



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2016-9571; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-139-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Model A321 series airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by a full scale fatigue test campaign on these airplanes in the context of the extended service goal. This proposed AD would require inspections of the affected frame locations, and repair if necessary. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We 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 <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 NPRM, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

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-2016-9571; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-1405; fax 425-227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposed AD. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2016-9571; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-139-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

Discussion

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2016-0146, dated July 20, 2016 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus Model A321 series airplanes. The MCAI states:

Following the results of a new full scale fatigue test campaign on the A321 airframe in the context of the A321 extended service goal, it was identified that cracks could develop on the fastener holes of frame (FR) 35.1, FR 35.2, and FR 35.3 between stringers (STR) 29 and STR 32 and at

the FR 35.2 to Slidebox junction (Triform fitting), both left hand (LH) and right hand (RH) sides.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could reduce the structural integrity of the fuselage. Prompted by these findings, Airbus developed an inspection programme, published in Service Bulletin (SB) A320-53-1308, SB A320-53-1309, SB A320-53-1310, SB A320-53-1311, SB A320-53-1312 and SB A320-53-1313, each containing instructions for a different location. For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive special detailed (rototest) inspections (SDI) of the affected frame locations and, depending on findings, accomplishment of a repair.

This [EASA] AD is considered an interim action, pending the development of a permanent solution.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at

<http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-9571.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

We reviewed the following Airbus service information. This service information describes procedures for repetitive rototest inspections for cracking of the affected frame locations, and contacting Airbus for repair instructions. These service bulletins are distinct because they apply to different frame locations.

- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1308, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1309, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1310, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1311, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1312, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1313, dated November 4, 2015.

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 and Requirements of this Proposed AD

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 176 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We estimate the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

Estimated costs				
Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspection	54 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$4,590 per inspection cycle	\$1,070 per inspection cycle	\$5,660 per inspection cycle	\$996,160 per inspection cycle

We have no way to estimate the costs to do any necessary repairs that would be required based on the results of the proposed inspection. We have no way of determining the number of airplanes that might need these repairs.

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.

We are 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

We 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. Is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and

4. 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.

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 (AD):

Airbus: Docket No. FAA-2016-9571; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-139-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

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

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a full scale fatigue test campaign on Airbus Model A321 series airplanes in the context of the extended service goal. It was determined that cracks could develop on the fastener holes of certain frames on the left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) sides of the affected airplanes. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking of the fastener holes at certain frame locations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Repetitive Inspections of the Frames, Stringers, and Slidebox Junctions

At the applicable time specified in table 1 to paragraph (g) of this AD, do a rototest inspection for cracking at frame (FR) 35.1, FR 35.2, and FR 35.3 on the LH and RH sides, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of the Airbus service information specified in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), (g)(3), (g)(4), (g)(5), and (g)(6) of this AD. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5,300 flight cycles.

(1) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1308, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.1 LH side).

(2) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1309, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.1 RH side).

(3) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1310, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.2 LH side).

(4) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1311, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.2 RH side).

(5) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1312, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.3 LH side).

(6) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1313, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.3 RH side).

Table 1 to Paragraph (g) of this AD – Inspection Threshold

Airplane accumulated total flight cycles at the effective date of this AD	Compliance Time
For airplanes with 18,300 total flight cycles or less	Before exceeding 18,300 total flight cycles, or within 5,300 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later
For airplanes with more than 18,300 total flight cycles	Before exceeding 23,600 total flight cycles, or within 2,100 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later

(h) Corrective Action

If any crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD: Before further flight, repair using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus’s EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). Although the service information specified in paragraph (g) of this AD specifies to contact Airbus for repair instructions, and specifies that action as “RC” (Required for Compliance), this AD requires repair as specified in this paragraph. Repair of an airplane as required by this paragraph does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive

inspections required by paragraph (g) of this AD for that airplane, unless specified otherwise in the repair instructions approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA.

(i) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, 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 International Branch, send it to ATTN: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-1405; fax 425-227-1149. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov. 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.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: For any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Required for Compliance (RC): Except as required by paragraph (h) of this AD: If any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC,

those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

(j) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2016-0146, dated July 20, 2016, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-9571.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 11, 2017.

Michael Kaszycki,
Acting Manager,
Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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