



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2020-0457; Product Identifier 2020-NM-039-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2018-25-02 and AD 2019-23-01, which apply to certain Airbus SAS Model A318 series airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, -233, -251N, -252N, and -271N airplanes; and Model A321 series airplanes. Those ADs require revising the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or more restrictive maintenance requirements and/or airworthiness limitations. Since the FAA issued AD 2018-25-02 and AD 2019-23-01, the agency has determined that new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations are necessary and models need to be added to the applicability. This proposed AD would require revising the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which will be incorporated by

reference. 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 <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: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For the EASA material identified in this proposed AD that will be incorporated by reference (IBR), contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 89990 1000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this IBR material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>.

For the Airbus material that was previously incorporated by reference, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, Rond-Point Emile Dewoitine No: 2, 31700 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 IBR 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 in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0457.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0457; 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, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email sanjay.ralhan@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 the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2020-0457; Product Identifier 2020-NM-039-AD” at the beginning of your comments. The FAA specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this NPRM. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this NPRM based on those comments.

The FAA will post all comments, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The FAA will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Discussion

The FAA issued AD 2019-23-01, Amendment 39-19794 (84 FR 66579, December 5, 2019) (“AD 2019-23-01”), for certain Airbus SAS Model A318 series airplanes; A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, -233, -251N, -252N, and -271N airplanes; and A321 series airplanes. AD 2019-23-01 requires revising the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations. AD 2019-23-01 resulted from a determination that new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations are necessary. The FAA issued AD 2019-23-01 to address fatigue cracking, accidental damage, or corrosion in principal structural elements, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane. AD 2019-23-01 requires airworthiness limitations that are newer or more restrictive than those specified in AD

2018-25-02, Amendment 39-19513 (83 FR 62690, December 6, 2018)

(“AD 2018-25-02”). AD 2019-23-01 specifies that accomplishing the revision required by paragraph (i) of AD 2019-23-01 terminates all requirements of AD 2018-25-02.

Actions Since AD 2019-23-01 Was Issued

Since the FAA issued AD 2019-23-01, the agency has determined that new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations are necessary. In addition, the FAA has added Model A319-151N and -153N airplanes and Model A320-253N, -272N, and -273N airplanes to the applicability of this proposed AD.

The EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2020-0036, dated February 26, 2020 (“EASA AD 2020-0036”) (also referred to as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus SAS Model A318 series airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, -133, -151N, and -153N airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -215, -216, -231, -232, -233, -251N, -252N, -253N, -271N, -272N, and -273N airplanes; and Model A321 series airplanes. EASA AD 2020-0036 superseded EASA AD 2018-0288 (which corresponds to FAA AD 2019-23-01). Model A320-215 airplanes are not certified by the FAA and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet; this AD therefore does not include those airplanes in the applicability.

Airplanes with an original airworthiness certificate or original export certificate of airworthiness issued after October 11, 2019, must be in compliance with the airworthiness limitations specified as part of the approved type design and referenced on

the type certificate data sheet; this AD therefore does not include those airplanes in the applicability.

This proposed AD was prompted by a determination that new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations are necessary. The FAA is proposing this AD to address fatigue cracking, accidental damage, or corrosion in principal structural elements, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane. See the MCAI for additional background information.

Related IBR Material under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2020-0036 describes new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations for damage tolerance of airplane structures.

This proposed AD would also require Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 Airworthiness Limitations Section (ALS) Part 2–Damage Tolerant Airworthiness Limitation Items (DT–ALI), Revision 07, dated June 13, 2018, which the Director of the Federal Register approved for incorporation by reference as of January 9, 2020 (84 FR 66579, December 5, 2019).

This material 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 the FAA’s bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, the FAA has been notified of the unsafe condition

described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA is proposing this AD because the FAA 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.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would retain the requirements of AD 2019-23-01. This proposed AD would also require revising the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations, which are specified in EASA AD 2020-0036 described previously, as incorporated by reference. Any differences with EASA AD 2020-0036 are identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD.

This proposed AD would require revisions to certain operator maintenance documents to include new actions (e.g., inspections). Compliance with these actions is required by 14 CFR 91.403(c). For airplanes that have been previously modified, altered, or repaired in the areas addressed by this proposed AD, the operator may not be able to accomplish the actions described in the revisions. In this situation, to comply with 14 CFR 91.403(c), the operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance according to paragraph (l)(1) of this proposed AD.

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA initially worked with Airbus and EASA to develop a process to use certain EASA ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has since coordinated with other manufacturers and

civil aviation authorities (CAAs) to use this process. As a result, EASA AD 2020-0036 will be incorporated by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2020-0036 in its entirety, through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in the EASA AD does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to “all required actions and compliance times,” compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in the EASA AD.

Service information specified in EASA AD 2020-0036 that is required for compliance with EASA AD 2020-0036 will be available on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0457 after the FAA final rule is published.

Airworthiness Limitation ADs Using the New Process

The FAA’s process of incorporating by reference MCAI ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with corresponding FAA ADs has been limited to certain MCAI ADs (primarily those with service bulletins as the primary source of information for accomplishing the actions required by the FAA AD). However, the FAA is now expanding the process to include MCAI ADs that require a change to airworthiness limitation documents, such as airworthiness limitation sections.

For these ADs that incorporate by reference an MCAI AD that changes airworthiness limitations, the FAA requirements are unchanged. Operators must revise

the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate the information specified in the new airworthiness limitation document. The airworthiness limitations must be followed according to 14 CFR 91.403(c) and 91.409(e).

