

(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, International Branch, ANM-116, 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, International Branch, ANM-116.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM-116.

(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.

(f) The actions shall be done in accordance with *Aerospatiale Service Bulletin No. ATR72-32-1036*, dated June 19, 1996; *Aerospatiale Service Bulletin No. ATR72-32-1037*, dated June 19, 1996; *Messier-Dowty Service Bulletin No. 631-32-125*, dated May 7, 1996; and *Messier-Dowty Service Bulletin No. 631-32-126*, dated May 7, 1996. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from *Aerospatiale*, 316 Route de Bayonne, 31060 Toulouse, Cedex 03, France. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 96-096-029(B), dated May 9, 1996.

(g) This amendment becomes effective on April 3, 1998.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 12, 1998.

Gilbert L. Thompson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-4247 Filed 2-26-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-340-AD; Amendment 39-10355; AD 98-04-44]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A340 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A340 series airplanes. This action requires replacement of the groove pins on the doors of the center main landing gear (MLG) with new pins, modification of the bolt head, installation of an antirotation plate, and modification of the hinge pins on the doors of the MLG by the installation of oversize bolts. This amendment is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent detachment of the center MLG door during flight, which could pose a hazard to persons or property on the ground.

DATES: Effective March 16, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 16, 1998.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before March 30, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-340-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

The service information referenced in this AD 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; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2110; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 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 A340 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that, during fatigue testing performed by the manufacturer, it was discovered that the hinge pins on the door of the center main landing gear (MLG) had broken. Further investigation has revealed that the cause of the pin failure may have been incorrect orientation of the pin. This condition, if not corrected, could

result in detachment of the center MLG door during flight, which could pose a hazard to persons or property on the ground.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A340-53-4070, Revision 1, dated July 18, 1997, which describes procedures for replacement of the groove pins on the doors of the center MLG with new pins, modification of the bolt head, and installation of an antirotation plate.

In addition, Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A340-53-4031, Revision 1, dated June 10, 1997, which describes procedures for modifying the hinge pins on the doors of the center MLG by installing oversize bolts.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 97-114-060(B), dated May 7, 1997, 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 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 the 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, this AD is being issued to prevent detachment of the center MLG door during flight, which could pose a hazard to persons or property on the ground. This AD requires accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins described previously.

Cost Impact

None of the airplanes affected by this action are on the U.S. Register. All airplanes included in the applicability of this rule currently are operated by

non-U.S. operators under foreign registry; therefore, they are not directly affected by this AD action. However, the FAA considers that this rule is necessary to ensure that the unsafe condition is addressed in the event that any of these subject airplanes are imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future.

Should an affected airplane be imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future, it would require approximately 16 work hours to accomplish the actions specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4070, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Parts would be supplied by the manufacturer at no cost to operators. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this action would be \$960 per airplane.

It would require approximately 10 work hours to accomplish the actions specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4031, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$1,677 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this action would be \$2,277 per airplane.

Determination of Rule's Effective Date

Since this AD action does not affect any airplane that is currently on the U.S. Register, it has no adverse economic impact and imposes no additional burden on any person. Therefore, prior notice and public procedures hereon are unnecessary and the amendment may be made effective in less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule and was not preceded by notice and opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this 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 under the caption **ADDRESSES**. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of

the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 97-NM-340-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will 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 final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action: (1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); 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. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends 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:

98-04-44 Airbus Industrie: Amendment 39-10355. Docket 97-NM-340-AD.

Applicability: Model A340 series airplanes; as listed in Airbus Service Bulletins A340-53-4070, Revision 1, dated July 18, 1997, and A340-53-4031, Revision 1, dated June 10, 1997; 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 (b) 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 detachment of the center main landing gear (MLG) door during flight, which could pose a hazard to persons or property on the ground, accomplish the following:

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 8,400 total flight cycles, or within the next 100 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, accomplish either (a)(1) or (a)(2) below, as applicable:

(1) For airplanes listed in Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4070, Revision 1, dated July 18, 1997: Replace the groove pins on the doors of the center MLG with new pins, modify the bolt head, and install an antirotation plate; in accordance with the service bulletin.

(2) For airplanes listed in Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4031, Revision 1, dated June 10, 1997: Modify the hinge pins on the doors of the center MLG by installing oversize bolts; in accordance with the service bulletin.

(b) 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, International Branch, ANM-116, 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, International Branch, ANM-116.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM-116.

(c) 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.

(d) The actions required by this AD shall be done in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4070, Revision 1, dated July 18, 1997, or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-53-4031, Revision 1, dated June 10, 1997, as applicable. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 97-114-060(B), dated May 7, 1997.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on March 16, 1998.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 12, 1998.

Gilbert L. Thompson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.
[FR Doc. 98-4246 Filed 2-26-98; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-152-AD; Amendment 39-10360; AD 98-04-49]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A320-111, -211, -212, -214, -231, -232, and -233 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to all Airbus Model A320-111, -211, -212, -214, -231, -232, and -233 series airplanes, that requires repetitive ultrasonic inspections to detect fatigue cracking in the wing/fuselage joint cruciform fittings, and corrective actions, if necessary. This amendment is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by this AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracks on the wing/fuselage joint cruciform fittings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing/fuselage.

DATES: Effective April 3, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director

of the Federal Register as of April 3, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2110; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to all Airbus Model A320-111, -211, -212, -214, -231, -232, and -233 series airplanes was published in the **Federal Register** on December 1, 1997 (62 FR 63476). That action proposed to require repetitive ultrasonic inspections to detect fatigue cracking in the wing/fuselage joint cruciform fittings, and corrective actions, if necessary.

Comments

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comments received.

All of the commenters support the proposed rule.

Conclusion

After careful review of the available data, including the comments noted above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 132 airplanes of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 8 work hours per airplane to accomplish the required inspection, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the inspection required by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$63,360, or \$480 per airplane.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the 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 adopted herein will 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 final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); 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. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends 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:

98-04-49 Airbus Industrie: Amendment 39-10360. Docket 97-NM-152-AD.

Applicability: Model A320-111, -211, -212, -214, -231, -232, and -233 series airplanes, all serial numbers, 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