butterfly clips, and in certain fastener holes due to fatigue-related stress. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent such fatigue-related cracking, which could lead to the failure of the aft spar cap and consequently could reduce structural integrity of the wing.

DATES: Comments must be received by August 14, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 95–NM–50–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, 2855 Lakewood Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90846, Attention: Technical Publications Business Administration, Dept. C1–L51, M.C. 2–60. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

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–50–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–50–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The FAA has received reports indicating that, during fatigue testing of the wing structure of a McDonnell Douglas Model DC–10–10 series airplane, cracks developed in the aft spar lower cap, in the stringer butterfly clips on the bulkheads at stations X_{ors}=372.000 and X_{ors}=402.000, and in the fastener holes of the access doors of the inboard upper surface. The cause of this cracking has been attributed to fatigue-related stress. The effects of such fatigue-related cracking could lead to the failure of the aft spar cap. This condition, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing.

The FAA has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas DC–10 Service Bulletin 57–36, Revision 7, dated December 11, 1992, which describes procedures for performing repetitive eddy current inspections of the wings to detect cracks in the aft spar lower cap, in the stringer butterfly clips on the bulkheads at stations X_{ors}=372.000 and X_{ors}=402.000, and in the fastener holes of the access doors of the inboard upper surface. This service bulletin also describes procedures for modification of those areas of the wings. For certain airplanes, the modification involves stress coining the fastener holes and replacing existing fasteners with interference-fit fasteners, which will minimize the possibility of crack development. For certain other airplanes, the modification involves adding shear angles to the panel supports of the wing and ring pad stress coining the fastener holes of the access doors of the wing, which will minimize the possibility of cracks developing in the stringer clips and fastener holes of the access doors. Accomplishment of these modifications would eliminate the need for the repetitive inspections.

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 eddy current inspections of the wings to detect cracks in the aft spar lower cap, in the stringer butterfly clips on the bulkheads at stations X_{ors}=372.000 and X_{ors}=402.000, and in the fastener holes of the access doors of the inboard upper surface. The proposed AD would also require modification of those areas of the wings, which would terminate the required repetitive inspections. These inspection and modification actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously. If any cracks are detected, the repair would be required to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the FAA.

The FAA points out that AD 94–23–01, amendment 39–9063 (59 FR 58766, November 15, 1994), currently requires repetitive inspections of the wing rear spar lower cap [reference paragraph (g) of that AD] and installation of crack preventative modifications [reference paragraph (h) of that AD] between Xors 410 and Xors 430. Revision 7 of McDonnell Douglas DC–10 Service Bulletin 57–36, as described above, specifies procedures for accomplishing the identical inspections and modifications referenced in AD 94–23–01, but expands the area to between Xors 409 to Xors 455. In light of this, the FAA has determined that accomplishment of paragraphs (g) and (h) of AD 94–23–02 are considered acceptable for compliance with the applicable inspections and modifications of that area that would be required by this proposed AD. A note to this effect has been included in the text of the proposed AD.

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.