

Issued in Renton, Washington, on December 23, 2015.

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Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2015-8429; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-122-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain The Boeing Company Model 747-100, 747-100B, 747-100B SUD, 747-200B, 747-200C, 747-200F, 747-300, 747-400, 747-400D, 747-400F, 747SR, and 747SP series airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by reports of fatigue cracks in the station 320 crown frame and in window post number 3. This proposed AD would require repetitive inspections for cracks and missing fasteners of the station 320 crown frame, cracks in the web and flange surfaces of the forward segment of window post number 3, and missing fasteners and cracks of the window upper sill; post-modification inspections for cracks of the window upper sill; one-time fastener rework; and related investigative and corrective actions if necessary. We are proposing this AD to detect and correct fatigue cracking and missing fasteners of the station 320 crown frame, cracking of the window post number 3, and cracking of the window upper sill, which could result in an in-flight decompression and a loss of structural integrity of the fuselage.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by February 29, 2016.

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *Fax:* 202-493-2251.

- *Mail:* U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor,

Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

- *Hand Delivery:* Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this proposed 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. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-8429.

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-2015-8429; 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 proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Office (phone: 800-647-5527) is in the **ADDRESSES** section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bill Ashforth, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM-120S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; phone: 425-917-6432; fax: 425-917-6590; email: Bill.Ashforth@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under the **ADDRESSES** section. Include "Docket No. FAA-2015-8429; Directorate Identifier 2015-NM-122-AD" at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD because of those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to [http://](http://www.regulations.gov)

www.regulations.gov, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

Discussion

We have received reports of fatigue cracks in the station 320 crown frame on Model 747-400 series airplanes. Other Model 747 airplanes, except Model 747-8F and 747-8 airplanes, are of a similar station 320 crown frame configuration. Inner chord cracks of 0.03- to 0.22-inch in length have been found on 15 airplanes with total flight cycles ranging from 11,498 to 31,315. Also, a 1.8-inch crack was found in the outboard web of the frame on one airplane with 14,749 total flight cycles.

Cracks have also been found in window post number 3, which connects to the lower end of the inner chord of the station 320 crown frame. Cracks of 0.03- to 0.11-inch in length have been found in window post number 3 on five airplanes with total flight cycles ranging from 12,329 to 15,772.

Additionally, fatigue cracks that had extended to fully sever the inner chord and outboard web of the frame were found on the Model 747-400 fatigue test airplane at 38,333 total pressure cycles, and significant cracks were found in both the frame inner chord and outboard web at 30,500 total pressure cycles on the Model 747-100SR fatigue test airplane.

Fatigue cracking and missing fasteners of the station 320 crown frame, cracking of the window post number 3, and cracking of the window upper sill could result in in-flight decompression and a loss of structural integrity of the fuselage.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

We reviewed Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015. The service information describes procedures for inspections and corrective actions for cracks and missing fasteners in the inner chord and outboard webs of the station 320 crown frame, in the left and right side window post number 3, and in the upper sill structure. 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 of this NPRM.

FAA's Determination

We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all the relevant information and determined the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or

develop in other products of the same type design.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions identified in the service information described previously, except as discussed under “Differences Between this Proposed AD and the Service Information.” For information on the procedures and compliance times, see this service information at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA–2015–8429.

The phrase “related investigative actions” is used in this proposed AD. “Related investigative actions” are follow-on actions that (1) are related to the primary actions, and (2) further investigate the nature of any condition found. Related investigative actions in an AD could include, for example, inspections.

The phrase “corrective actions” is used in this proposed AD. “Corrective actions” are actions that correct or address any condition found. Corrective actions in an AD could include, for example, repairs.

Differences Between This Proposed AD and the Service Information

Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015, specifies to contact the manufacturer for instructions on how to repair certain conditions, but this proposed AD would require repairing those conditions in one of the following ways:

- In accordance with a method that we approve; or
- Using data that meet the certification basis of the airplane, and that have been approved by the Boeing Commercial Airplanes Organization Designation Authorization (ODA) whom we have authorized to make those findings.

