corners of the door frame and the cross beams of the aft cargo door, in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 737–52–1079, Revision 5, dated May 16, 1996.

(1) If no cracking is detected, accomplish the requirements of either paragraph (a)(1)(i) or (a)(1)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Repeat the internal visual inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 4,500 flight cycles. Or,

(ii) Prior to further flight, modify the corners of the door frame and the cross beams of the aft cargo door in accordance with the service bulletin. Accomplishment of such modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD.

(2) If any cracking is detected in the upper or lower cross beams, prior to further flight, modify the cracked beam in accordance with paragraph III.C. of Part I of the Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin. Accomplishment of such modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD for the repaired beam.

(3) If any cracking is detected in the forward or aft upper door frame, prior to further flight, repair the frame and modify the corners of the door frame of the aft cargo door, in accordance with paragraph III.E. of Part I of the Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin, except as provided by paragraph (b) of this AD. Accomplishment of such modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD for the upper door frame.

Note 2: Cracks of the forward or aft upper door frame, regardless of length, must be repaired prior to further flight in accordance with paragraph III.E. of Part I of the Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin.

(4) If any cracking is detected in the forward or aft lower door frame, prior to further flight, replace the damaged frame with a new frame, and modify the corners of the door frame of the aft cargo door, in accordance with paragraph III.F. of Part I of the Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin. Accomplishment of such modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD for the lower door frame.

(b) Where Boeing Service Bulletin 737–52–1079, Revision 5, dated May 16, 1996, specifies that certain repairs are to be accomplished in accordance with instructions received from Boeing, this AD requires that, prior to further flight, such repairs be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

(c) Modification of the corners of the door frame and the cross beams of the aft cargo door in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 737–52–1079, Revision 5, dated May 16, 1996, or in accordance with the requirements of AD 90–06–02, amendment 39–6489, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD.

Note 3: Modification of the corners of the door frame and the cross beams of the aft cargo door accomplished prior to the effective date of this AD in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 737–52–1079, dated December 16, 1983; Revision 1, dated December 15, 1988; Revision 2, dated July 20, 1989; Revision 3, dated May 17, 1990; or Revision 4, dated February 21, 1991; are considered acceptable for compliance with paragraph (c) of this AD.

(d) 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 4: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

(e) 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.

(f) Except as provided by paragraph (b) of this AD, the inspections, repair, replacement, and modification (if accomplished), shall be done in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 737–52–1079, Revision 5, dated May 16, 1996. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124–2207. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(g) This amendment becomes effective on December 24, 1998.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on November 30, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–32361 Filed 12–8–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–NM–319–AD; Amendment 39–10932; AD 98–23–51]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 727 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This document publishes in the **Federal Register** an amendment adopting Airworthiness Directive (AD) T98–23–51 that was sent previously to all known U.S. owners and operators of certain Boeing Model 727 series airplanes by individual telegrams. This AD requires modification of certain fuselage skin lap joints and, on certain airplanes, modification of the lap joint(s) in the door structure. This AD also requires repetitive internal detailed visual inspections to detect cracking, corrosion, or delamination of the fuselage skin lap joints, and repair, if necessary. This action is prompted by information that a modification required by an existing AD may not have been accomplished completely on as many as 160 airplanes. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent corrosion and subsequent fatigue cracking of the fuselage skin lap joints, which could result in rapid decompression of the airplane.

DATES: Effective December 14, 1998, to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by telegraphic AD T98–23–51, issued on November 27, 1998, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

The incorporation by reference of Boeing Service Bulletin 727–53–0072, Revision 5, dated June 1, 1989, as listed in the regulations, is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of December 14, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of Boeing Document D6–54929, ''Aging Airplane Corrosion Prevention and Control Program, Model 727,'' Revision A, dated July 28, 1989, as listed in the regulations, was approved previously by the Director of the Federal Register as of December 31, 1990 (55 FR 49258, November 27, 1990).

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before February 8, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98–NM–319–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

The applicable service information may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124–2207. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 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: Steven R. Edgar, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ANM–120S, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–2025; fax (425) 227–1181.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On February 21, 1991, the FAA issued AD 91–06–06, amendment 39–6921 (56 FR 9612, March 7, 1991), which is applicable to certain Boeing Model 727 series airplanes. [The airplanes affected by that AD are those on which the body skin longitudinal lap joints were bonded together with a room temperature curing epoxy adhesive (''cold-bonded'') in conjunction with flush riveting.] That AD superseded two existing AD's to require inspections to detect cracks, corrosion, and delamination of the fuselage skin lap joints, and repair, if necessary. That AD also requires modifications of certain lap joints. That action was prompted by reports of cracking in the lap joints. The actions required by that AD are intended to prevent rapid decompression of the airplane.

