

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## Federal Aviation Administration

## 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-139-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

**Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Model F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 Series Airplanes, and Model F27 Mark 050 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 all Fokker Model F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes, and Model F27 Mark 050 series airplanes. This proposal would require revising the Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) to modify the limitation that prohibits positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop during flight, and to provide a statement of the consequences of positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop during flight. This proposal is prompted by incidents and accidents involving airplanes equipped with turboprop engines in which the ground propeller beta range was used improperly during flight. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent loss of airplane controllability caused by the power levers being positioned below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by April 20, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-139-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.

This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mark Quam, Aerospace Engineer, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2145; fax (425) 227-1149.

## 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 97-NM-139-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. 97-NM-139-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

**Discussion**

In recent years, the FAA has received reports of 14 incidents and/or accidents involving intentional or inadvertent operation of the propellers in the ground beta range during flight on airplanes equipped with turboprop engines. (For the purposes of this proposal, beta is defined as the range of propeller operation intended for use during taxi, ground idle, or reverse operations as controlled by the power lever settings aft of the flight idle stop.)

Five of the 14 in-flight beta occurrences were classified as accidents. In each of these five cases, operation of the propellers in the beta range occurred during flight. Operation of the propellers in the beta range during flight, if not prevented, could result in loss of airplane controllability.

Communication between the FAA and the public during a meeting held on

June 11-12, 1996, in Seattle, Washington, revealed a lack of consistency of the information on in-flight beta operation contained in the FAA-approved airplane flight manual (AFM) for airplanes that are not certificated for in-flight operation with the power levers below the flight idle stop. (Airplanes that are certificated for this type of operation are not affected by the above-referenced conditions.)

**U.S. Type Certification of the Airplane**

These airplane models are manufactured in the Netherlands and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of Section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. The FAA has reviewed all available information and determined that AD action is necessary for products of these type designs that are certificated for operation in the United States.

**FAA's Determinations**

The FAA has examined the circumstances and reviewed all available information related to the incidents and accidents described previously. The FAA finds that the Limitations Section of the AFM's for certain airplanes must be revised to prohibit positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight, and to provide a statement of the consequences of positioning the power levers below the flight idle stop. The FAA has determined that the affected airplanes include those that are equipped with turboprop engines and that are not certificated for in-flight operation with the power levers below the flight idle stop. Since Fokker Model F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes, and Model F27 Mark 050 series airplanes meet these criteria, the FAA finds that the AFM for these airplanes must be revised to include the limitation and statement of consequences described previously.

**Explanation of the Requirements of the Proposed AD**

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on Model F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes, and Model F27 Mark 050 series airplanes of the same type design, the proposed AD would require revising the Limitations Section of the AFM to modify the limitation that prohibits the positioning of the power levers below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight, and to add a statement of the consequences of positioning the power

levers below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight.

### Interim Action

This is considered interim action until final action is identified, at which time the FAA may consider further rulemaking.

### Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 49 Fokker Model F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes, and Model F27 Mark 050 series airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$2,940, or \$60 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 AD were not adopted.

### Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects 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, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

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:

**Fokker:** Docket 97-NM-139-AD.

**Applicability:** All Model F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes, and Model F27 Mark 050 series airplanes, 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 loss of airplane controllability caused by the power levers being positioned below the flight idle stop while the airplane is in flight, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, revise the Limitations Section of the FAA-approved Airplane Flight Manual (AFM) to include the following statements as specified in paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of this AD, as applicable. This action may be accomplished by inserting a copy of this AD into the AFM.

(1) For Model F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes, insert the following:

"Warning: Ground fine pitch must not be selected in flight. This may lead to loss of control from which recovery may not be possible."

(2) For Model F27 Mark 050 series airplanes, insert the following:

"Warning: Do not attempt to select ground idle in flight. In case of failure of the flight idle stop, this would lead to loss of control from which recovery may not be possible."

(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, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, 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, Standardization Branch, ANM-113.

**Note 2:** Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Standardization Branch, ANM-113.

(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 March 13, 1998.

**Darrell M. Pederson,**

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

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-NM-15-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

### Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 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 Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes. This proposal would require replacing certain toilet rinse valves with modified rinse valves. This proposal is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent water contamination of the avionics computers, which could result in the display of erroneous or misleading information to the flightcrew, and consequent reduced controllability of the airplane.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by April 20, 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-15-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.