



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2024-1467; Project Identifier AD-2023-01241-T]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all The Boeing Company Model 737-100, -200, -200C, -300, -400, and -500 series airplanes.

This proposed AD was prompted by a report indicating cracks in the frame inner chord and web at station (STA) 727. This proposed AD would require an inspection for any repair, repetitive inspections of the frame inner chord and web at STA 727 for any crack, and applicable on-condition actions. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

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 [regulations.gov](https://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.

AD Docket: You may examine the AD docket at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2024-1467; 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 NPRM, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

Material Incorporated by Reference:

- For service information identified in this NPRM, 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; website 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 at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2024-1467.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Muoi Vuong, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th Street, Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 562-627-5205; email: muoi.vuong@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2024-1467; Project Identifier AD-2023-01241-T” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA

will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov), including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Muoi Vuong, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th Street, Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 562-627-5205; email: muoi.vuong@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives that is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

The FAA has received a report indicating that cracking was found in the frame inner chord and web at STA 727 between S-11L and S-13L. The cracks were found on a Model 737-400 series airplane that had completed 49,724 flight cycles and 50,875 flight hours. Inspections were performed following accomplishment of Boeing Service Bulletin

737-53A1177 (which is also required for the affected airplanes in AD 2015-21-06, Amendment 39-18298 (80 FR 69839, November 12, 2015)), during which cracks were found above S-4L and S-4R. Cracks between S-11L and S-13L were found on that airplane after The Boeing Company advised the operator to remove and replace the bonded ring assembly from the frame at STA 727 and to inspect all open fastener holes in the adjacent structure. Such cracking, if not addressed, may result in the inability of a Principal Structural Element to sustain limit load, which could adversely affect the structural integrity of the airplane.

FAA's Determination

The FAA is issuing this NPRM after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023. This service information specifies procedures for a general visual inspection for any repair and repetitive high frequency eddy current inspections of the frame inner chord and web at STA 727, between S-11 and S-13, left and right sides, for any crack, and applicable on-condition actions. On-condition actions include obtaining and following repair instructions.

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 ADDRESSES.

Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in the service information already described, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. For information on the procedures and

compliance times, see this service information at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2024-1467.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 245 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

Estimated costs				
Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspections	8 work-hours x \$85 per hour = \$680	\$0	\$680	\$166,600

The FAA has received no definitive data on which to base the cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this proposed 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

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would 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 this proposed regulation:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Would 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.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 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:

The Boeing Company: Docket No. FAA-2024-1467; Project Identifier AD-2023-01241-T.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all The Boeing Company Model 737-100, -200, -200C, -300, -400, and -500 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 a report indicating cracks in the frame inner chord and web at station (STA) 727. The FAA is issuing this AD to address cracks in the left and right frames at STA 727 before they reach a critical length. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, may result in the inability of a principal structural element (PSE) to sustain limit load, which 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 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023: Within 120 days after the effective date of this AD, inspect for existing repairs and cracking of the frame inner chord and web at STA 727, between S-11 and S-13, left and right sides, 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 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023: Except as specified by paragraph (i) of this AD, at the applicable times specified in the “Compliance” paragraph of Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023, do all applicable actions identified in, and in accordance with, the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023.

Note 1 to paragraph (h): Guidance for accomplishing the actions required by this AD can be found in Boeing Service Bulletin 737-53A1416, dated July 21, 2023, which is referred to in Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023.

(i) Exceptions to Service Information Specifications

(1) Where the Compliance Time columns of the tables in the “Compliance” paragraph of Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023, use the phrase “the original issue date of Requirements Bulletin 737-53A1416 RB,” this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023, specifies contacting Boeing for repair instructions or for alternative inspections, this AD requires doing the repair, or doing the alternative inspections and applicable on-condition actions, before further flight 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, AIR-520, Continued Operational Safety 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 responsible Flight Standards 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:
AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the responsible Flight Standards 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, AIR-520, Continued Operational Safety 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 Muoi Vuong, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th Street, Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 562-627-5205; email: muoi.vuong@faa.gov.

(2) Service information identified in this AD that is not incorporated by reference is available at the address specified in paragraph (l)(3) of this AD.

(l) 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 737-53A1416 RB, dated July 21, 2023.

(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; website 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 material at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, visit www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations or email fr.inspection@nara.gov.

Issued on May 9, 2024.

James D. Foltz,
Deputy Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.
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