

of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(h) This amendment (39-9124) supersedes AD 91-08-01, Amendment 39-7007.

(i) This amendment (39-9124) becomes effective on March 10, 1995.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on January 18, 1995.

**Barry D. Clements,**

*Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

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#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 94-NM-52-AD; Amendment 39-9126; AD 95-02-07]

#### **Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 747 Series Airplanes Equipped With General Electric CF6-45 or CF6-50 Engines or Pratt & Whitney JT9D Series Engines**

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

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Boeing Model 747 series airplanes, that requires installation of a seal on the wing front spar at each engine strut. This amendment is prompted by a report of a fire that occurred due to fuel leakage from the fuel line coupling in the engine strut area along the wing front spar while the airplane was on the ground after engine shutdown. The actions specified by this AD are intended to ensure that fuel is contained within the strut drainage area and channeled away from ignition sources.

**DATES:** Effective March 16, 1995.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 16, 1995.

**ADDRESSES:** The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** G. Michael Collins, Aerospace Engineer, Propulsion Branch, ANM-140S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington

98055-4056; telephone (206) 227-2689; fax (206) 227-1181.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Boeing Model 747 series airplanes was published in the **Federal Register** on June 9, 1994 (59 FR 29744). That action proposed to require installation of a seal on the wing front spar at each engine strut.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comments received.

One commenter supports the proposed rule.

Several commenters state that the one reported incident was an "isolated incident" and is not characteristic of industry findings. One commenter also states that the incident was not a safety-of-flight issue since the reported fire occurred while the airplane was on the ground. Because of this, these commenters request that the FAA withdraw the proposed rule. The FAA does not concur. As explained in detail in the preamble to the proposed rule, airflow when the airplane is in flight or airflow from the engine running when the airplane is on the ground does prevent fuel from leaking onto hot engine surface. However, a potential unsafe condition still exists because fire can occur after engine shutdown as a result of the fuel dripping onto the hot engine surface. The reported fire demonstrates that the design of the flammable fluid drainage system does not adequately separate the fuel leak from the hot surface of the engine following engine shutdown. The FAA has determined that the actions required by this AD are warranted in order to address that unsafe condition.

Several commenters contend that the proposed installation of a seal on the wing front spar at each engine will not prevent a fuel leak from occurring. One commenter states that individual modifications, such as the proposed modification, should only be required as part of a more comprehensive program of modifications that will address all known fuel system leakage problems. (The commenter did not, however, provide any specific details of a program.) Another commenter states that periodic replacement of the O-rings in the fitting would prevent the leakage of fuel; therefore, the proposed installation is not necessary. Because of these items, these commenters request that the rule not be issued. The FAA

does not concur. Each incident report and each modification presented to correct causes of fuel leakage incidents is evaluated by the FAA. Both the effectiveness of the modification and the economic impact to accomplish corrective action required by an AD are considered. The FAA has determined that the installation required by this AD will improve the drainage system and prevent future fires that could be caused by fuel leakage from the fuel line (Wiggins) coupling in the engine strut area. Scheduled replacement of the O-rings may reduce the potential for fuel leaks caused by worn or aged O-rings, but it will not eliminate all causes of fuel leakage in the area of the modification.

One commenter states that the seal described in the proposed rule will be replaced during an anticipated "Boeing Model 747 strut modification program," and that installing the seal before modifying the strut area would provide a short-lived increase in safety. This commenter, therefore, considers the proposed installation to be unwarranted. The FAA does not concur. The planned strut modification program does not include a requirement for incorporation of the installation required by this AD, nor has a compliance time for the strut modifications been established; it is likely that the compliance time may be a period of three to five years. Although the planned strut modifications may require the removal and reinstallation of the seal installation required by this AD, the risk of a fire occurring before the planned strut modification program is implemented outweighs the convenience of waiting to install the seal until the strut modification is accomplished. The installation required by this AD can be incorporated during normal scheduled maintenance periods, thereby reducing the costs associated with this installation since access to this area will be necessitated in order to accomplish other scheduled maintenance actions.

Several commenters request that the FAA extend the proposed compliance time for the installation. Some of the commenters request the compliance time be extended from the proposed 12 months to as much as 48 months. This would permit ample time to accomplish the installation during scheduled maintenance periods. One of these commenters requests that the compliance time be extended to coincide with the planned strut modification program to reduce the additional cost to the operators. The FAA concurs that the compliance time may be extended somewhat. In