The compliance times for accomplishment of the modifications required by AD 91–06–06 were specified in that AD as follows:

- For airplanes that had accumulated 45,000 or more landings as of August 21, 1989 [the effective date of AD 89–15–06, amendment 39–6262 (54 FR 29530, July 13, 1989)]: Within 4 years after August 21, 1989.
- For airplanes that had accumulated less than 45,000 landings as of August 21, 1989: Within 6 years after August 21, 1989, or prior to the accumulation of 28,000 landings, whichever occurs later.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

The FAA recently received information that the modification required by AD 91–06–06 may not have been accomplished completely on as many as 160 airplanes that are included in the applicability of that AD and that are subject to the unsafe condition addressed in that AD. These airplanes were converted from a passenger-carrying to a cargo-carrying (''freighter'') configuration, or to a passenger-and cargo-carrying (''combi'') configuration. These conversions included installation of a main deck cargo door. Although these conversions were accomplished in accordance with several different Supplemental Type Certificates (STC), in each case, as part of the modification, a doubler (approximately 20 feet long) was installed over lap joints S–4L, S–10L, S–19L, and (sometimes) S–26L.

FAA personnel have recently examined five of these airplanes, operated by three operators, and determined that the lap joints had not been modified, as required, in the area covered by the doublers on any of the five airplanes. Preliminary inquiries indicate a substantial likelihood that very few of the freighters or combi airplanes have been so modified.

FAA's Determinations

The installation of doublers over the lap joints during the freighter or combi conversions did not correct the unsafe condition addressed by AD 91–06–06 because it is not effective in preventing delamination, corrosion, and cracking in the lap joint. In fact, in some cases, the unsafe condition may be aggravated because of load redistribution due to the installation of a main deck cargo door. This may accelerate crack growth along the lap joint under the doubler.

Because it is possible that these lap joints have been neither inspected nor modified as required by AD 91–06–06, the FAA considers that there is a significant risk that such cracking may have occurred on these airplanes. Because without special inspections such cracking cannot be detected until the crack emerges from under the doubler, such cracks could remain undetected until they approach or reach a length at which the fuselage can no longer sustain pressure loads sufficiently to prevent catastrophic rapid decompression.

Ordinarily, failure to comply with an AD may result in immediate grounding of the affected airplane(s) until compliance is achieved. However, given the size of the fleet affected by this AD, the length of time that will be necessary to modify the fleet using existing available maintenance facilities, and the interim inspections required by this AD, the FAA considers that immediate grounding would be unwarranted.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The FAA has reviewed and approved Boeing Service Bulletin 727–53–0072, Revision 5, dated June 1, 1989, which describes procedures for modification of the fuselage skin lap joints. Those procedures include separating and reworking the joint; performing a high frequency eddy current inspection of the holes to detect cracking; and oversizing the fastener holes; and installing certain fasteners.

Explanation of Requirements of the Rule

Since the unsafe condition described is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design, the FAA issued Telegraphic AD T98–23–51 to prevent corrosion and subsequent fatigue cracking of the fuselage skin lap joints, which could result in rapid decompression of the airplane. The AD requires modification of certain fuselage skin lap joints. On certain airplanes, the fuselage structure that was removed to make the opening for the door is used to fabricate the door itself. For those airplanes, this AD also requires modification of the lap joint(s) in the door structure. This AD allows continued operation of these airplanes for a limited period to permit the required modification to be accomplished without undue disruption. The modification is required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

This AD also requires repetitive internal detailed visual inspections to detect cracking, corrosion, or delamination of the fuselage skin lap joints, and repair, if necessary. The AD requires that those inspections be accomplished repetitively at intervals not to exceed 60 landings until the modification is accomplished. The inspection is required to be accomplished in accordance with certain tasks specified in Boeing Document D6–54929, ''Aging Airplane Corrosion Prevention and Control Program, Model 727,'' Revision A, dated July 28, 1989. Repair, if necessary, is required to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

The FAA investigated several different non-destructive inspection methods that could be used to detect cracking in the upper row of the lap joints that have been covered by the doublers. The FAA (including representatives of the FAA Technical Center and a national resource specialist for non-destructive evaluation), in conjunction with Sandia Laboratories, The Boeing Company, and several designated engineering representatives, considered various inspection methods. Those methods included low frequency eddy current, high frequency eddy current, x-ray, sliding probe eddy current, and ultrasonic techniques. Some of these techniques hold potential for detecting cracking in the hidden upper row of the lap joint. However, those methods tend to be sensitive to configurational differences and require good accessibility to the joint. Due to variability of configurations within the fleet, a single procedure and standard could not be developed in sufficient

time to accomplish the necessary inspections.

