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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2007-0298; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-238-AD; Amendment 39-15369; AD 2008-03-18]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Saab Model SAAB SF340A and Model SAAB 340B Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for the products listed above. This AD results from mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) originated by an aviation authority of another country to identify and correct an unsafe condition on an aviation product. The MCAI describes the unsafe condition as:

Subsequent to accidents involving Fuel Tank System explosions in flight * * * and on ground, the FAA has published Special Federal Aviation Regulation 88 (SFAR88) * * * [which] required * * * [conducting] a design review against explosion risks.

The unsafe condition is the potential of ignition sources inside fuel tanks, which, in combination with flammable fuel vapors, could result in fuel tank explosions and consequent loss of the airplane. We are issuing this AD to require actions to correct the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD becomes effective March 17, 2008.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in this AD as of March 17, 2008.

ADDRESSES: You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> or in person at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shahram Daneshmandi, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98057-3356; telephone (425) 227-1112; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

We issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 to include an AD that would apply to the specified products. That NPRM was published in the Federal Register on December 10, 2007 (72 FR 69635). That NPRM proposed to correct an unsafe condition for the specified products. The MCAI states:

Subsequent to accidents involving Fuel Tank System explosions in flight * * * and on ground, the FAA has published Special Federal Aviation Regulation 88 (SFAR88) in June 2001.

In their Letters referenced 04/00/02/07/01-L296 dated March 4, 2002 and 04/00/02/07/03-L024, dated February 3, 2003, the JAA recommended the application of a similar regulation to the National Aviation Authorities (NAA).

Under this regulation, all holders of type certificates for passenger transport aircraft with either a passenger capacity of 30 or more, or a payload capacity of 7,500 pounds (3402 kg) or more, which have received their certification since January 1, 1958, are required to conduct a design review against explosion risks.

This Airworthiness Directive (AD), which renders mandatory the modification [2762] of improving the sealing of Fuel Access Doors, is a consequence of the design review.

The unsafe condition is the potential of ignition sources inside fuel tanks, which, in combination with flammable fuel vapors, could result in fuel tank explosions and consequent loss of the airplane. Modification 2762 includes removing the fuel tank access doors and the old type of clamp rings and gaskets, installing new, improved clamp rings and re-installing the fuel tank access doors, and doing related investigative and applicable corrective actions. Related investigative and applicable corrective actions include inspecting for corrosion of the wing skin panel, access door areas, and access doors; removing any corrosion found during the inspection; and replacing the access door protection plate with a new protection plate. Corrosion removal also includes inspecting the doubler flange and contacting Saab and doing repairs if the doubler flange thickness does not meet minimum specifications. Additional corrective actions include replacing conductive foil on the access door with an aluminum panel. You may obtain further information by examining the MCAI in the AD docket.

Comments

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD. We received no comments on the NPRM or on the determination of the cost to the public.

Conclusion

We reviewed the available data and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting the AD as proposed.

Differences Between This AD and the MCAI or Service Information

We have reviewed the MCAI and related service information and, in general, agree with their substance. But we might have found it necessary to use different words from those in the MCAI to

ensure the AD is clear for U.S. operators and is enforceable. In making these changes, we do not intend to differ substantively from the information provided in the MCAI and related service information.

We might also have required different actions in this AD from those in the MCAI in order to follow our FAA policies. Any such differences are highlighted in a Note within the AD.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD will affect about 168 products of U.S. registry. We also estimate that it will take about 20 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this AD. The average labor rate is \$80 per work-hour. Required parts will cost about \$417 per product. Where the service information lists required parts costs that are covered under warranty, we have assumed that there will be no charge for these parts. As we do not control warranty coverage for affected parties, some parties may incur costs higher than estimated here. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this AD to the U.S. operators to be about \$338,856, or about \$2,017 per product.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify this AD:

1. Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and
3. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

We prepared a regulatory evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this AD and placed it in the AD docket.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov>; or in person at the Docket Operations office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains the NPRM, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone (800) 647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new AD:



2008-03-18 SaaB Aircraft AB: Amendment 39-15369. Docket No. FAA-2007-0298; Directorate Identifier 2007-NM-238-AD.

