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## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

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

**[Docket No. FAA-2019-0711; Product Identifier 2019-NM-167-AD; Amendment 39-19755; AD 2019-20-02]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

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

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

**ACTION:** Final rule; request for comments.

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**SUMMARY:** The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all The Boeing Company Model 737-600, -700, -700C, -800, -900, and -900ER series airplanes. This AD requires repetitive inspections for cracking of the left and right hand side outboard chords of frame fittings and failsafe straps at a certain station, and repair if any cracking is found. This AD was prompted by reports of cracking discovered in this area. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** This AD is effective October 3, 2019.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of October 3, 2019.

The FAA must receive comments on this AD by November 18, 2019.

**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 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, Transport Standards 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 <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2019-0711.

## **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-2019-0711; 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, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations (phone: 800-647-5527) is listed above. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Greg Rutar, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Section, FAA, Seattle ACO Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone and fax: 206-231-3529; email: [Greg.Rutar@faa.gov](mailto:Greg.Rutar@faa.gov).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **Discussion**

In September 2019, the FAA received reports of cracking discovered in the left and right hand side outboard chords of the station (STA) 663.75 frame fittings and failsafe straps adjacent to the stringer S-18A straps on multiple Boeing Model 737-800 airplanes during a passenger-to-freighter conversion. The affected airplanes had accumulated between 35,578 and 37,329 total flight cycles. Cracking in the STA 663.75 frame fitting outboard chords and failsafe straps adjacent to the stringer S-18A straps, if not addressed, could result in failure of a Principal Structural Element (PSE) to sustain limit load. This condition could adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane and result in loss of control of the airplane.

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

The FAA reviewed Boeing Multi-Operator Message MOM-MOM-19-0536-01B, dated September 30, 2019. This service information describes procedures for a detailed inspection for cracking of the left and right hand side outboard chords of the STA 663.75 frame fittings and failsafe straps adjacent to the stringer S-18A straps. This service information also provides procedures for reporting inspection results to Boeing. 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.

### **FAA's Determination**

The FAA is issuing this AD because the agency 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.

### **AD Requirements**

This AD requires repetitive inspections for cracking of the left and right hand side outboard chords of the STA 663.75 frame fittings and failsafe straps adjacent to the stringer S-18A straps. This AD also requires repair of all cracking using a method approved by the FAA or The Boeing Company Organization Designation Authorization (ODA). This AD also requires sending a report of all results of the initial inspection to Boeing.

## **Interim Action**

The FAA considers this AD interim action. The inspection reports that are required by this AD will enable the manufacturer to obtain better insight into the nature, cause, and extent of the cracking, and eventually to develop final action to address the unsafe condition. Once final action has been identified, the FAA might consider further rulemaking.

## **Justification for Immediate Adoption and Determination of the Effective Date**

Section 553(b)(3)(B) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C.) authorizes agencies to dispense with notice and comment procedures for rules when the agency, for “good cause,” finds that those procedures are “impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.” Under this section, an agency, upon finding good cause, may issue a final rule without seeking comment prior to the rulemaking. Similarly, Section 553(d) of the APA authorizes agencies to make rules effective in less than thirty days, upon a finding of good cause.

An unsafe condition exists that requires the immediate adoption of this AD without providing an opportunity for public comments prior to adoption. The FAA has found that the risk to the flying public justifies forgoing notice and comment prior to adoption of this rule because cracking in the STA 663.75 frame fitting outboard chords and failsafe straps adjacent to the stringer S-18A straps could result in failure of a PSE to sustain limit load. This condition could adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane and result in loss of control of the airplane. The compliance time for the required action is shorter than the time necessary for the public to comment and for publication of the final rule.

Accordingly, notice and opportunity for prior public comment are impracticable and contrary to the public interest pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(B). In addition, for the reasons stated above, the FAA finds that good cause exists pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d) for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

## **Comments Invited**

This AD is a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment. However, the FAA invites you to send any written data, views, or arguments about this final rule. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include the docket number FAA-2019-0711 and Product Identifier 2019-NM-167-AD at the beginning of your comments. The FAA specifically invites comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this final rule. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this final rule because of those comments.

The FAA will post all comments the agency receives, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The FAA will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact the agency receives about this final rule.

## **Regulatory Flexibility Act**

The requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) do not apply when an agency finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 to adopt a rule without prior notice and comment. Because the FAA has determined that it has good cause to adopt this rule without notice and comment, RFA analysis is not required.

## Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 1,911 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

### Estimated Costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspection	1 work-hour × \$85 per hour = \$85 per inspection cycle	\$0	\$85 per inspection cycle	\$162,435 per inspection cycle.
Reporting	1 work-hour × \$85 per hour = \$85	\$0	\$85	\$162,435.

The FAA has received no definitive data that would enable the agency to provide cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this AD.

## Paperwork Reduction Act

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB control number. The control number for the collection of information required by this AD is 2120-0056. The paperwork cost associated with this AD has been detailed in the Costs of Compliance section of this document and includes time for reviewing instructions, as well as completing and reviewing the collection of information. Therefore, all reporting associated with this AD is mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to the FAA at 800 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20591. ATTN: Information Collection Clearance Officer, AES-200.

## 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.

This AD is issued in accordance with authority delegated by the Executive Director, Aircraft Certification Service, as authorized by FAA Order 8000.51C. In accordance with that order, issuance of ADs is normally a function of the Compliance and Airworthiness Division, but during this transition period, the Executive Director has delegated the authority to issue ADs applicable to transport category airplanes and associated appliances to the Director of the System Oversight Division.

## 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, and
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska.

### **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 (AD):



**2019-20-02 The Boeing Company:** Amendment 39-19755; Docket No. FAA-2019-0711; Product Identifier 2019-NM-167-AD.

**(a) Effective Date**

This AD is effective October 3, 2019.

**(b) Affected ADs**

None.

**(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to all The Boeing Company Model 737-600, -700, -700C, -800, -900, and -900ER series airplanes, certificated in any category.

**(d) Subject**

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

**(e) Unsafe Condition**

This AD was prompted by reports of cracking discovered in the left and right hand side outboard chords of the station (STA) 663.75 frame fittings and failsafe straps adjacent to the stringer S-18A straps. The FAA is issuing this AD to address cracking in the STA 663.75 frame fitting outboard chords and failsafe straps adjacent to the stringer S-18A straps, which could result in failure of a Principal Structural Element (PSE) to sustain limit load. This condition could adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane and result in loss of control of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

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

**(g) Inspection and Corrective Action**

At the earlier of the times specified in paragraphs (g)(1) and (2) of this AD: Do a detailed inspection for cracking of the left and right hand side outboard chords of the STA 663.75 frame fittings and failsafe straps adjacent to the stringer S-18A straps, in accordance with Boeing Multi-Operator Message MOM-MOM-19-0536-01B, dated September 30, 2019. If any crack is found, repair before further flight using a method approved in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (k) of this AD. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 3,500 flight cycles.

(1) Prior to the accumulation of 30,000 total flight cycles, or within 7 days after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) Prior to the accumulation of 22,600 total flight cycles, or within 1,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

#### **(h) Report**

At the applicable time specified in paragraph (h)(1) or (2) of this AD, submit a report of all findings, positive and negative, of the initial inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD. Submit the report in accordance with Boeing Multi-Operator Message MOM-MOM-19-0536-01B, dated September 30, 2019.

(1) If the inspection was done on or after the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 3 days after the inspection.

(2) If the inspection was done before the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 3 days after the effective date of this AD.

#### **(i) Special Flight Permit**

Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with 14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199 to operate the airplane to a location where the airplane can be repaired if any crack is found, provided the Manager, Seattle ACO Branch, FAA, concurs with issuance of the special flight permit. Send requests for concurrence by email to 9-ANM-Seattle-ACO-AMOC-Requests@faa.gov.

#### **(j) Paperwork Reduction Act Burden Statement**

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2120-0056. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be approximately 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to the FAA at: 800 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20591, Attn: Information Collection Clearance Officer, AES-200.

#### **(k) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)**

(1) The Manager, Seattle 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 (l) 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 by The Boeing Company Organization Designation Authorization (ODA) that has been authorized by the Manager, Seattle 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.

## **(l) Related Information**

For more information about this AD, contact Greg Rutar, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Section, FAA, Seattle ACO Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone and fax: 206-231-3529; email: Greg.Rutar@faa.gov.

## **(m) 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 Multi-Operator Message MOM-MOM-19-0536-01B, dated September 30, 2019.

(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, Transport Standards 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: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued in Des Moines, Washington, on September 30, 2019.

Michael Kaszycki,  
Acting Director, System Oversight Division,  
Aircraft Certification Service.