14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 94-NM-107-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; British Aerospace Model ATP Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the supersedure of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to all British Aerospace Model ATP series airplanes, that currently requires inspections to detect cracking of the aft end of the wing rib boom angles on the left and right engine, and repair or replacement of the wing rib boom angle assemblies, if necessary. That AD was prompted by the detection of cracks in the engine outboard rib boom angles at the main landing gear (MLG) actuator attachment point. The actions specified by that AD are intended to prevent structural failure of the actuator attachment point, which could lead to collapse of the MLG. This action would limit the applicability of the rule to only a certain number of airplanes; revise the initial inspection threshold, depending on whether or not certain modifications have been accomplished on the boom angles; and would require that modified boom angles be installed whenever replacement is necessary.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 22, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 94–NM– 107–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 Jetstream Aircraft, Inc., P.O. Box 16029, Dulles International Airport, Washington, DC 20041–6029. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William Schroeder, Aerospace Engineer, Standardization Branch, ANM–113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (206) 227–2148; fax (206) 227–1320.

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–107–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–107–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

On July 14, 1993, the FAA issued AD 93-14-08, amendment 39-8632 (58 FR 42194, August 9, 1993), applicable to all British Aerospace Model ATP series airplanes, to require inspections to detect cracking of the aft end of the wing rib boom angles at the left and right engine, and repair or replacement of the wing rib boom angle assemblies, if necessary. The initial inspection is required within 400 hours time-inservice after the effective date of the AD, or within 12 months since airplane manufacture, whichever is later. If no cracks are detected, the inspection is required to be repeated at intervals of 3,000 landings or 12 months, whichever occurs sooner. If cracks are detected, the boom angle(s) must be repaired or replaced; or, if cracking is within certain limits, the area may be reinspected for

a period of time until the boom angle is repaired or replaced.

The issuance of AD 93–14–08 was prompted by the detection of cracks in the engine outboard rib boom angles at the main landing gear (MLG) actuator attachment point. The requirements of that AD are intended to prevent structural failure of the actuator attachment point, which could lead to collapse of the MLG.

Since the issuance of that AD, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), which is the airworthiness authority for the United Kingdom, has advised the FAA that airplanes on which modified engine rib boom angles have been installed may be less susceptible to the subject cracking problems initially. The modified boom angles are of a configuration that has improved resistance to cracking. Therefore, for airplanes on which this modification is installed, the CAA advises that the initial inspection for cracking may be extended beyond that which is currently required.

British Aerospace has issued Service Bulletin ATP-57-13, Revision 5, dated June 3, 1994. This revision is essentially the same as Revision 1, which was specified in AD 93-14-08 as the appropriate source of service information. Like Revision 1, new Revision 5 describes procedures for repetitive detailed visual inspection to detect cracking of the aft end of the engine outboard rib boom angles under the wing rib immediately outboard of the left and right engine; and describes procedures for replacement of cracked rib boom angle assemblies. Revision 5 differs from Revision 1 in that it recommends that the initial inspection of airplanes that are equipped with modified engine rib boom angles (Modification 10313A) be postponed until the modified boom angles have accumulated 30,000 landings. The CAA has classified this service bulletin as mandatory.

British Aerospace also has issued Service Bulletin ATP 57–16–10313A, Revision 1, dated July 2, 1994 (as corrected by Errata No. 2, dated August 30, 1994), which describes procedures for installing Modification 10313A. This modification entails installation of new outboard and inboard rib boom angles on the left wing and right wing that are less susceptible to cracking. The CAA classified this service bulletin as "optional."

In light of this, the FAA has determined that AD 93–14–08 must be amended to allow airplanes on which Modification 10313A is installed to be inspected at a compliance threshold that is extended beyond that which is