



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2016-9498; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-105-AD; Amendment 39-18958; AD 2017-14-14]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Model A321 series airplanes. This AD was prompted by a determination from fatigue testing that cracks could develop in the cabin floor beam junction at certain fuselage frame locations. This AD requires repetitive inspections for cracking in the cabin floor beam junction at certain fuselage frame locations, and repair if necessary. We are issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in this AD as of [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this final rule, 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. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-9498.

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-2016-9498; 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 AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Office (telephone: 800-647-5527) is Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

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:

Discussion

We issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all Airbus Model A321 series airplanes. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on December 16, 2016 (81 FR 91060). The NPRM was prompted by a determination from fatigue testing on the Model A321 airframe that cracks could develop in the cabin floor beam junction at certain fuselage frame locations. The NPRM proposed to require repetitive inspections for cracking in the cabin floor beam junction at certain fuselage frame locations, and repair if necessary. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking in the cabin floor beam junction at certain fuselage frame locations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2016-0105, dated June 6, 2016 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition on 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 in the cabin floor beam junctions at fuselage frame (FR) 35.1 and FR 35.2, on both left hand (LH) and right hand (RH) sides, also on aeroplanes operated in the context of design service goal.

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)

A320-53-1317, SB A320-53-1318, SB A320-53-1319, and SB A320-53-1320, each containing instructions for a different location.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive detailed inspections (DET) of the affected cabin floor beam junctions [for cracking] and, depending on findings, accomplishment of a repair.

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

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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-2016-9498.

Comments

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD. The following presents the comment received on the NPRM and the FAA's response.

Request to Use Later Approved Service Information Revisions

Delta Airlines (DAL) requested that we revise the proposed AD to permit use of later approved revisions of service information as we have done in previous alternative methods of compliance (AMOCs). DAL stated that Airbus service bulletins are EASA approved, and through the bi-lateral agreement with the European Union, these subsequent service bulletin revisions should be allowed to be used by U.S. operators without seeking an AMOC. DAL also explained that having the ability to utilize future service bulletin revisions without seeking an AMOC is more efficient and preserves the required level of safety. DAL added that they operate airplanes that are not listed in the service bulletin applicability, but are included in the proposed AD. DAL claimed that

without a provision allowing later approved revisions, they might have to apply for multiple AMOCs as the service information is updated.

We do not agree with DAL's request. We may not refer to any document that does not yet exist in an AD. In general terms, we are required by Office of the Federal Register (OFR) regulations to either publish the service document contents as part of the actual AD language; or submit the service document to the OFR for approval as "referenced" material, in which case we may only refer to such material in the text of an AD. The AD may refer to the service document only if the OFR approved it for "incorporation by reference." See 1 CFR part 51.

To allow operators to use later revisions of the referenced document (issued after publication of the AD), either we must revise the AD to reference specific later revisions, or operators must request approval to use later revisions as an AMOC under the provisions of paragraph (i)(1) of this AD.

In addition, in accordance with 14 CFR part 39.27, if there is a conflict between an AD and service information, operators must follow the requirements of the AD. We have not changed this AD in this regard.

Conclusion

We reviewed the relevant data, considered the comment received, and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this AD as proposed except for minor editorial changes. We have determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for correcting the unsafe condition; and

- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

We reviewed the following service information, which describes procedures for inspections for cracking on the frame to cabin floor beam junction at certain fuselage frame locations, and repairs. This service information is distinct because it applies to different locations on the airplanes.

- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1317, dated December 15, 2015 (FR 35.1 on the right-hand side).
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1318, dated October 9, 2015 (FR 35.1 on the left-hand side).
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1319, dated October 9, 2015 (FR 35.2 on the right-hand side).
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1320, dated October 9, 2015 (FR 35.2 on the left-hand side).

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.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects 175 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We estimate the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspection	6 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$510 per inspection cycle	\$0	\$510 per inspection cycle	\$89,250 per inspection cycle

We have received no definitive data that would enable us to provide cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this 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.

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 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;
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.

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):

2017-14-14 Airbus: Amendment 39-18958; Docket No. FAA-2016-9498; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-105-AD.

(a) Effective Date

This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

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

(d) Subject

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

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a determination from fatigue testing on the Model A321 airframe that cracks could develop in the cabin floor beam junction at certain fuselage frame locations. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking in the cabin floor beam junction at certain fuselage frame locations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Repetitive Inspections

Before exceeding 36,900 total flight cycles since first flight of the airplane, or within 2,100 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later: Do a detailed inspection for cracking of the frame to cabin floor beam junction on the aft and

forward sides at frame (FR) 35.1 and FR 35.2 on the left-hand and right-hand sides, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of the Airbus service information specified in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), (g)(3), and (g)(4) of this AD. Repeat the inspection of the frame to cabin floor beam junction on the aft and forward sides at FR 35.1 and FR 35.2 on the left-hand and right-hand sides thereafter at intervals not to exceed 15,300 flight cycles.

(1) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1317, dated December 15, 2015 (FR 35.1 right-hand side).

(2) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1318, dated October 9, 2015 (FR 35.1 left-hand side).

(3) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1319, dated October 9, 2015 (FR 35.2 right-hand side).

(4) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1320, dated October 9, 2015 (FR 35.2 left-hand side).

(h) Repair

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 actions required by paragraph (g) of this AD, unless otherwise specified in the instructions provided 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 the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j)(2) of this AD. 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 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 AD 2016-0105, dated June 6, 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-2016-9498.

(2) For more information about this AD, 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. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov.

(3) Service information identified in this AD that is not incorporated by reference is available at the addresses specified in paragraphs (k)(3) and (k)(4) of this AD.

(k) 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 this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1317, dated December 15, 2015.

(ii) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1318, dated October 9, 2015.

(iii) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1319, dated October 9, 2015.

(iv) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1320, dated October 9, 2015.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, 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>.

(4) 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.

(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, call 202-741-6030, or go to: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on June 29, 2017.

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

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