[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2025-5028; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00434-T;

Amendment 39-23351; AD 2026-10-11]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus SAS Model A320-251N, -252N, -253N, -271N, -272N, and -273N airplanes. This AD was prompted by a detected deviation to the manufacturing process of the angle fitting connection to side panel skin between certain frames (FR) at a certain stringer on both left hand (LH) and right hand (RH) sides. This AD requires inspecting the fastener holes to ensure they are the nominal diameter and applicable corrective actions. The FAA is 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 a certain publication listed in this AD as of [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES:

AD Docket: You may examine the AD docket at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2025-5028; 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 final rule, the

mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI), any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

Material Incorporated by Reference:

• For European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) material identified in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at ad.easa.europa.eu.

• 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 under Docket No. FAA-2025-5028.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Promita Dey, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 316-946-4106; email: promita.dey@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to certain Airbus SAS Model A320-251N, -252N, -253N, -271N, -272N, and -273N airplanes. The NPRM was published in the *Federal Register* on November 21, 2025 (90 FR 52570). The NPRM was prompted by EASA AD 2025-0065, dated March 27, 2025 (EASA AD 2025-0065) (also referred to as the MCAI), issued by EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union. The MCAI states a deviation to the manufacturing process was detected during a review of the cold working process in the assembly line. This deviation could

adversely affect the fatigue life of the angle fitting connection to side panel skin between FR 35 and FR 36 at stringer 30 on both LH and RH sides. This could lead to crack initiation and propagation, which could possibly result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

In the NPRM, the FAA proposed to require inspecting the fastener holes to ensure they are the nominal diameter and applicable corrective actions, as specified in EASA AD 2025-0065. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2025-5028.

Discussion of Final Airworthiness Directive

Comments

The FAA received a comment from the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA) who supported the NPRM without change.

The FAA received additional comments from the Citizens Rulemaking Alliance. The following presents the comments received on the NPRM and the FAA's response to each comment.

Request to Justify Forgoing Notice and Comment or Issue an NPRM

The Citizens Rulemaking Alliance requested that the FAA either provide its justification for finding good cause to bypass notice and comment procedures, or convert this action to an NPRM with an appropriate comment period and defer non-urgent requirements. The commenter asserted the FAA has not adequately justified use of the good cause exemption to bypass notice and comment and the 30-day delayed effective date.

The FAA notes the comment was submitted in response to an NPRM for which the FAA provided a 45-day comment period. This final rule is effective 35 days after its publication in the *Federal Register*. Therefore, no change to this AD is necessary.

Request to Make Incorporation by Reference (IBR) Materials Reasonably Available

The Citizens Rulemaking Alliance requested that the FAA make IBR material available and free to the public during the comment period. The commenter stated that this AD appears to incorporate by reference manufacturer service information.

The FAA notes that this AD incorporates by reference EASA AD 2025-0065, not the manufacturer service information referenced in that EASA AD. The FAA posted EASA AD 2025-0065 to the AD docket when the NPRM was published in the *Federal Register*. The material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0065 may only be posted before the final rule's publication if it is already publicly available or if there is written consent from the owner of that material. Additionally, the FAA provided notice in the NPRM that the material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0065 will be available in the AD docket after this AD is published. The FAA did not change this AD as a result of this comment.

Request to Comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)

The Citizens Rulemaking Alliance requested that the FAA revise the AD to comply with the PRA if reporting is required or remove any reporting provisions until PRA requirements are satisfied. If reporting is not required, the commenter requested the FAA clarify that in the AD.

The FAA notes paragraph (i) of this AD specifies that this AD does not require reporting. If an AD were to require reporting, the preamble of the AD would include a paragraph titled "Paperwork Reduction Act" that would provide the applicable OMB control number, required PRA statements, and the estimated time to collect the required information (burden). Any costs associated with the reporting requirement would be

included in the Costs of Compliance section in the preamble of the AD. Therefore, the FAA did not change this AD as a result of this comment.

Request to Consider Impact on Small Entities

The Citizens Rulemaking Alliance requested that the FAA either provide the factual basis for its Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) certification that the AD will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities, or prepare an initial regulatory flexibility analysis.

The FAA provides the following clarification. The RFA of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 601-612), as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-121) and the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 (Pub. L. 111-240), requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of the regulatory action on small business and other small entities and to minimize any significant economic impact. The term "small entities" comprises small businesses and not-for-profit organizations that are independently owned and operated and are not dominant in their fields, and governmental jurisdictions with populations of less than 50,000.

This AD will affect two domestic entities, none of which are small business entities. While the FAA has determined that this final AD will not affect any small entities, FAA estimates the total cost per affected airplane to be $2,295 (27 work-hours x $85 per work-hour). Because the FAA does not find a cost burden to small business entities, as provided in section 605(b), the FAA certifies this AD will not result in a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities. The FAA did not change this AD as a result of this comment.

