



## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2026-3469; Project Identifier AD-2025-01573-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 certain The Boeing Company Model 757-200 series airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by a report of a crack found in the frame during a structural inspection of an airplane equipped with an Air Cargo Equipment (ACE) cargo loading system in the forward cargo bay. This proposed AD would require an inspection or maintenance records check of certain frames for any repair and applicable on-condition actions, and a repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) surface inspection of certain frames 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](http://regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2026-3469; 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 Boeing material identified in this proposed 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](http://myboeingfleet.com).

- You may view this material 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](http://regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2026-3469.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Wayne Ha, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 562-627-5238; email: [wayne.ha@faa.gov](mailto:wayne.ha@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 using a method listed under the ADDRESSES

section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2026-3469; Project Identifier AD-2025-01573-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, 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 Wayne Ha, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 562-627-5238; email: wayne.ha@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**

Fatigue damage can occur locally, in small areas or structural design details, or globally, in widespread areas. Multiple-site damage is widespread damage that occurs in

a large structural element such as a single rivet line of a lap splice joining two large skin panels. Widespread damage can also occur in multiple elements such as adjacent frames or stringers. Multiple-site damage and multiple-element damage cracks are typically too small initially to be reliably detected with normal inspection methods. Without intervention, these cracks will grow, and eventually compromise the structural integrity of the airplane. This condition is known as WFD. It is associated with general degradation of large areas of structure with similar structural details and stress levels. As an airplane ages, WFD will likely occur, and will certainly occur if the airplane is operated long enough without any intervention.

An FAA final rule (“Aging Airplane Program: Widespread Fatigue Damage;” 75 FR 69746, November 15, 2010) became effective on January 14, 2011, and amended 14 CFR parts 25, 26, 121, and 129 (commonly known as the WFD rule). The WFD rule requires certain actions to prevent structural failure due to WFD throughout the operational life of certain existing transport category airplanes and all of these airplanes that will be certificated in the future. Design approval holders (DAHs) of existing and future airplanes subject to the WFD rule are required to establish a limit of validity (LOV) of the engineering data that support the structural maintenance program. Operators affected by the WFD rule may not fly an airplane beyond its LOV, unless an extended LOV is approved.

The WFD rule does not require identifying and developing maintenance actions if the DAHs can show that such actions are not necessary to prevent WFD before the airplane reaches the LOV. Many LOVs, however, do depend on accomplishment of future maintenance actions. As stated in the WFD rule, any maintenance actions necessary to reach the LOV will be mandated by airworthiness directives through separate rulemaking actions.

In the context of WFD, this action is necessary to enable DAHs to propose LOVs that allow operators the longest operational lives for their airplanes, and still ensure that WFD will not occur. This approach allows for an implementation strategy that provides flexibility to DAHs in determining the timing of service information development (with FAA approval), while providing operators with certainty regarding the LOV applicable to their airplanes.

The FAA has received a report indicating that a crack was found on a Model 757-200 airplane equipped with an ACE cargo loading system in the forward cargo bay. The crack was found in the frame at station (STA) 740, between stringers S-21R and S-22R, during a structural inspection in a heavy maintenance check. The crack proceeded from a fastener hole common to the STA 740 frame inner chord at the support channel reinforcement for the ACE cargo loading system. The FAA has determined that the crack is likely the result of high operating frame stress, together with a frame inner chord hard point fatigue detail, common to the reinforcing channel associated with the ACE cargo loader configuration. This safety condition exists when the ACE cargo loading provisions have been installed independent of the cargo loading module being installed. In addition, analysis has shown that although the ACE cargo loading provisions can be installed at many frame locations in the lower lobe, vulnerability to undetected cracking is limited to the highly loaded frames between STA 640 and STA 840. Existing maintenance planning document inspections do not provide sufficient inspections to maintain the safety of the fleet for known cracks. This condition, if not addressed, could result in the inability of the frame inner chord, 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.

## **Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51**

The FAA reviewed Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, dated September 17, 2025. This material specifies procedures for performing a general visual inspection (GVI) or maintenance records check of the frames from STA 640 to STA 840, between stringers S-21L and S-23L, and S-21R and S-23R for any repair and applicable on-condition actions. On-condition actions include contacting Boeing for alternative inspection and doing the alternative inspection and applicable corrective actions in the repaired areas.

This material also specifies procedures for a repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) surface inspection of the frames from STA 640 to STA 840, between stringers S-21L and S-23L, and S-21R and S-23R for any crack and applicable on-condition actions. On-condition actions include contacting Boeing for repair instructions and doing the repair.

## **Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM**

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in the material already described except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD.

## Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 122 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
General visual inspection or maintenance records check	Up to 22 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$1,870	\$0	Up to \$1,870	Up to \$228,140
HFEC inspection	8 work-hours X \$85 = \$680 per inspection cycle	\$0	\$680 per inspection cycle	\$82,960 per inspection cycle

The FAA has received no definitive data on which to base the cost estimates for the on-condition repairs 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-2026-3469; Project Identifier AD-2025-01573-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 The Boeing Company Model 757-200 series airplanes, certificated in any category, as identified in Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, dated September 17, 2025.

**(d) Subject**

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

**(e) Unsafe Condition**

This AD was prompted by a report of a crack found in the frame during a structural inspection of an airplane equipped with an Air Cargo Equipment (ACE) cargo loading system in the forward cargo bay. The FAA is issuing this AD to address any crack in the frames from station (STA) 640 to STA 840, between certain stringers. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in the inability of the frame inner chord, a principal structural element, 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**

Except as specified by paragraph (h) of this AD: At the applicable times specified in the “Compliance” paragraph of Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, dated September 17, 2025, do all applicable actions identified in, and in accordance with,

the Accomplishment Instructions of Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, dated September 17, 2025.

**Note 1 to paragraph (g):** Guidance for accomplishing the actions required by this AD can be found in Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-53A0128, dated September 17, 2025, which is referred to in Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, dated September 17, 2025.

**(h) Exceptions to Requirements Bulletin Specifications**

(1) Where the Condition and Compliance Time columns of the tables in the “Compliance” paragraph of Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, dated September 17, 2025, refer to the original issue date of Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, dated September 17, 2025, 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, using a method approved in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (i) of this AD.

**(i) 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 Continued Operational Safety Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: [AMOC@faa.gov](mailto:AMOC@faa.gov). Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the responsible Flight Standards Office.

(2) 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.

**(j) Additional Information**

For more information about this AD, contact Wayne Ha, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 562-627-5238; email: wayne.ha@faa.gov.

**(k) Material Incorporated by Reference**

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of the material listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this material as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Boeing Alert Requirements Bulletin 757-53A0128 RB, dated September 17, 2025.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For Boeing material 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 material 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](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations) or email [fr.inspection@nara.gov](mailto:fr.inspection@nara.gov).

Issued on March 31, 2026.

Victor Wicklund,  
Acting Director, Integrated Certificate Management Division,  
Aircraft Certification Service.  
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