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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2016-3700; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-171-AD; Amendment 39-18595; AD 2016-15-04]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all The Boeing Company Model 757-200 and -200CB series airplanes. This AD was prompted by an evaluation by the design approval holder (DAH) indicating that the lap splices at stringer S-14R, lower fastener row, are subject to widespread fatigue damage (WFD). This AD requires external dual frequency eddy current (DFEC) or internal high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections of the lap splice, inner skin fasteners, at stringer S-14R, station (STA) 440 through STA 540, and corrective action if necessary. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking of the fuselage skin lap splice. Such cracking could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

DATES: This AD is effective September 2, 2016.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of September 2, 2016.

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this final rule, contact Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Attention: Data & Services Management, P.O. Box 3707, MC 2H-65, Seattle, WA 98124-2207; telephone: 206-544-5000, extension 1; fax: 206-766-5680; Internet: <https://www.myboeingfleet.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-3700.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-3700; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9

a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The address for the Docket Office (phone: 800-647-5527) is Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Eric Schrieber, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120L, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, CA 90712-4137; phone: 562-627-5348; fax: 562-627-5210; email: eric.schrieber@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

We issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all The Boeing Company Model 757-200 and -200CB series airplanes. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on March 1, 2016 (81 FR 10533) ("the NPRM"). The NPRM was prompted by an evaluation by the DAH indicating that the lap splices at stringer S-14R, lower fastener row, are subject to WFD. The NPRM proposed to require repetitive external DFEC or internal HFEC inspections of the lap splice, inner skin fasteners, at stringer S-14R, STA 440 through STA 540, and corrective action if necessary. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking of the fuselage skin lap splice. Such cracking could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

Comments

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD. The following presents the comments received on the NPRM and the FAA's response to each comment. Boeing indicated its support for the NPRM.

Request for Updated Service Information

United Airlines generally concurred with the NPRM, but requested that repairs be incorporated into a subsequent revision of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015. According to United Airlines, the lack of certain approved repairs adds a significant level of burden on the operators.

We acknowledge United Airlines' comment and concerns. We have been advised that Boeing is working on revising the referenced service information to include repair information, but Boeing cannot provide a fixed date when the next revision will be published. To delay this AD until this service information is available is inappropriate since we have determined that an unsafe condition exists and that inspections must be conducted to ensure continued safety. If the updated service information is approved and published, any operator may request approval of an alternative method of compliance (AMOC) as specified in paragraph (j) of this AD. We may also consider further rulemaking after reviewing any updated service information. We have not changed this AD regarding this issue.

Request To Add Exclusion to the Service Information

United Airlines requested that the note under step 3.B.1. of the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015, be changed so that any FAA-approved repair that meets the minimum 3 rows on either side of the lap splice would qualify as

exempt from the initial and repeat inspections. United Airlines stated that this change would remove the need to request approval of an AMOC.

The FAA does not make changes to service bulletins. The commenter's request could be incorporated into the AD, but we do not agree with the requested change because each existing repair affected by this AD needs to be evaluated in accordance with paragraph (g) of this AD. For any repair in the affected area, operators may request approval of an AMOC as specified in paragraph (j) of this AD. We have not changed this AD regarding this issue.

Effect of Winglets on Accomplishment of the Proposed Actions

Aviation Partners Boeing stated that accomplishing the supplemental type certificate (STC) ST01518SE does not affect the actions specified in the NPRM.

We agree with the commenter. We have redesignated paragraph (c) of the NPRM as (c)(1) and added new paragraph (c)(2) to this final rule to state that installation of STC ST01518SE does not affect the ability to accomplish the actions required by this final rule. Therefore, for airplanes on which STC ST01518SE is installed, a "change in product" AMOC approval request is not necessary to comply with the requirements of 14 CFR 39.17.

Clarification of Service Information Exception

Paragraph (h)(2) of the NPRM describes a standard service information exception; however that exception does not apply to Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015. Therefore, we have removed paragraph (h)(2) of the NPRM from this AD.

Conclusion

We reviewed the relevant data, considered the comments received, and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this AD with the changes described previously and minor editorial changes. We have determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for correcting the unsafe condition; and
- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM.

