertent deployment of the slats while the airplane was in flight at cruise altitude. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent inadvertent deployment of the slats during flight, which could result in an abrupt pitch up of the airplane and consequent injury to crew and passengers; it could also result in significant vibrations and cause damage to the elevators.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 3, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 94–NM– 175–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 McDonnell Douglas Corporation, P.O. Box 1771, Long Beach, California 90801-1771, Attention: Business Unit Manager, Technical Administrative Support, Dept. L51, M.C. 2-98. 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, Transport Airplane Directorate, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wahib Mina, Aerospace Engineer,

Airframe Branch, ANM–120L, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712–4137; telephone (310) 627–5324; fax (310) 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 94–NM–175–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–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 94–NM–175–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The FAA previously has issued several AD's, applicable to McDonnell Douglas Model MD–11 series airplanes, whose requirements have addressed the problems associated with inadvertent deployment of the slats during flight:

1. AD 92–13–03, amendment 39–8273 (57 FR 27155, June 18, 1992), requires either modification or replacement of the flap control module quadrant. That action was prompted by an incident in which a flightcrew member inadvertently bumped the flap/slat handle, which then placed the handle in an improper position that allowed the slats to extend during cruise.

2. AD 92–14–51, amendment 39–8325 (57 FR 38264, August 24, 1992), requires a one-time inspection of the slat mechanical input system for proper clearance and rigging, and adjustment of the system, if necessary. That action was prompted by two incidents in which the slats extended during flight at cruise altitude because the rigging of the slat input system was out of tolerance in three separate places in the extended position

3. AD 92–26–03, amendment 39–8430 (57 FR 57906, December 8, 1992), requires installing a cover on the flap/ slat control module quadrant in the flight compartment. That action was prompted by an incident in which a flightcrew member inadvertently initiated slat deployment by unintentionally depressing the zero degree detent gate while the flap/slat handle was stowed in the retracted detent and the handle was not in the proper position within the detent.

4. AD 93–15–03, amendment 39–8649 (58 FR 41421, August 4, 1993), requires installing a retainer assembly on the upper pedestal flap/slat control module quadrant in the flight compartment. That action was prompted by several incidents in which flightcrew members accidentally bumped the flap/slat handle and the slats deployed during cruise.

Deployment of the slats during flight at cruise altitude could result in abrupt pitch up of the airplane and consequent injury to crew and passengers; it could also create significant vibrations and cause damage to the elevators.

In the preambles to those AD's, the FAA stated that the requirements of each of the AD's were considered to be interim action until final action was identified. The manufacturer had undertaken a design review of the flap/ slat system of the Model MD–11 in an effort to positively address the problems associated with it, and the FAA indicated that it would consider further rulemaking once that design review was completed.

The manufacturer's design review has now been completed and the manufacturer has developed an electrically controlled slat system. Installation of this new system will reduce the possibility of uncommanded operation of the slats and inadvertent displacement of the flap/slat handle. The FAA has determined that the system positively addresses the unsafe condition addressed in the previouslyissued AD's. In light of this, the FAA has determined that further rulemaking action is indeed necessary, and this