To find and fix fatigue cracking of certain upper and lower skin panels of the fuselage, which could result in sudden fracture and failure of the skin panels and consequent rapid decompression of the airplane, accomplish the following:

External Detailed and Eddy Current Inspections

(a) For Groups 1 through 6 and Group 8 airplanes: Before the accumulation of 35,000 total flight cycles, or within 4,500 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever is later, do external detailed and eddy current inspections of the crown area skin panels of the fuselage for cracking, per Part 1 and Figure 1 of the Work Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737–53A1210, Revision 1, including Appendix A and excluding Evaluation Form, dated October 25, 2001. Repeat the inspections at least every 4,500 flight cycles until paragraph (c) or (d)(1)(ii) of this AD has been done, as applicable. Although paragraph 1.D. of the service bulletin references a reporting requirement, such reporting is not required by this AD.

Note 2: For the purposes of this AD, a detailed 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.''

(b) For all airplanes: Before the accumulation of 40,000 total flight cycles, or within 4,500 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever is later, do an external detailed inspection of the lower lobe area and section 41 of the fuselage for cracking, per Part 2 and Figure 2 of the Work Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737–53A1210, Revision 1, including Appendix A and excluding Evaluation Form, dated October 25, 2001. Repeat the inspection at least every 9,000 flight cycles until paragraph (d)(2) of this AD has been done, as applicable.

Preventive Modification

(c) For Groups 3, 5, 6, and 8 airplanes: If no cracking is found during any inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, doing the preventive modification of the chem-milled pockets in the upper skin as specified in Part 5 of the Work Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737–53A1210, Revision 1, including Appendix A and excluding Evaluation Form, dated October 25, 2001, ends the repetitive inspections for the modified area only.

Corrective Actions

(d) If any cracking is found during any inspection required by paragraph (a) or (b) of this AD, before further flight, do the actions specified in paragraphs (d)(1) and (d)(2) of this AD, as applicable, per the Work Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737–53A1210, Revision 1, including Appendix A and excluding Evaluation Form, dated October 25, 2001. Where the service bulletin specifies to contact Boeing for repair instructions, before further flight, repair per a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA; or per data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company Designated Engineering Representative (DER) who has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle ACO, to make such findings. For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO, as required by this paragraph, the approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

(1) For cracking of the crown area, do the repair specified in either paragraph (d)(1)(i) or (d)(1)(ii) of this AD. Installation of the lap joint repair specified in paragraph (g) of AD 2002–07–08, amendment 39–12702, is considered acceptable for compliance with the corresponding action specified in this paragraph for the lap joint areas only.

(i) Do a time-limited repair per Part 4 of the Work Instructions of the service bulletin, then do the actions required by paragraph (e) of this AD at the times specified in that paragraph.

(ii) Do a permanent repair per Part 3 of the Work Instructions of the service bulletin. Installation of a permanent repair ends the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD for the repaired area only.

(2) For cracking of the lower lobe area and Section 41, repair per Part 2 of the Work Instructions of the service bulletin. Accomplishment of this repair ends the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (b) of this AD for the repaired area only.

Follow-on and Corrective Actions

(e) If a time-limited repair is done, as specified in paragraph (d)(1)(i) of this AD: Do the actions specified in paragraphs (e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3) of this AD, at the times specified, per the Work Instructions of Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737–53A1210, Revision 1, including Appendix A and excluding Evaluation Form, dated October 25, 2001.

(1) Within 3,000 flight cycles after doing the repair: Do a general visual inspection of the repaired area for loose fasteners per Part 4 of the Work Instructions of the service bulletin. If any loose fastener is found, before further flight, replace with a new fastener per the service bulletin. Then repeat the inspection at least every 3,000 flight cycles until permanent rivets are installed in the repaired area, which ends the repetitive inspections for this paragraph.

(2) Within 4,000 flight cycles after doing the repair: Do an internal eddy current inspection of the skin, tear straps, and lap joint in each adjacent bay of the repaired area for cracking, per Part 4 of the Work Instructions of the service bulletin. If any cracking is found, before further flight, repair per a method approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO, or per data meeting the type certification basis of the airplane approved by a Boeing Company DER who has been authorized by the FAA to make such findings. For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO, as required by this paragraph, the approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

(3) Within 10,000 flight cycles after doing the repair: Make the repair permanent per Part 4 and Figure 20 of the Work Instructions of the service bulletin, which ends the repetitive inspections for the repaired area only.

Credit for Actions Done per Previous Service Bulletin

(f) Inspections, repairs, and preventive modifications done before the effective date of this AD per Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737–53A1210, dated December 14, 2000, are acceptable for compliance with the corresponding actions required by this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(g) 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, Seattle ACO. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

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

Special Flight Permit

(h) 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 June 11, 2003.

Ali Bahrami,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 03–15327 Filed 6–17–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000–NM–169–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC–9–81 (MD–81), DC–9–82 (MD–82), DC–9–83 (MD–83), DC–9–87 (MD–87), and Model MD–88 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 airplanes. This proposal would require reversing the ground stud installation of the main

battery, and installing a new nameplate on the cover of the battery. This action is necessary to prevent damage to equipment or possible fire in the electrical/electronics equipment compartment due to electrical arcing between the ground stud of the main battery and adjacent structure. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by August 4, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000–NM–169–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227–1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: *9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov.* Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain ''Docket No. 2000–NM–169–AD'' in the subject line and need not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 or 2000 or ASCII text.

