# **Proposed Rules**

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#### This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

#### Federal Aviation Administration

## 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 94-NM-178-AD]

## Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC–10–10 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-10–10 airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections to detect cracking of the upper caps in the front spar of the left and right wing, and repair, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by reports of fatigue cracking in the upper cap of the front spar of the wing in the forward flange area. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent progression of fatigue cracking, which could cause reduced structural integrity of the wing front spar and damage to adjacent structures.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by March 7, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 94–NM– 178–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, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: John L. Cecil, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM–121L, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard., Long Beach, California 90712–4137; telephone (310) 627–5322; 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–178–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–178–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

#### Discussion

The FAA has recently received reports of cracking in the upper cap of the front spar of the left and right wing between stations Xos 669 and Xos 789 on McDonnell Douglas Model DC-10-10 airplanes. In one of the reported instances, cracking went from the forward edge of the cap, through a fastener hole, and terminated at the vertical leg of the cap. Subsequent investigation has revealed that the cracking was initiated and propagated by fatigue. This condition, if not corrected, could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing front spar and damage to adjacent structures.

The FAA has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas DC–10 Service Bulletin 57–129, dated August 12, 1994, which describes procedures for eddy current test high frequency (ETHF) surface inspections to detect fatigue cracking in the upper cap of the front spar of the wing, and repair of the upper cap, if cracks are found. It also provides procedures for accomplishing a modification to prevent cracking.

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 repetitive ETHF surface inspections to detect fatigue cracking, and repair of the upper cap in the front spar of the wing if any cracking is found. Additional repetitive inspections would be required after any repair of the upper cap. If the preventive modification is installed on an airplane on which no cracks were found during the initial inspection, the repetitive inspections of that airplane may be terminated. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

Subsequent to the issuance of the referenced service bulletin, the manufacturer conducted further crack growth analysis. Based on the results of that analysis, the FAA is proposing a shorter compliance time for the initial ETHF inspection than the time specified in the service bulletin. This will provide additional inspection intervals to ensure adequate detection of cracking in the front spar cap in a timely manner.

As a result of recent communications with the Air Transport Association (ATA) of America, the FAA has learned that, in general, some operators may