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## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

#### **14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2020-0844; Product Identifier 2020-NM-100-AD; Amendment 39-21364; AD 2020-26-09]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

#### **Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

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**SUMMARY:** The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all The Boeing Company Model 737-100, -200, -200C, -300, -400, and -500 series airplanes. This AD was prompted by a report of cracks found in fastener holes at a certain station of the center wing box. This AD requires repetitive external surface high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections and repetitive external surface ultrasonic inspections; or repetitive internal detailed inspections; of a certain station of the center wing box for any cracking, and repair if necessary. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** This AD is effective January 27, 2021.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of January 27, 2021.

**ADDRESSES:** For service information identified in this final rule, contact Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Attention: Contractual & Data Services (C&DS), 2600 Westminister Blvd., MC 110-SK57, Seal Beach, CA 90740-5600; telephone 562-797-1717; internet <https://www.myboeingfleet.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. It is also available on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0844.

#### **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0844; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this final rule, any

comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is 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:** Wayne Ha, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Section, FAA, Los Angeles ACO Branch, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, CA 90712-4137; phone: 562-627-5238; email: Wayne.Ha@faa.gov.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **Discussion**

The FAA 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 737-100, -200, -200C, -300, -400, and -500 series airplanes. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on September 22, 2020 (85 FR 59449). The NPRM was prompted by a report of cracks found in fastener holes at a certain station of the center wing box. The NPRM proposed to require repetitive external surface HFEC inspections and repetitive external surface ultrasonic inspections; or repetitive internal detailed inspections; of a certain station of the center wing box for any cracking, and repair if necessary.

The FAA is issuing this AD to address any cracking found in fastener holes at the center wing box, which could result in inability of a principal structural element to sustain limit load and could adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane.

### **Comments**

The FAA gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this final rule. The following presents the comments received on the NPRM and the FAA's response to each comment.

### **Support for the NPRM**

Jason Carrig and Boeing stated their support for the NPRM.

### **Effect of Winglets on Accomplishment of the Proposed Actions**

Aviation Partners Boeing stated that accomplishing Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) ST01219SE does not affect the actions specified in the proposed AD.

The FAA concurs with the commenter. The FAA has redesignated paragraph (c) of the proposed AD as paragraph (c)(1) of this AD and added paragraph (c)(2) to this AD to state that installation of STC ST01219SE does not affect the ability to accomplish the actions required by this AD. Therefore, for airplanes on which STC ST01219SE 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.

### **Conclusion**

The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered the comments received, and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this final rule with the changes described previously and minor editorial changes. The FAA has determined that these minor changes:

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

The FAA also determined that these changes will not increase the economic burden on any operator or increase the scope of this final rule.

### **Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51**

The FAA reviewed Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020. The service information describes procedures for repetitive external surface HFEC inspections and repetitive external surface ultrasonic inspections; or repetitive internal detailed inspections; of the center wing box, station 663.75 rear spar, lower skin, and lower chord between left buttock line 31.83 and right buttock line 31.83, for any cracking, and repair 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**

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 141 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

**Estimated Costs for Required Actions**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Labor cost</b>	<b>Parts cost</b>	<b>Cost per product</b>	<b>Cost on U.S. operators</b>
Repetitive external HFEC and external ultrasonic inspections	3 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$255 per inspection cycle	\$0	\$255 per inspection cycle	Up to \$35,955 per inspection cycle
Repetitive internal detailed inspections	28 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$2,380 per inspection cycle	\$0	\$2,380 per inspection cycle	Up to \$335,580 per inspection cycle

The FAA has received no definitive data that would enable providing 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.

The FAA is 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) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) 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:



**2020-26-09 The Boeing Company:** Amendment 39-21364 ; Docket No. FAA-2020-0844; Product Identifier 2020-NM-100-AD.

**(a) Effective Date**

This AD is effective January 27, 2021.

**(b) Affected ADs**

None.

**(c) Applicability**

(1) This AD applies to all The Boeing Company Model 737-100, -200, -200C, -300, -400, and -500 series airplanes, certificated in any category.

(2) Installation of Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) ST01219SE does not affect the ability to accomplish the actions required by this AD. Therefore, for airplanes on which STC ST01219SE 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 57, Wings.

**(e) Unsafe Condition**

This AD was prompted by a report of cracks found in fastener holes at the center wing box, station 663.75 rear spar, of the lower skin located at left buttock line 6.50. The FAA is issuing this AD to address any cracking found in fastener holes at the center wing box, which could result in inability of a principal structural element to sustain limit load and could adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

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

**(g) Required Actions for Group 1 Airplanes**

For airplanes identified as Group 1 in Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020: Within 120 days after the effective date of this AD, inspect the airplane and do all applicable on-condition actions using a method approved in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (j) of this AD.

## **(h) Required Actions for Group 2 Airplanes**

For airplanes identified as Group 2 in Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020, except as specified by paragraph (i) of this AD: At the applicable times specified in the “Compliance” paragraph of Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020, do all applicable actions identified in, and in accordance with, the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020.

Note 1 to paragraph (h): Guidance for accomplishing the actions required by this AD can be found in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 737-57A1348, dated June 1, 2020, which is referred to in Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020.

## **(i) Exceptions to Service Information Specifications**

(1) Where Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020, uses the phrase “the original issue date of Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB,” this AD requires using “the effective date of this AD,” except where Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020, uses the phrase “the original issue date of Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB” in a note or flag note.

(2) Where Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020, specifies contacting Boeing for repair instructions: This AD requires doing the 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 ACO Branch, 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 certification office, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (k)(1) 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 Company Organization Designation Authorization (ODA) that has been authorized by the Manager, Los Angeles ACO Branch, FAA, 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.

## **(k) Related Information**

(1) For more information about this AD, contact Wayne Ha, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Section, FAA, Los Angeles ACO Branch, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, CA 90712-4137; phone: 562-627-5238; email: Wayne.Ha@faa.gov.

(2) Service information identified in this AD that is not incorporated by reference is available at the addresses specified in paragraphs (l)(3) and (4) of this AD.

## **(I) 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 Requirements Bulletin 737-57A1348 RB, dated June 1, 2020.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Boeing Commercial Airplanes, Attention: Contractual & Data Services (C&DS), 2600 Westminister Blvd., MC 110-SK57, Seal Beach, CA 90740-5600; telephone 562-797-1717; internet <https://www.myboeingfleet.com>.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195.

(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, email [fedreg.legal@nara.gov](mailto:fedreg.legal@nara.gov), or go to: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on December 9, 2020.

Lance T. Gant,

Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

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