p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from McDonnell Douglas Corporation, 3855 Lakewood Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90846, Attention: Technical Publications Business Administration, Department 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: John Cecil, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM–120L, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, 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 95–NM–49–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. 95–NM–49–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received several reports indicating that corrosion was found on the aft tang of the lower front spar cap of the horizontal stabilizer on McDonnell Douglas Model DC-10 series airplanes. Additionally, the FAA has received several reports indicating that corrosion was found on the lower skin panel of the horizontal stabilizer on these airplanes. Investigation has revealed that the corrosion was caused by water entrapment in the horizontal stabilizer. Such corrosion, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in damage to the spar cap and/or lower skin panel of the horizontal stabilizer, which could lead to reduced controllability of the airplane.

The FAA has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas Service Bulletin 55-14, Revision 6, dated January 11, 1993, which describes procedures for repetitive visual inspections for corrosion of the lower front spar cap and skin panel of the horizontal stabilizer, and repair of corroded or cracked parts. The service bulletin also describes procedures for modifications of the lower front spar cap and the lower front skin panel of the horizontal stabilizer, which, if accomplished, would eliminate the need for repetitive inspections. The modification involves drilling a drain hole in the horizontal stabilizer to allow drainage of entrapped water, which will minimize the possibility of corrosion.

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 visual inspections to detect corrosion or cracking of the lower front spar cap and the skin panel of the horizontal stabilizer, and repair of corroded or cracked parts. This proposed AD would also require the eventual modification of the lower front spar cap and the lower front skin panel of the horizontal stabilizer, which would terminate the repetitive inspection requirements. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

As a result of recent communications with the Air Transport Association (ATA) of America, the FAA has learned that, in general, some operators may misunderstand the legal effect of AD's on airplanes that are identified in the applicability provision of the AD, but that have been altered or repaired in the area addressed by the AD. The FAA points out that all airplanes identified in the applicability provision of an AD are legally subject to the AD. If an airplane has been altered or repaired in the affected area in such a way as to affect compliance with the AD, the owner or operator is required to obtain FAA approval for an alternative method of compliance with the AD, in accordance with the paragraph of each AD that provides for such approvals. A note has been included in this notice to clarify this long-standing requirement.

There are approximately 286 Model DC-10-10, DC-10-30, and DC-10-40 airplanes, and KC-10 (military) airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. Approximately 142 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

The FAA estimates that it would take approximately 26 work hours 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 inspection on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$221,520, or \$1,560 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

The FAA estimates that it would take approximately 241 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed terminating modification, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$124,906 per airplane. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed terminating modification is estimated to be \$19,789,972, or \$139,366 per airplane.

Based on these figures, the estimated total cost impact of the proposed requirements of this AD would be \$20,011,492, or \$140,926 per airplane.

The total 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 AD were not adopted.

Additionally, the FAA recognizes that the proposed modification would require a large number of work hours to accomplish. However, the 5-year compliance time specified in paragraph (b) of this proposed AD should allow ample time for the terminating modification to be accomplished coincidentally with scheduled major airplane inspection and maintenance activities, thereby minimizing the costs associated with special airplane scheduling.

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and