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: Data and Service Management, Dept. C1–L5A (D800–0024). This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elvin Wheeler, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM–130L, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712–4137; telephone (562) 627–5344; 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 action may be changed in light of the comments received. Submit comments using the following format:

- Organize comments issue-by-issue. For example, discuss a request to change the compliance time and a request to change the service bulletin reference as two separate issues.
- For each issue, state what specific change to the proposed AD is being requested.
- Include justification (*e.g.*, reasons or data) for each request.

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 action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: ''Comments to Docket Number 2000–NM–169–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. 2000–NM–169–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

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 a report indicating that heat damage had been detected on the ground stud of the main battery and on adjacent structure of a Model DC–9–82 (MD–82) airplane. The heat damage has been attributed to a loose or inadequately tightened ground stud of the main battery, which resulted in electrical arcing. Such electrical arcing could result in damage to equipment or possible fire in the electrical/electronics equipment compartment.

The ground stud of the main battery on McDonnell Douglas Model DC–9–81 (MD–81), DC–9–83 (MD–83), DC–9–87 (MD–87), and MD–88 airplanes is identical to that on the affected Model. Therefore, all of these models may be subject to the same unsafe condition.

Other Related Rulemaking

The FAA, in conjunction with Boeing and operators of Model Douglas DC–9–81 (MD–81), DC–9–82 (MD–82), DC–9–83 (MD–83), DC–9–87 (MD–87), and Model MD–88 airplanes, has reviewed 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 corrective actions identified during that process. We have previously issued several other ADs and may consider further rulemaking actions to address the remaining identified unsafe conditions.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD–80–24A159, Revision 01, dated January 24, 2000, which describes procedures for reversing the ground stud of the main battery and installing a nameplate at stations Y=110.000 and Z=39.000 in the lower nose frame area. The manufacturer advises that reversing the ground stud installation will allow easier access to tighten the ground stud nut to proper torque, which will minimize the possibility of the ground stud coming loose and causing arcing or further damage. Installation of the nameplate will clarify installation and torque requirements for future maintenance. 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, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously.

Changes to 14 CFR Part 39/Effect on the Proposed AD

On July 10, 2002, the FAA issued a new version of 14 CFR part 39 (67 FR 47997, July 22, 2002), which governs the FAA's airworthiness directives system. The regulation now includes material that relates to altered products, special flight permits, and alternative methods of compliance (AMOC). Because we have now included this material in part 39, we no longer need to include it in each individual AD; however, this

proposed AD identifies the office authorized to approve AMOCs.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 1,224 Model DC–9–81 (MD–81), DC–9–82 (MD–82), DC–9–83 (MD–83), DC–9–87 (MD–87), and Model MD–88 airplanes of the affected design in the worldwide fleet. The FAA estimates that 600 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately $38, per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $94,800, or $158 per airplane.

The cost impact figure discussed above is 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 proposed AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions. The manufacturer may cover the cost of parts associated with this proposed AD, subject to warranty conditions. Manufacturer warranty remedies also may be available for labor costs associated with this proposed AD. As a result, the costs attributable to the proposed AD may be less than stated above.

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 2000–NM–169–AD.

Applicability: Model DC–9–81 (MD–81), DC–9–82 (MD–82), DC–9–83 (MD–83), DC–9–87 (MD–87), and Model MD–88 airplanes, as listed in McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD80–24A159, Revision 01, dated January 24, 2000; certificated in any category.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent damage to equipment or possible fire in the electrical/electronics equipment compartment due to electrical arcing between the ground stud of the main battery and adjacent structure; accomplish the following:

(a) Within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, reverse the installation of the ground stud for the main battery, and install a new nameplate on the cover of the battery; per McDonnell Douglas Alert Service Bulletin MD80–24A159, Revision 01, dated January 24, 2000.

(b) Accomplishment of the actions specified in paragraph (a) of this AD before the effective date of this AD, in accordance with McDonnell Douglas Service Bulletin MD80–24A159, dated March 15, 1996, is considered to be an acceptable method of compliance with paragraph (a) of this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(c) In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, the Manager, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California, is authorized to approve alternative methods of compliance for this AD.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on June 12, 2003.

Kalene C. Yanamura,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 03–15333 Filed 6–17–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2001–NM–164–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model MD–11 and –11F 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 and –11F airplanes. This proposal would require an initial general visual inspection of the power feeder cables of the integrated drive generator (IDG) and the fuel feed lines of engine plyons No. 1 and No. 3 on the wings for proper clearance and damage; corrective actions if necessary; and repetitive general visual inspections and a terminating action for the repetitive inspections. This action is necessary to prevent potential chafing of the power feeder cables of the IDG in engine pylons No. 1 and No. 3 on the wings, and consequent arcing on the fuel lines in the engine pylons and possible fuel fire. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by August 4, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2001–NM–164–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227–1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: *9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov*. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain ''Docket No. 2001–NM–16–4AD'' in the subject line and need not be submitted