As a result of these discussions, the FAA deemed a detailed internal visual inspection the most useful short-term inspection. The FAA expects that this inspection is not likely to detect cracking unless the cracking has turned and run circumferentially. However, this inspection can be accomplished quickly and easily in the field, and is expected to yield some measure of security in the short term.

While these inspections will be effective in detecting some types of cracking, the FAA is not confident that all potentially catastrophic cracking can be detected by these inspections. Therefore, this AD requires accomplishment of the modification within 120 days or 250 landings after the effective date of the AD, whichever occurs later. In addition, paragraph (f) specifies that no airplane shall be returned to service following modification from a passenger-carrying to a ''freighter'' or a ''combi'' configuration, unless the modification required by paragraph (b) of this AD has been accomplished on that airplane.

It should be noted that, although this AD has the effect of staying the requirement of AD 91–06–06 to accomplish the modifications in the area of the main deck cargo door, for the period specified in this AD, this stay applies only once the AD becomes effective. For the period between the compliance deadline imposed by AD 91–06–06 and the effective date of this AD, the FAA has initiated investigations to determine the causes of the operators' failures to comply, and may initiate appropriate legal enforcement action to address those failures.

In most AD's, the compliance provision includes the phrase, ''compliance required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.'' In this AD, the phrase ''unless accomplished previously'' is omitted because it is possible that operators' maintenance records may indicate that the requirements of AD 91–06–06, including the modification, have been accomplished. As indicated, however, these records are likely to be inaccurate for the subject airplanes. Therefore, this AD requires that the modification be accomplished regardless of the information contained in the maintenance records. If an operator can verify that the modification required by this AD has, in fact, been accomplished, it may request approval of an alternative method of compliance (AMOC), in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (g) of this AD, based on submission of data verifying such accomplishment.

Since the issuance of AD 91–06–06, the FAA has approved several AMOC's for that AD for freighter and combi airplanes. These AMOC's allow internal and external visual inspections in lieu of the repetitive visual and high frequency eddy current inspections. However, the approval of these alternative inspection methods did not affect the modification requirement of paragraph F. of AD 91–06–06, and were based on an assumption that the modification either had been or would be accomplished. In addition, these inspections are unreliable to detect cracking in the upper row of fasteners under the doubler.

The FAA also approved one AMOC, applicable to Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) SA1368SO, which approved the modification in accordance with the STC to be an acceptable alternative to the modification required by paragraph F. of AD 91–06–06. Preliminary information indicates that as many as 30 airplanes may have been modified in accordance with STC SA1368SO.

As explained previously, installation of the doubler in accordance with this STC is not likely to stop propagation of cracking that was present at the time the main deck cargo door was installed, nor will it prevent new cracks from initiating. Further, once initiated, such cracking is likely to grow undetected because it is hidden between the doubler and the inner skin. AMOC's approved previously in accordance with AD 91–06–06 are not considered to be valid as alternative methods of compliance with this AD unless those AMOC's are approved separately under the provisions of paragraph (g) of this AD.

Normally, the compliance time specified for the required modification would be sufficient for the FAA to provide notice and a brief public comment period before adopting such a requirement. However, in this case, because of the significant time required to accomplish the modification, the full compliance time is necessary to prevent unnecessarily disrupting operations. This compliance period will enable operators either to comply or to develop sufficient data to substantiate extension of the compliance time or approval of an AMOC. This compliance time does not reflect a lack of urgency for adopting the requirement.

On November 19, 1998, the FAA met with affected operators and STC holders to discuss the issues addressed in this AD. A joint FAA/industry team was formed to address the relevant technical issues and to develop data necessary to address the identified unsafe condition. It was agreed that the team's objective is either to provide means for operators to comply within the specified compliance time or to substantiate that an acceptable level of safety can be maintained for some longer period before the required modification is accomplished.

At this meeting, the FAA emphasized the necessity of correcting the unsafe condition by modifying the lap joints under the doublers. The FAA also emphasized the risk that AMOC requests would not be approvable if, as some suggested, industry focuses its efforts during the 120-day compliance time on attempting to develop alternatives to modifying the lap joints. For airplanes that are already scheduled to undergo heavy maintenance during the 120-day compliance time, operators have the opportunity to comply with this AD with the least possible disruption. Accomplishment of the modification on these airplanes also will provide important data on the condition of the lap joints under the doubler that will be very useful in assessing the appropriateness of AMOC requests for other airplanes. Therefore, if operators fail to avail themselves of this opportunity, the FAA will not be receptive to requests for AMOC's or compliance time extensions for those airplanes.

