

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 failure of the ground cooling fan, which could result in smoke in the flight deck and cabin and consequent inability of the flight crew to perform duties or possible passenger injury due to smoke inhalation, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 3 months after the effective date of this AD, modify the ground cooling fan and rotate the modified check valve, in accordance with Dornier Service Bulletin SB-328-21-227, dated July 16, 1997.

Note 2: The service bulletin references EG&G Rotron Service Bulletin 011389500-21-1, dated April 30, 1997, as an additional source of service information to accomplish the actions required by this AD.

(b) As of the effective date of this AD, no person shall install on any airplane a ground cooling fan, part number 011389500, unless it has been modified in accordance with Dornier Service Bulletin SB-328-21-227, dated July 16, 1997.

(c) 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.

(d) 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.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in German airworthiness directive 97-243, dated August 28, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 29, 1998.

John J. Hickey,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.
[FR Doc. 98-11888 Filed 5-4-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-NM-18-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A320 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 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections to detect fatigue cracking of the front spar vertical stringers on the wings; and repair, if necessary. This proposal also provides for an optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections. This proposal is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the front spar vertical stringers on the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airframe.

DATES: Comments must be received by June 4, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-18-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: 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:

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 98-NM-18-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-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-18-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 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that, during full-scale fatigue testing on a Model A320 test article, fatigue cracking occurred at 116,151 simulated flights on the front vertical stringer on the wing at frame 36. Such fatigue cracking, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in reduced structural integrity of the airframe.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-57-1016, Revision 1, dated December 6, 1995, which describes procedures for repetitive eddy current

inspections to detect fatigue cracking of the front spar vertical stringers on the wings.

In addition, Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-57-1017, Revision 01, dated March 17, 1997, which describes procedures for modification of the front spar vertical stringers on the wings. The modification includes the installation of new shims and new fasteners on the front spar vertical stringers on the wings. Accomplishment of this modification would eliminate the need for the repetitive inspections described in Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1016, Revision 1.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in these service bulletins is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1016, Revision 1, dated December 6, 1995, as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 97-311-105(B), dated October 22, 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 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 accomplishment of the inspections specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1016, Revision 1, dated December 6, 1995, except as discussed below. This proposed AD also would provide for optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections.

Operators should note that, in consonance with the findings of the DGAC, the FAA has determined that the repetitive inspections proposed by this AD can be allowed to continue in lieu of accomplishment of a terminating action. In making this determination, the FAA considers that, in this case, long-term continued operational safety

will be adequately assured by accomplishing the repetitive inspections to detect fatigue cracking before it represents a hazard to the airplane.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Service Bulletin

Operators should note that, although Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1016, Revision 1, dated December 6, 1995, specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of certain repair conditions, this proposal would require the repair of those conditions to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by either the FAA or the DGAC (or its delegated agent). In light of the type of repair that would be required to address the identified unsafe condition, and in consonance with existing bilateral airworthiness agreements, the FAA has determined that, for this proposed AD, a repair approved by either the FAA or the DGAC would be acceptable for compliance with this proposed AD.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Foreign AD

Operators should note that, unlike the procedures described in French airworthiness directive 97-311-105(B), dated October 22, 1997, this proposed AD would not permit further flight if fatigue cracks are detected on the front spar vertical stringers of the wings. The FAA has determined that, because of the safety implications and consequences associated with such fatigue cracking, any subject front spar vertical stringer that is found to be cracked must be repaired prior to further flight in accordance with a method approved by the FAA or the DGAC (or its delegated agent).

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 16 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD. It would take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the inspection proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$1,920, or \$120 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

The cost impact figure discussed above 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.

Should an operator elect to accomplish the optional terminating modification, rather than continue the repetitive inspections, it would require

approximately 6 work hours to accomplish it, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$700 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the optional terminating modification proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$1,060 per airplane.

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:

Airbus Industrie: Docket 98-NM-18-AD.

Applicability: Model A320 series airplanes on which Airbus Modification 21290 (reference Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-

1017, Revision 01, dated March 17, 1997) has not been installed, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise 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 (c) 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 detect and correct fatigue cracking of the front spar vertical stringers on the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airframe, accomplish the following:

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 24,000 total flight cycles, or within 60 days after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later: Perform an eddy current inspection to detect fatigue cracking of the front spar vertical stringers on the wings, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1016, Revision 1, dated December 6, 1995.

(1) If no crack is detected, repeat the eddy current inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 14,000 flight cycles.

(2) If any crack is detected, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate; or the Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (or its delegated agent). Thereafter, repeat the eddy current inspection at intervals not to exceed 14,000 flight cycles.

(b) Modification of the front spar vertical stringers on the wings, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1017, Revision 01, dated March 17, 1997, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD.

(c) 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. 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.

(d) 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.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 97-311-105(B), dated October 22, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 29, 1998.

John J. Hickey,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-11889 Filed 5-4-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-NM-10-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9-80 Series Airplanes and Model MD-90-30 and MD-88 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 McDonnell Douglas Model DC-9-80 series airplanes and Model MD-90-30 and MD-88 airplanes. This proposal would require a one-time inspection of the harness assembly of the tailcone emergency evacuation slide to determine the diameter of the swaged balls; reidentification of the harness assembly; and reinstallation or replacement of the assembly with a new assembly, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by a failed deployment of the tailcone emergency evacuation slide during a system test conducted by the manufacturer. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent failure of the tailcone emergency evacuation slide to deploy automatically due to incorrect diameter of the swaged balls on the wire rope of the harness assembly.

DATES: Comments must be received by June 19, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-10-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

The Boeing Company, Douglas Products Division, 3855 Lakewood Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90846, Attention: Technical Publications Business Administration, Dept. C1-L51 (2-60). This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Alan Sinclair, Aerospace Engineer, Systems and Equipment Branch, ANM-130L, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Boulevard, Lakewood, California 90712-4137; telephone (562) 627-5338; fax (562) 627-5210.

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 98-NM-10-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-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-NM-10-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.