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this proposed AD affects 1,553 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

The FAA estimates the total cost per operator for the retained actions from AD 2019-23-01 to be \$7,650 (90 work-hours x \$85 per work-hour).

The FAA has determined that revising the existing maintenance or inspection program takes an average of 90 work-hours per operator, although the agency recognizes that this number may vary from operator to operator. In the past, the agency has estimated that this action takes 1 work-hour per airplane. Since operators incorporate maintenance or inspection program changes for their affected fleet(s), the FAA has determined that a per-operator estimate is more accurate than a per-airplane estimate. The FAA estimates the total cost per operator for the new proposed actions to be \$7,650 (90 work-hours x \$85 per work-hour).

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) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) 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

a. Removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2018-25-02, Amendment 39-19513 (83 FR 62690, December 6, 2018), and AD 2019-23-01, Amendment 39-19794 (84 FR 66579, December 5, 2019); and

b. Adding the following new AD:

Airbus SAS: Docket No. FAA-2020-0457; Product Identifier 2020-NM-039-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

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

(b) Affected ADs

This AD replaces AD 2018-25-02, Amendment 39-19513 (83 FR 62690, December 6, 2018) (“AD 2018-25-02”), and AD 2019-23-01, Amendment 39-19794 (84 FR 66579, December 5, 2019) (“AD 2019-23-01”).

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus SAS airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (4) of this AD, certificated in any category, with an original certificate of airworthiness or original export certificate of airworthiness issued on or before October 11, 2019.

(1) Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes.

(2) Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, -133, -151N, and -153N airplanes.

(3) Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, -233, -251N, -252N, -253N, -271N, -272N, and -273N airplanes.

(4) Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, -232, -251N, -251NX, -252N, -252NX, -253N, -253NX, -271N, -271NX, -272N, and -272NX airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 05, Time Limits/Maintenance Checks.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a determination that new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations are necessary. The FAA is issuing this AD to address fatigue cracking, accidental damage, or corrosion in principal structural elements, 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) Retained Maintenance or Inspection Program Revision, with No Changes.

This paragraph restates the requirements of paragraph (g) of AD 2019-23-01, with no changes. Accomplishing the maintenance or inspection program revision required by paragraph (i) of this AD terminates the requirements of this paragraph.

(1) For airplanes with an original certificate of airworthiness or original export certificate of airworthiness issued on or before June 13, 2018, except for Model A319-151N and -153N airplanes and Model A320-253N, -272N, and -273N airplanes: Within 90 days after January 9, 2020 (the effective date of AD 2019-23-01), revise the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate the information specified in Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 Airworthiness Limitations Section (ALS) Part 2–Damage Tolerant Airworthiness Limitation Items (DT–ALI), Revision 07, dated June 13, 2018.

(2) The initial compliance time for doing the tasks is at the time specified in Airbus A318/A319/A320/A321 Airworthiness Limitations Section (ALS) Part 2–Damage Tolerant Airworthiness Limitation Items (DT–ALI), Revision 07, dated June 13, 2018, or within 90 days after January 9, 2020, whichever occurs later.

(h) Retained Restriction on Alternative Actions and Intervals with a New Exception.

This paragraph restates the requirements of paragraph (h) of AD 2019-23-01, with a new exception. Except as required by paragraph (i) of this AD, after the maintenance or inspection program has been revised as required by paragraph (g) of this AD, no alternative actions (e.g., inspections) or intervals may be used unless the actions or intervals are approved as an alternative method of compliance (AMOC) in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (l)(1) of this AD.

(i) New Maintenance or Inspection Program Revision

Except as specified in paragraph (j) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020-0036, dated February 26, 2020 (“EASA AD 2020-0036”). Accomplishing the maintenance or inspection program revision required by this paragraph terminates the requirements of paragraph (g) of this AD.

(j) Exceptions to EASA AD 2020-0036

(1) The requirements specified in paragraphs (1) and (2) of EASA AD 2020-0036 do not apply to this AD.

(2) Paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2020-0036 specifies revising “the AMP” within 12 months after its effective date, but this AD requires revising the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate the “tasks and associated thresholds and intervals” specified in paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2020-0036 within 90 days after the effective date of this AD.

(3) The initial compliance times for doing the tasks specified in paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2020-0036 is at the applicable “associated thresholds” specified in paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2020-0036, or within 90 days after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(4) The provisions specified in paragraphs (4), (5), and (6) of EASA AD 2020-0036 do not apply to this AD.

(5) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2020-0036 does not apply to this AD.

(k) New Provisions for Alternative Actions or Intervals

After the existing maintenance or inspection program has been revised as required

by paragraph (i) of this AD, no alternative actions (e.g., inspections) or intervals are allowed unless they are approved as specified in the provisions of the “Ref. Publications” section of EASA AD 2020-0036.

(l) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)*: The Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation 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 local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Section, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (m)(4) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov.

(i) 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.

(ii) AMOCs approved previously for AD 2019-23-01 are approved as AMOCs for the corresponding provisions of EASA AD 2020-0036 that are required by paragraph (g) of this AD.

(2) *Contacting the Manufacturer*: For any requirement in this AD to obtain instructions from a manufacturer, the instructions must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA;

or EASA; or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(m) Related Information

(1) For information about EASA AD 2020-0036, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 89990 6017; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>.

(2) For information about the Airbus material that was previously incorporated by reference, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, Rond-Point Emile Dewoitine No: 2, 31700 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>

(3) 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. This material may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0457.

(4) For more information about this AD, contact Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3223; email sanjay.ralhan@faa.gov.

Issued on May 21, 2020.

Gaetano A. Sciortino, Deputy Director for Strategic Initiatives,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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