Request to Provide Additional Cost Information

The Citizens Rulemaking Alliance requested that the FAA add to the AD docket the methodology and assumptions supporting the estimated cost of the proposed AD and reopen the comment period for public input on the additional cost information. The

commenter stated that, in addition to labor and parts cost, the FAA's cost analysis should include downtime and operational impacts and disclose the methodology and data sources.

The FAA recognizes that, in doing the actions required by an AD, operators might incur indirect costs in addition to the direct costs. The cost analysis in an AD typically describes only the direct costs of the specific actions required by an AD, which does not include indirect costs since the FAA lacks data on those costs and they vary significantly among operators. The number of work hours necessary to do the required actions of an AD is provided by the manufacturer. This number represents the time necessary to perform only the actions actually required by an AD. The cost of parts or special tools, if necessary, to complete the actions required by an AD is also provided by the manufacturer. Further, when the FAA is informed that the manufacturer may cover some or all of the estimated costs of an AD under warranty, the FAA indicates that in the AD.

In the Costs of Compliance section of the proposed AD, the FAA disclosed the number of airplanes affected on the U.S. registry, estimated number of work hours provided by the manufacturer, and the aggregate costs. The FAA did not disclose an estimated parts cost since this AD does not require any parts. Additionally, the FAA considered the impact that this AD will have on affected operators and determined this AD will not trigger any downtime costs because the requirements of this AD can be performed during regularly scheduled maintenance. Since the FAA has assessed and disclosed the total known costs of the AD requirements in the Costs of Compliance section of the proposed AD, and the commenter did not provide additional cost data for the FAA to consider in its cost analysis, it is not necessary to reopen the comment period or provide additional information in the AD docket. The FAA did not change this AD as a result of this comment.

Conclusion

These products have been approved by the civil aviation authority of another country and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with this State of Design Authority, that authority has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered any comments received, and determined that air safety requires adopting this AD as proposed. Accordingly, the FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products. Except for minor editorial changes, this AD is adopted as proposed in the NPRM. None of the changes will increase the economic burden on any operator.

Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2025-0065, which specifies procedures for special detailed inspections of the holes on the angle fitting connection to the side panel skin between FR 35 and FR 36 at stringer 30 on both the LH and RH sides for discrepancies (fastener holes not in nominal condition) and applicable corrective actions. Corrective actions include a rototest inspection of the affected holes for cracking, repair, and contacting the manufacturer for additional instructions.

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.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 90 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated costs for required actions

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
27 work-hours X $85 per hour = $2,295	$0	$2,295	$206,550

Estimated costs of on-condition actions*

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product
20 work-hours X $85 per hour = $1,700	$0	$1,700

*The FAA has received no definitive data on which to base the cost estimates for the on-condition obtaining and following instructions 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.

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

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) 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 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:

2026-10-11 Airbus SAS: Amendment 39-23351; Docket No. FAA-2025-5028; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00434-T.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (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 SAS Model A320-251N, -252N, -253N, -271N, -272N, and -273N airplanes, certificated in any category, as identified in European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2025-0065, dated March 27, 2025 (EASA AD 2025-0065).

(d) Subject

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

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by a detected deviation to the manufacturing process of the angle fitting connection to side panel skin between frame (FR) 35 and FR 36 at stringer 30 on both left hand (LH) and right hand (RH) sides. The FAA is issuing this AD to address reduced fatigue life of the affected area, which if not addressed, could result in crack initiation and propagation, which could possibly result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2025-0065.

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2025-0065

(1) Where paragraphs (2) and (3) of EASA AD 2025-0065 specify “discrepancy”, this AD requires replacing that text with “fastener hole not in nominal condition”.

(2) Where paragraph (4) of EASA AD 2025-0065 specifies “any discrepancy is detected, as defined in the SB, before next flight, contact Airbus for approved repair instructions and, within the compliance time specified therein, accomplish those instructions accordingly”, this AD requires replacing that text with “if any cracking is detected, the cracking must be repaired before further flight using a method approved by the Manager, AIR-520, Continued Operational Safety 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”.

(3) This AD does not adopt the “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2025-0065.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0065 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

(j) Additional AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs):* 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 (k) of this AD and email to: 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) *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, AIR-520, Continued Operational Safety Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus SAS'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 paragraphs (i) and (j)(2) of this AD, if any material 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.

(k) Additional Information

For more information about this AD, contact Promita Dey, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 316-946-4106; email: promita.dey@faa.gov.

(l) 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 this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2025-0065, dated March 27, 2025.

(ii) Reserved.

(3) For EASA material identified in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at ad.easa.europa.eu.

(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 or email

fr.inspection@nara.gov.

Issued on May 11, 2026.

Lona C. Saccomando,
Acting Deputy Director, Integrated Certificate Management Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.
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