We also determined that these changes will not increase the economic burden on any operator or increase the scope of this AD.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

We reviewed Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015. The service information describes procedures for performing repetitive external DFEC or internal HFEC inspections of the lap splice, inner skin fasteners, at stringer S-14R, STA 440–STA 540, and corrective action if necessary. This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects 572 airplanes of U.S. registry.
We estimate the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated Costs

| Action | Labor cost | Parts cost | Cost per product | Cost on U.S. operators |
|------------------------------------|--|------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Option 1: External DFEC inspection | 4 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$340 per inspection cycle | \$0 | \$340 per inspection cycle | \$194,480 per inspection cycle. |
| Option 2: Internal HFEC inspection | 10 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$850 per inspection cycle | \$0 | \$850 per inspection cycle | \$486,200 per inspection cycle. |

We have received no definitive data that will enable us to provide cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this AD.

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

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 that this AD:

- (1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979),
- (3) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (4) 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.

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 airworthiness directive (AD):



2016-15-04 The Boeing Company: Amendment 39-18595; Docket No. FAA-2016-3700; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-171-AD.

(a) Effective Date

This AD is effective September 2, 2016.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

(1) This AD applies to all The Boeing Company Model 757-200 and -200CB series airplanes, certificated in any category.

(2) Installation of Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) ST01518SE (http://rgl.faa.gov/Regulatory_and_Guidance_Library/rgSTC.nsf/0/38B606833BBD98B386257FAA00602538?OpenDocument&Highlight=st01518se) does not affect the ability to accomplish the actions required by this AD. Therefore, for airplanes on which STC ST01518SE is installed, a "change in product" alternative method of compliance (AMOC) approval request is not necessary to comply with the requirements of 14 CFR 39.17.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by an evaluation by the design approval holder indicating that the lap splices at stringer S-14R, lower fastener row, are subject to widespread fatigue damage. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking of the fuselage skin lap splice. Such cracking could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Inspections

At the applicable time specified in paragraph 1.E., "Compliance," of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015, except as required by paragraph (h) of this AD: Do an external dual frequency eddy current inspection or internal high frequency eddy current inspection for cracking of the lap splice, inner skin lower fastener row, at stringer S-14R, station (STA) 440 through STA 540, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015. Repeat either inspection thereafter at the time specified in

paragraph 1.E., "Compliance," of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015.

(h) Service Information Exceptions

Where Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015, specifies a compliance time "after the original issue date of this service bulletin," this AD requires compliance within the specified compliance time after the effective date of this AD.

(i) Repair

If any crack is found during any inspection required by this AD, before further flight, repair using a method approved in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (j) of this AD.

(j) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the ACO, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-LAACO-AMOC-Requests@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(3) An AMOC that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used for any repair, modification, or alteration required by this AD if it is approved by the Boeing Commercial Airplanes ODA that has been authorized by the Manager, Los Angeles ACO, to make those findings. To be approved, the repair method, modification deviation, or alteration deviation must meet the certification basis of the airplane, and the approval must specifically refer to this AD.

(4) Except as required by paragraph (h) of this AD: For service information that contains steps that are labeled as Required for Compliance (RC), the provisions of paragraphs (j)(4)(i) and (j)(4)(ii) of this AD apply.

(i) The steps labeled as RC, including substeps under an RC step and any figures identified in an RC step, must be done to comply with the AD. An AMOC is required for any deviations to RC steps, including substeps and identified figures.

(ii) Steps not labeled as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the RC steps, including substeps and identified figures, can still be done as specified, and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition.

(k) Related Information

For more information about this AD, contact Eric Schrieber, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120L, FAA, Los Angeles ACO, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, CA 90712-4137; phone: 562-627-5348; fax: 562-627-5210; email: eric.schrieber@faa.gov.

(l) Material Incorporated by Reference

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

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0102, dated October 8, 2015.

(ii) Reserved.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Attention: Data & Services Management, P. O. Box 3707, MC 2H-65, Seattle, WA 98124-2207; telephone: 206-544-5000, extension 1; fax: 206-766-5680; Internet: <https://www.myboeingfleet.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

(4) You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

(5) You may view this service information that is incorporated by reference 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 July 21, 2016.

Michael Kaszycki,
Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.