Effective Date

- (a) This airworthiness directive (AD) becomes effective March 17, 2008.

Affected ADs

- (b) None.

Applicability

- (c) This AD applies to Saab Model SAAB SF340A and Model SAAB 340B airplanes, certificated in any category, serial numbers 004 through 401.

Subject

- (d) Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 57: Wings.

Reason

- (e) The mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) states:

Subsequent to accidents involving Fuel Tank System explosions in flight * * * and on ground, the FAA has published Special Federal Aviation Regulation 88 (SFAR88) in June 2001.

In their Letters referenced 04/00/02/07/01-L296 dated March 4, 2002 and 04/00/02/07/03-L024, dated February 3, 2003, the JAA recommended the application of a similar regulation to the National Aviation Authorities (NAA).

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This Airworthiness Directive (AD), which renders mandatory the modification [2762] of improving the sealing of Fuel Access Doors, is a consequence of the design review.

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actions include inspecting for corrosion of the wing skin panel, access door areas, and access doors; removing any corrosion found during the inspection; and replacing the access door protection plate with a new protection plate. Corrosion removal also includes inspecting the doubler flange and contacting Saab and doing repairs if the doubler flange thickness does not meet minimum specifications. Additional corrective actions include replacing conductive foil on the access door with an aluminum panel.

Actions and Compliance

(f) Within 72 months after the effective date of this AD, unless already done, do the actions described in paragraphs (f)(1) and (f)(2) of this AD.

(1) Do Modification 2762 and all related investigative actions and applicable corrective actions, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-031, Revision 02, dated September 28, 2005. Do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions before further flight. Actions done before the effective date of this AD in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-031, dated September 4, 1996; or Revision 01, dated June 28, 1999; are considered acceptable for compliance with the requirements of this paragraph.

(2) For airplanes identified in Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-010, dated March 28, 1989, do the additional corrective actions described in and in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of that service bulletin.

FAA AD Differences

Note 1: This AD differs from the MCAI and/or service information as follows: The MCAI does not require doing the actions of Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-010, which is specified in Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-031, Revision 02, as the appropriate source of service information for doing additional corrective actions for certain airplanes to completely address the unsafe condition. This AD requires accomplishing the additional corrective actions described in Service Bulletin 340-57-010 for certain airplanes.

Other FAA AD Provisions

(g) The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. Send information to ATTN: Shahram Daneshmandi, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98057-3356; telephone (425) 227-1112; fax (425) 227-1149. Before using any approved AMOC on any airplane to which the AMOC applies, notify your appropriate principal inspector (PI) in the FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO), or lacking a PI, your local FSDO.

(2) Airworthy Product: For any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer or other source, use these actions if they are FAA-approved. Corrective actions are considered FAA-approved if they are approved by the State of Design Authority (or their delegated agent). You are required to assure the product is airworthy before it is returned to service.

(3) Reporting Requirements: For any reporting requirement in this AD, under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the information collection requirements and has assigned OMB Control Number 2120-0056.

Related Information

(h) Refer to MCAI EASA Airworthiness Directive 2007-0168, dated June 15, 2007; Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-031, Revision 02, dated September 28, 2005; and Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-010, dated March 28, 1989; for related information.

Material Incorporated by Reference

(i) You must use Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-031, Revision 02, dated September 28, 2005; and Saab Service Bulletin 340-57-010, dated March 28, 1989; as applicable; to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of this service information under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact Saab Aircraft AB, SAAB Aircraft Product Support, S-581.88, Linköping, Sweden.

(3) You may review copies at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call (202) 741-6030, or go to: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 31, 2008.

Ali Bahrami,

Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. E8-2344 Filed 2-8-08; 8:45 am]