Explanation of “RC” Steps in Service Information

The FAA worked in conjunction with industry, under the Airworthiness Directive Implementation Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC), to enhance the AD system. One enhancement was a new process for annotating which steps in the service information are required for compliance with an AD. Differentiating these steps from other tasks in the service information is expected to improve an owner’s/operator’s understanding of crucial AD requirements and help

provide consistent judgment in AD compliance. The steps identified as Required for Compliance (RC) in any service information identified previously have a direct effect on detecting, preventing, resolving, or eliminating an identified unsafe condition.

For service information that contains steps that are labeled as RC, the following provisions apply: (1) 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, and an alternative method of compliance (AMOC) is required for any deviations to RC steps, including substeps and identified figures; and (2) 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.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 165 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We estimate the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

ESTIMATED COSTS

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspections	Up to 193 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$16,405 per inspection cycle.	\$0	Up to \$16,405 per inspection cycle.	Up to \$2,706,825 per inspection cycle.

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

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD 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.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify 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),

(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.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 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):

The Boeing Company: Docket No. FAA–2015–8429; Directorate Identifier 2015–NM–122–AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by February 29, 2016.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to The Boeing Company Model 747–100, 747–100B, 747–100B SUD, 747–200B, 747–200C, 747–200F, 747–300, 747–400, 747–400D, 747–400F, 747SR, and 747SP series airplanes, certificated in any category, as identified in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015.

(d) Subject

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

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by reports of fatigue cracks in the station 320 crown frame in window post number 3. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct fatigue cracking and missing fasteners of the station 320 crown frame, cracking of the window post number 3, and cracking of the window upper sill, which could result in an in-flight decompression and a loss of structural integrity of the fuselage.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Initial Inspections, Related Investigative Actions, and Corrective Actions

At the applicable time specified in paragraph 1.E., “Compliance,” of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015, except as provided by paragraphs (j)(1) and (j)(2) of this AD: Do the actions specified in paragraphs (g)(1) through (g)(5) of this AD; and do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions; in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015, except as required by paragraph (j)(3) of this AD. Do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions before further flight.

(1) Do a detailed inspection for cracks and missing fasteners of the station 320 crown frame.

(2) Do a surface high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection for cracks of the station 320 crown frame.

(3) Do a surface HFEC inspection for cracks in the web and flange surfaces of the forward segment of window post number 3.

(4) Do a detailed inspection for missing fasteners of the window upper sill.

(5) Do a surface HFEC inspection for cracks of the window upper sill.

(h) Repetitive Inspections and Post-Repair Inspections, Related Investigative Actions, and Corrective Actions

Do applicable repetitive post-repair inspections and repeat the inspections specified in paragraphs (g)(1) through (g)(5) of this AD for cracking in the window upper sill thereafter at the applicable compliance time and intervals specified in paragraph 1.E., “Compliance,” of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015; and do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions; in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015, except as required by paragraph (j)(3) of this AD. Do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions before further flight.

(i) Fastener Rework, Related Investigative Actions, and Corrective Actions

At the applicable time specified in paragraph 1.E., “Compliance,” of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015: Do the applicable actions (including fastener rework and a detailed inspection of the condition of the fastener hole) specified in Part 11 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015; and do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions; in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015. Do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions before further flight.

(j) Exceptions to Service Information Specifications

(1) Where Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015, specifies a compliance time “after the original date of this service bulletin,” this AD requires compliance within the specified compliance time after the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015, specifies a compliance time “after the Revision 1 date of this service bulletin,” this AD requires compliance within the specified compliance time after the effective date of this AD.

(3) Where Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747–53A2862, Revision 1, dated July 24, 2015, specifies to contact Boeing for repairs: Before further flight, repair, using a method approved in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (k) of this AD.

(k) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Seattle 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 (l)(1) of this AD. Information may

be emailed to: 9-ANM-Seattle-ACO-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 the Boeing Commercial Airplanes Organization Designation Authorization (ODA) that has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle 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 paragraphs (g), (h), and (j)(3) of this AD: For service information that contains steps that are labeled as Required for Compliance (RC), the provisions of paragraphs (k)(4)(i) and (k)(4)(ii) 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.

(l) Related Information

(1) For more information about this AD, contact Bill Ashforth, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM–120S, FAA, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057–3356; phone: 425–917–6432; fax: 425–917–6590; email: Bill.Ashforth@faa.gov.

(2) 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.

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Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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