Since it was found that immediate corrective action was required, notice and opportunity for prior public comment thereon were impracticable and contrary to the public interest, and good cause existed to make the AD effective immediately by individual telegrams issued on November 27, 1998, to all known U.S. owners and operators of certain Boeing Model 727 series airplanes. These conditions still exist, and the AD is hereby published in the **Federal Register** as an amendment to section 39.13 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 39.13) to make it effective to all persons.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this 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 under the caption **ADDRESSES.** All communications received on or before

the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: ''Comments to Docket Number 98–NM–319–AD.'' The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will 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 final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

The FAA has determined that this regulation is an emergency regulation that must be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft, and that it is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866. It has been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it, if filed, may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES.**

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends 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:

98–23–51 Boeing: Amendment 39–10932. Docket 98–NM–319–AD.

Applicability: Model 727 series airplanes, line positions 1 through 849 inclusive; that have been converted from a passenger-carrying to a cargo-carrying (''freighter'') configuration, or to a passenger- and cargo-carrying (''combi'') configuration; certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise 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 (g) 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.

To prevent corrosion and subsequent fatigue cracking of the fuselage skin lap joints, which could result in rapid decompression of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 60 landings after the effective date of this AD, perform a detailed internal visual inspection to detect cracking, corrosion, or delamination of the fuselage skin lap joints where those lap joints are covered by external doublers at stringers S–4L, S–10L, S–19L, and S–26L from body station 360 to 740; in accordance with task numbers C53–224–01 and C53–111–01 of Boeing Document D6–54929, ''Aging Airplane Corrosion Prevention and Control Program, Model 727,'' Revision A, dated July 28, 1989. The lap joints must be completely exposed to perform the inspection.

(1) If no cracking, corrosion, or delamination is found, repeat the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD thereafter at intervals not to exceed 60 landings until the modification required by paragraph (b) of this AD is accomplished.

(2) If any crack, corrosion, or delamination is found, prior to further flight, repair damaged structure in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Thereafter, repeat the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD at intervals not to exceed 60 landings until the modification required by paragraph (b) of this AD is accomplished.

(b) Modify the fuselage skin lap joints where those lap joints are covered by external doublers at stringers S–4L, S–10L, S–19L, and S–26L from body station 360 to 740 by removing the external doublers; and by separating and reworking the joint in accordance with Part IV, Figure 4, of the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Service Bulletin 727–53–0072, Revision 5, dated June 1, 1989, except that blind fasteners shall not be installed. Before oversizing the fastener holes as part of the modification, perform a high frequency eddy current inspection of the holes to detect cracking, in accordance with the service bulletin; and, prior to further flight, repair any cracking in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO. When reassembling the lap joint, all three rows of fasteners must penetrate all layers of the lap joint, including the upper skin, lower skin, and the doublers; and the stringers and tripler, as applicable. Accomplish the modification at the latest of the times specified in paragraphs (b)(1), (b)(2), and (b)(3) of this AD.

(1) Prior to the accumulation of 28,000 total landings.

(2) Within 250 landings after the effective date of this AD.

(3) Within 120 days after the effective date of this AD.

Note 2: Installation of protruding head fasteners in the upper row of fasteners of the lap joint in itself does not constitute accomplishment of the modification.

(c) For airplanes on which the cargo door itself was manufactured using the original fuselage skin, paragraphs (a) and (b) of this AD also apply to the lap joint(s) in the door structure.

(d) Accomplishment of the modification required by paragraph (b) of this AD constitutes terminating action for the inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD, and constitutes an acceptable alternative method of compliance with paragraph F. of AD 91–06–06 for the affected area.

(e) Contrary provisions of AD 91–06–06 notwithstanding, this AD allows continued operation of the subject airplanes following the effective date of this AD in accordance with the terms of this AD, provided that the modification required by AD 91–06–06 has been accomplished on all lap joints other than those in the area of the main deck cargo door.

(f) For any airplane that, as of the effective date of this AD, is being, or will be converted from a passenger-carrying to a cargo-carrying (''freighter'') configuration, or to a passenger- and cargo-carrying (''combi'') configuration: After the effective date of this AD, no such

airplane shall be returned to service following such conversion unless the modification required by paragraph (b) of this AD has been accomplished on that airplane.

