

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on March 3, 1998.

James E. Jackson,

Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-CE-18-AD; Amendment 39-10382; AD 98-06-05]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Industrie Aeronautiche e Meccaniche Model Piaggio P-180 Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that applies to Industrie Aeronautiche e Meccaniche (I.A.M.) Model Piaggio P-180 airplanes that are equipped with a Rockwell Collins APS-65 autopilot system that incorporates an APC-65A autopilot computer. This AD requires incorporating airplane flight manual (AFM) and pilot's operating handbook (POH) supplements that include revised autopilot emergency disengagement procedures. This AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for Italy. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent pilot difficulty in disengaging the autopilot during flight, which could result in the pilot's lack of proper attention to critical flight tasks due to the increased pilot workload with possible consequent loss of airplane controllability.

DATES: Effective April 2, 1998.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before May 11, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket 98-CE-18-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Service information that relates to this AD, including the AFM/POH supplements, may be obtained from I.A.M. Rinaldo Piaggio S.p.A., Via Cibrario, 4 16154 Genoa, Italy. This information may also be examined at

the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-CE-18-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. David O. Keenan, Project Officer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service, 1201 Walnut, suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone: (816) 426-6934; facsimile: (816) 426-2169.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

The Registro Aeronautico Italiano (R.A.I.), which is the airworthiness authority for Italy, recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on I.A.M. Model Piaggio P-180 airplanes that are equipped with a Rockwell Collins APS-65 autopilot system that incorporates an APC-65A autopilot computer. The R.A.I. reports two cases of flight crews having difficulty disengaging the autopilot during flight.

This condition, if not corrected in a timely manner, could result in the pilot's lack of proper attention to critical flight tasks due to the increased pilot workload with possible consequent loss of airplane controllability.

Relevant Service Information

I.A.M. has issued Piaggio Alert Service Bulletin ASB-80-0100, dated September 25, 1997, which specifies the following AFM and POH supplements that include revised autopilot emergency disengagement procedures:

- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 5 of 30, Page 9-7, Reissued: June 19, 1992;
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 6 of 30, Page 9-8, Reissued: June 19, 1992;
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 7 of 30, Page 9-9, Reissued: June 19, 1992;
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 8 of 30, Page 9-10, Reissued: June 19, 1992;
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 9 of 30, Page 9-11, Reissued: June 19, 1992; and
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 10 of 30, Page 9-12, Reissued: June 19, 1992.

The R.A.I. classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued Italian AD No. 97-290, dated October 21, 1997, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in Italy.

The FAA's Determination

This airplane model is manufactured in Italy and is type certificated for

operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the R.A.I. has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above.

The FAA has examined the findings of the R.A.I.; reviewed all available information, including the AFM/POH supplements previously referenced; and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Explanation of the Provisions of This AD

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop in other I.A.M. Model Piaggio P-180 airplanes of the same type design that are registered for operation in the United States and are equipped with a Rockwell Collins APS-65 autopilot system that incorporates an APC-65A autopilot computer, the FAA is issuing an AD. This AD requires incorporating the AFM and POH supplements previously referenced that include revised autopilot emergency disengagement procedures.

Compliance Time of This AD

Although difficulty for the flight crew to disengage the autopilot is only a safety problem while the airplane is in flight, this unsafe condition is not a result of the number of times the airplane is operated. The chance of this situation occurring is the same for an airplane with 10 hours time-in-service (TIS) as it is for an airplane with 5,000 hours TIS. In addition, the utilization of the affected airplanes varies from operator to operator. Some operators may utilize the affected airplanes in excess of 200 hours TIS in a month, while others may only log 20 hours TIS or less in a month. Based on the above information, the FAA has determined that the compliance time of this AD should be presented in both calendar time and hours TIS (with the prevalent one being that which occurs first) in order to assure that the unsafe condition is addressed on all of the affected airplanes in a reasonable time period.

Determination of the Effective Date of the AD

Since a situation exists that requires the immediate adoption of this regulation, it is found that notice and opportunity for public prior comment hereon are impracticable, and that good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting immediate flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and opportunity to comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications should 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 will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 98-CE-18-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects 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. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

The FAA has determined that this regulation is an emergency regulation that must be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft, and is not a significant regulatory action under Executive Order 12866. It has been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures

(44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket (otherwise, an evaluation is not required). A copy of it, if filed, may be obtained from the Rules Docket.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (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. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

98-06-05 Industrie Aeronautique E

Meccaniche: Amendment 39-10382; Docket No. 98-CE-18-AD.

Applicability: Model Piaggio P-180 airplanes, all serial numbers; certificated in any category, that are equipped with a Rockwell Collins APS-65 autopilot system that incorporates an APC-65A autopilot computer.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (d) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required within the next 10 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD or within the next 30 calendar days after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first, unless already accomplished.

To prevent pilot difficulty in disengaging the autopilot during flight, which could result in the pilot's lack of proper attention to critical flight tasks due to the increased pilot workload with possible consequent loss

of airplane controllability, accomplish the following:

(a) Incorporate the following airplane flight manual (AFM) and pilot's operating handbook (POH) supplements that include revised autopilot emergency disengagement procedures:

- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 5 of 30, Page 9-7, Reissued: June 19, 1992;
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 6 of 30, Page 9-8, Reissued: June 19, 1992;
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 7 of 30, Page 9-9, Reissued: June 19, 1992;
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 8 of 30, Page 9-10, Reissued: June 19, 1992;
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 9 of 30, Page 9-11, Reissued: June 19, 1992; and
- Section 9 Supplement 1, Report 6591, 10 of 30, Page 9-12, Reissued: June 19, 1992.

Note 2: The actions required by this AD are also referenced in Piaggio Alert Service Bulletin ASB-80-0100, dated September 25, 1997.

(b) Amending the AFM and POH, as required by this AD, may be performed by the owner/operator holding at least a private pilot certificate as authorized by section 43.7 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 43.7), and must be entered into the aircraft records showing compliance with this AD in accordance with section 43.9 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 43.9).

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(d) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an equivalent level of safety may be approved by the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, 1201 Walnut, suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. The request shall be forwarded through an appropriate FAA Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Small Airplane Directorate.

(e) Questions or technical information related to the service information or the AFM and POH supplements referenced in this AD should be directed to I.A.M. Rinaldo Piaggio S.p.A., Via Cibrario, 4 16154 Genoa, Italy. This information may be examined at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in Italian AD No. 97-290, dated October 21, 1997.

(f) This amendment (39-10382) becomes effective on April 2, 1998.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on March 4, 1998.

James E. Jackson,

Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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