whichever occurs first, until the initial ELCH inspection is accomplished in accordance with paragraph (d) of this AD. And

(ii) After the initial ELCH inspection required by paragraph (d) of this AD has been accomplished, repeat these visual inspections thereafter at intervals not to exceed 350 landings, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(3) If any disbonding or cracking is detected, prior to further flight, conduct an ELCH inspection of the suspected area for signs of disbonding, and accomplish follow-on actions in accordance with the Flow Chart, Figure 2, of the applicable service bulletin. If the confirmed extent of disbonding, however, is greater than 400 square cm in Area I, or greater than 800 square cm in Area II, as those areas of the rudder are defined in the applicable service bulletin, prior to further flight, repair and accomplish subsequent inspections in accordance with the requirements of paragraph (d)(3) of this AD.

(d) ELCH Inspections. Within 6 months after the effective date of this AD, conduct an initial elasticity laminate checker (ELCH) inspection of the complete rudder, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–55–6008 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes) or Airbus Service Bulletin A310–55–2008 (for Model A310 series airplanes), both dated December 10, 1990, as applicable. Initiation of this inspection constitutes terminating action for the requirements of paragraph (a) and specified portions of paragraph (b) of this AD.

(1) If no disbonding or cracking is detected, repeat the ELCH inspection at intervals not to exceed 2 years or 3,500 landings, whichever occurs first.

(2) If disbonding or cracking is confirmed by ELCH inspection, and the extent of the disbonding is equal to or less than 400 square cm in Area I, or equal to or less than 800 square cm in Area II, as those areas of the rudder are defined in the applicable service bulletin: Prior to further flight, accomplish follow-on actions in accordance with Flow Chart, Figure 2, of the applicable service bulletin.

(3) If disbonding or cracking is confirmed by ELCH inspection, and the extent of the disbonding is greater than 400 square cm in Area I, or greater than 800 square cm in Area II, as those areas of the rudder are defined in the applicable service bulletin: Prior to further flight, accomplish either paragraph (d)(3)(i) or (d)(3)(ii) of this AD:

(1) Repair in a manner approved by the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM–113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Thereafter, continue to conduct ELCH inspections in a manner and at intervals approved by the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM–113.

(ii) Replace the rudder in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–55–6010 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes) or Airbus Service Bulletin A310–55 2012 (for Model A310 series airplanes), both dated April 18, 1991, as applicable. After this replacement is accomplished, no further actions are required by this AD.

(e) Terminating Action. Within five years after the effective date of this AD, replace the rudder in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–55–6010 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes) or Airbus Service Bulletin A310–55 2012 (for Model A310 series airplanes), both dated April 18, 1991, as applicable. This replacement constitutes terminating action for the inspection requirements of this AD.

(f) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM–113. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM–113.

Note 5: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM–113.

(g) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on October 16, 1996.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 96–27125 Filed 10–22–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

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14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96–NM–76–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Construcciones Aeronauticas, S.A. (CASA) Model CN–235 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to all CASA CN–235 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive eddy current inspections to detect fatigue cracks in the nose landing gear (NLG) turning tube, and replacement of cracked tubes. This proposal is prompted by a report of the failure of an NLG turning tube during landing roll; the failure was attributed to fatigue cracking in the turning tube. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to ensure that fatigue cracking in the NLG turning tube is detected and corrected before it could cause the failure of the tube and, consequently, degrade the structural integrity of the NLG.

DATES: Comments must be received by December 2, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96–NM–76–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Construcciones Aeronauticas, S.A., Getafe, Madrid, Spain. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Greg Dunn, Aerospace Engineer, Standardization Branch, ANM–113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (206) 227–2799; fax (206) 227–1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: ''Comments to Docket Number 96–NM–76–AD.'' The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96–NM–76–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The Dirección General de Aviación (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for Spain, recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on all CASA Model CN–235 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that it received a report from one operator who experienced, during landing roll, the failure of the nose landing gear (NLG) turning tube. Investigation revealed that the failure was due to fatigue cracking in the turning tube. The tube had accumulated over 8,600 landings. A subsequent inspection of the fleet revealed fatigue cracking in the NLG turning tubes on other airplanes; in each case, the tube had accumulated more than 8,000 landings. Such cracking, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in failure of the NLG turning tube. This situation could degrade the structural integrity of the NLG, and adversely effect landing operations.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

CASA has issued Maintenance Instructions COM 235–092, Revision No. 2, dated May 5, 1995, which describes procedures for conducting repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections to detect fatigue cracking in the NLG turning tube. It also describes procedures for replacing cracked tubes with new units. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued Spanish airworthiness directive 01/95, Revision 1, dated May 18, 1995, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in Spain.