(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: Alternative methods of compliance, approved previously in accordance with AD 91–06–06, amendment 39–6921, are not considered to be approved as alternative methods of compliance with this AD.

Note 4: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

(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.

(i) The actions shall be done in accordance with Boeing Service Bulletin 727–53–0072, Revision 5, dated June 1, 1989; and Boeing Document D6–54929, ''Aging Airplane Corrosion Prevention and Control Program, Model 727,'' Revision A, dated July 28, 1989.

(1) The incorporation by reference of Boeing Service Bulletin 727–53–0072, Revision 5, dated June 1, 1989, is approved by the Director of the Federal Register, in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) The incorporation by reference of Boeing Document D6–54929, ''Aging Airplane Corrosion Prevention and Control Program, Model 727,'' Revision A, dated July 28, 1989, was approved previously by the Director of the Federal Register as of December 31, 1990 (55 FR 49258, November 27, 1990).

(3) Copies may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124–2207. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(j) This amendment becomes effective on December 14, 1998, to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by telegraphic AD T98–23–51, issued on November 27, 1998, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on December 1, 1998.

John J. Hickey,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–32472 Filed 12–8–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–SW–33–AD; Amendment 39–10936; AD 98–25–10]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Aircraft Belts, Inc. Model CS, CT, FM, FN, GK, GL, JD, JE, JT, JU, MD, ME, MM, MN, NB, PM, PN, RG, and RH Seat Restraint Systems

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to Aircraft Belts, Inc. Model CS, CT, FM, FN, GK, GL, JD, JE, JT, JU, MD, ME, MM, MN, NB, PM, PN, RG, and RH seat restraint systems, installed on, but not limited to, Beech Aircraft Corp., Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc., Cessna Aircraft Co., Dassault Aviation, Eurocopter Deutschland, Eurocopter France, Gulfstream Aerospace, Learjet Corp., Lockheed Aircraft Corp., and Piper Aircraft Corp. aircraft. This action requires an inspection to ensure the locking mechanism is engaging properly, and replacing the buckle-half of the seat restraint system, if necessary. This amendment is prompted by the manufacturer reporting two failures of the seat restraint system in the field. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent failure of the seat restraint system due to the buckle assembly locking mechanism not engaging properly, which could result in the seat restraint system failing to properly secure the occupant during turbulence or landing.

DATES: Effective December 24, 1998.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before February 8, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98–SW–33–AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rob Romero, Aerospace Engineer, Airplane Certification Office, ASW–150, FAA, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222–5102, fax (817) 222–5960.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This amendment adopts a new AD that is applicable to Aircraft Belts, Inc. Model CS, CT, FM, FN, GK, GL, JD, JE, JT, JU, MD, ME, MM, MN, NB, PM, PN, RG, and RH seat restraint systems installed on, but not limited to, Beech Aircraft Corp., Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc., Cessna Aircraft Co., Dassault Aviation, Eurocopter Deutschland, Eurocopter France, Gulfstream Aerospace, Learjet Corp., Lockheed Aircraft Corp., and Piper Aircraft Corp. aircraft. This action requires, within 10 hours time-in-service (TIS), a one-time inspection to ensure the locking mechanism is engaging properly, and replacing the buckle-half of the seat restraint system, if necessary. This amendment is prompted by manufacturer's reports of two failures of the seat restraint system that occurred in the field. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent failure of the seat restraint system due to the buckle assembly locking mechanism not engaging properly, which could result in the seat restraint system failing to properly secure the occupant during turbulence or landing.

The FAA has reviewed Aircraft Belts, Inc. Service Bulletin dated June 16, 1998, which describes procedures for inspecting the buckle assembly on certain restraint systems to ensure the locking mechanism engages properly.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other Aircraft Belts, Inc. Model CS, CT, FM, FN, GK, GL, JD, JE, JT, JU, MD, ME, MM, MN, NB, PM, PN, RG, and RH seat restraint systems of the same type design, this AD is being issued to prevent failure of the seat restraint system due to the buckle assembly locking mechanism not engaging properly, which could result in the seat restraint system failing to properly secure the occupant during turbulence or landing. This AD requires, within 10 hours TIS, a one-time inspection to ensure the seat restraint system locking mechanism is engaging properly, and replacing the buckle-half of the seat restraint system, if necessary. The short compliance time involved is required because the previously described critical unsafe condition can adversely affect the controllability of the aircraft. Therefore, the one-time inspection and replacement, if necessary, is required within 10 hours TIS, and this AD must be issued immediately.

Since a situation exists that requires the immediate adoption of this regulation, it is found that notice and opportunity for prior public comment hereon are impracticable, and that good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.