

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 39**

[Docket No. 99-NM-263-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

**Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 Series Airplanes****AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplanes. This proposal would require a one-time detailed visual inspection of a certain passenger seat wire assembly to detect chafed or damaged wires; repair, if necessary; and installation of protective sleeving. This proposal is prompted by a report of arcing emanating from a certain passenger seat wire assembly. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent chafing of the passenger seat wire assembly against a bracket at the lower sidewall panel due to insufficient clearance between the bracket and seat wire assembly, which could result in arcing damage to the passenger seat wire assembly and consequent smoke and fire in the main cabin.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by March 17, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-NM-263-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 Boeing Commercial Aircraft Group, Long Beach Division, 3855 Lakewood Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90846, Attention: Technical Publications Business Administration, Dept. C1-L51 (2-60). This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Brett Portwood, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM-130L, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712-4137; telephone (562) 627-5350; fax (562) 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 99-NM-263-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-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-NM-263-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

**Supplementary Information**

As part of its practice of re-examining all aspects of the service experience of a particular aircraft whenever an accident occurs, the FAA has become aware of an instance in which a seat control circuit breaker tripped while a crew member was checking a problem with the controls of a first class passenger seat. The circuit breaker was reset and subsequently an arc was observed emanating from the passenger seat wire assembly at the base of the

sidewall panel at fuselage station Y=675. This incident occurred on a McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplane. This arcing caused a foam material to ignite. Investigation revealed that the passenger seat wire assembly had been chafing on a bracket at the lower sidewall panel. This condition has been attributed to insufficient clearance between the bracket and seat wire assembly. This condition, if not corrected, could result in smoke and fire in the main cabin.

This incident is not considered to be related to an accident that occurred off the coast of Nova Scotia involving a McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplane. The cause of that accident is still under investigation.

**Other Related Rulemaking**

The FAA, in conjunction with Boeing and operators of Model MD-11 series airplanes, is continuing to review all aspects of the service history of those airplanes to identify potential unsafe conditions and to take appropriate corrective actions. This proposed airworthiness directive (AD) is one of a series of actions identified during that process. The process is continuing and the FAA may consider additional rulemaking actions as further results of the review become available.

**Explanation of Relevant Service Information**

The FAA has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD11-24A152, dated August 9, 1999, which describes procedures for a one-time detailed visual inspection of the passenger seat wire assembly to detect chafed or damaged wires; repair, if necessary; and installation of protective sleeving. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

**Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule**

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other products of this same type design, this proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously.

**Cost Impact**

There are approximately 128 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 32 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

It would take approximately 2 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, at an average labor

rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the inspection proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$3,840, or \$120 per airplane.

It would take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed installation of protective sleeving, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the installation proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$3,840, or \$120 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted.

### Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would 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. Therefore, it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (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) if promulgated, 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. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

### List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

### The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend 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 the following new airworthiness directive:

**McDonnell Douglas:** Docket 99-NM-263-AD.

**Applicability:** Model MD-11 series airplanes, as listed in McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD11-24A152, dated August 9, 1999; certificated in any category.

**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 (b) 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 as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent chafing of the passenger seat wire assembly against a bracket at the lower sidewall panel due to insufficient clearance between the bracket and seat wire assembly, which could result in arcing damage to the passenger seat wire assembly and consequent smoke and fire in the main cabin, accomplish the following:

#### Inspection, Installation, and Repair, If Necessary

(a) Within 6 months after the effective date of this AD, perform a detailed visual inspection of the passenger seat wire assembly to detect chafed or damaged wires, and install protective sleeving, in accordance with McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD11-24A152, dated August 9, 1999. If any chafed or damaged wire is found, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with the service bulletin.

**Note 2:** For the purposes of this AD, a detailed visual inspection is defined as: "An intensive visual examination of a specific structural area, system, installation, or assembly to detect damage, failure, or irregularity. Available lighting is normally supplemented with a direct source of good lighting at intensity deemed appropriate by the inspector. Inspection aids such as mirror, magnifying lenses, etc., may be used. Surface cleaning and elaborate access procedures may be required."

#### Alternative Methods of Compliance

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance

Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Los Angeles ACO.

**Note 3:** Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Los Angeles ACO.

### Special Flight Permits

(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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 21, 2000.

**Vi L. Lipski,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 00-2003 Filed 1-31-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-13-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-NM-264-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

### Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 Series Airplanes

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain McDonnell Douglas Model MD-11 series airplanes. This proposal would require a one-time detailed visual inspection of the electrical connections to detect corrosion; repair, if necessary; and installation of new circuit breakers and associated wiring. This proposal is prompted by a report that the ratings of certain circuit breakers of a certain video entertainment system exceed the ratings of their associated electrical connector contacts. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent a disparity between the ratings of certain circuit breakers and their associated electrical connector contacts, which could damage the electrical connector contacts and cause possible arcing and heat damage to the electrical connector.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by March 17, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114,