FAA's Conclusions

This airplane model is manufactured in Spain and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require repetitive eddy current inspections to detect fatigue cracking in the NLG turning tube. If any cracking is detected, the turning tube would be required to be replaced with a new unit prior to further flight. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

Interim Action

This is considered interim action until final action is identified, at which time the FAA may consider further rulemaking.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 1 CASA Model CN–235 series airplane of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 8 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Required parts would be provided by the manufacturer at no cost to operators. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $480.

The cost impact figure is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects 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. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that 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); and (3) if promulgated, 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. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES.**

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (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. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Casa: Docket 96–NM–76–AD.

Applicability: All Model CN–235 series airplanes, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (d) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent structural degradation of the nose landing gear (NLG) due to failure of the NLG turning tube, accomplish the following:

(a) At the applicable time specified in either paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of this AD, conduct a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect fatigue cracking in the NLG turning tube, in accordance with the procedures specified in Annex 1 and Annex 2 of CASA Maintenance Instructions COM 235–092, Revision No. 2, dated May 5, 1995.

(1) For Model CN–235 airplanes [Basic model; Maximum Takeoff Weight (MTOW)=31,746 lbs. (14,400 kgs.)]: Conduct the inspection prior to or upon the accumulation of 6,000 landings on the NLG turning tube, or within 50 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For Model CN–235–100 series airplanes [MTOW=33,290 lbs. (15,100 kgs.)] and Model CN–235–200 series airplanes [MTOW=34,833 lbs. (15,800 kgs)]: Conduct the inspection prior to or upon the accumulation of 4,800 landings on the NLG turning tube, or within 50 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(b) If no cracking is detected during the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 200 landings.

(c) If any cracking is detected during any inspection required by paragraph (a) or (b) of this AD, prior to further flight, replace the NLG turning tube with a new unit in accordance with CASA Maintenance Instructions COM 235–092, Revision No. 2, dated May 5, 1995. After replacement, repeat the HFEC inspection prior to or upon the accumulation of 6,000 landings on the new NLG turning tube installed on Model CN–325 airplanes (basic model); or prior to or upon the accumulation of 4,800 landings on the new NLG turning tube installed on Model CN–325–100 and –200 series airplanes. Thereafter, repeat the inspection at intervals not to exceed 200 landings.

(d) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM–113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM–113.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Standardization Branch, ANM–113.

(e) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on October 16, 1996.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 96–27124 Filed 10–22–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96–NM–93–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A320–111, –211, –212, and –231 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Airbus Model A320–111, –211, –212, and –231 series airplanes. This proposal would require reinforcement of the tail section of the fuselage at frames 68 and 69. This proposal is prompted by reports indicating that the tail section has struck the runway during takeoffs and landings. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent structural damage to the tail section when it strikes the runway. This condition, if not detected, could result in depressurization of the fuselage during flight.

DATES: Comments must be received by December 2, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96–NM–93–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Charles Huber, Aerospace Engineer, Standardization Branch, ANM–113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (206) 227–2589; fax (206) 227–1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: ''Comments to Docket Number 96–NM–93–AD.'' The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96–NM–93–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Airbus Model A320–111, –211, –212, and –231 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that it has received reports indicating that the tail section of some Model A320 series airplanes has struck the runway during takeoffs and landings. These impacts could damage the structural integrity of the tail section. This condition, if not detected, could cause depressurization of the fuselage during flight.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320–53–1110, dated August 28, 1995, which describes procedures for modification of the tail section of the airplane by reinforcing the fuselage at frames 68 and 69. Should a tail strike go undetected, this modification will provide sufficient margins of strength to protect the fuselage from further damage during flight. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French Airworthiness Directive (CN) 96–009–0074(B), dated January 3, 1996, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

FAA's Conclusions

This airplane model is manufactured in France and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to