

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent fatigue cracks in the skin and longerons of the fuselage, which could result in loss of the structural integrity of the fuselage and, consequently, lead to rapid depressurization of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Perform a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection of the external areas of the fuselage to detect cracks of the skin and/or longeron between stations Y=160.000 and Y=218.000, in accordance with McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-235, dated September 15, 1993; and of the entire area between stations Y=160.000 and Y=180.000, longeron 4 left and longeron 5 left. Perform the inspection at the time specified in paragraph (a)(1) or (a)(2) of this AD, as applicable.

Note 2: Where there are differences between this AD and the referenced service bulletin, the AD prevails.

(1) For airplanes other than those identified in paragraph (a)(2) of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 30,000 total landings, or within 8,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For airplanes that have been inspected previously in accordance with Task C46-53300 of the Corrosion Prevention and Control Program (CPCP), as required by AD 92-22-8-R1, amendment 39-8591, within 6,000 flight cycles prior to the effective date of this AD: Inspect within 12,000 landings after the effective date of this AD.

(b) *Condition 1 (No Cracks).* If no crack is detected during any inspection required by this AD, accomplish either paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this AD, in accordance with McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-235, dated September 15, 1993.

(1) *Condition 1, Option I (Repetitive Inspection).* Repeat the HFEC inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, and the aided visual inspection specified in paragraph 2.E. of the Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin, at intervals not to exceed 10,000 landings.

(2) *Condition 1, Option II (Terminating Action Modification).* Accomplish the preventative modification installation of clips and doublers between stations Y=160.000 and Y=218.000, in accordance with the service bulletin. Accomplishment of the modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD.

(c) *Condition 2 (Skin Cracks).* If any skin crack is detected during any inspection required by this AD, prior to further flight, repair it in accordance with McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-235, dated September 15, 1993. After repair, accomplish either paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this AD.

(d) *Condition 3 (Longeron Cracks).* If any longeron crack is detected during any inspection required by this AD, prior to further flight, repair it in accordance with McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-235, dated September 15, 1993. After repair, accomplish either paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this AD.

(e) Prior to the accumulation of 100,000 total landings, or within 4 years after the

effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, accomplish the preventative modification specified in paragraph 2.J. of the Accomplishment Instructions of McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-235, dated September 15, 1993. Accomplishment of the modification constitutes terminating action for the 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, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), 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, Los Angeles ACO.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Los Angeles ACO.

(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.

(h) The actions shall be done in accordance with McDonnell Douglas DC-9 Service Bulletin 53-235, dated September 15, 1993. 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 The Boeing Company, Douglas Products Division, 3855 Lakewood Boulevard, Long Beach, California 90846, Attention: Technical Publications Business Administration, Dept. C1-L51 (2-60). Copies may be inspected 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; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(i) This amendment becomes effective on July 30, 1998.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on June 17, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-16695 Filed 6-24-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-212-AD; Amendment 39-10627; AD 98-13-36]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Saab Model SAAB SF340A, SAAB 340B, and SAAB 2000 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Saab Model SAAB SF340A, SAAB 340B, and SAAB 2000 series airplanes, that requires repetitive operational tests of the pitch trim system of the elevator trim-tab of the flight control unit to ensure that the system operates correctly, and repair if necessary. This amendment is prompted by a report of uncommanded movement of the right-hand elevator trim-tab to a maximum deflection position, which was apparently due to a failure in the aircraft harness and a fault in the pitch trim synchronizer. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent such uncommanded movement of the elevator trim-tab, which could lead to structural overload of the horizontal stabilizers at speeds above 180 knots, and consequent reduced controllability of the airplane.

DATES: Effective July 30, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of July 30, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from SAAB Aircraft AB, SAAB Aircraft Product Support, S-581.88, Linköping, Sweden. 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 certain Saab Model SAAB SF340A, SAAB 340B, and SAAB 2000 series airplanes was published in the Federal Register on May 9, 1997 (62 FR 25566). That action proposed to require repetitive operational tests of the pitch trim system of the elevator trim-tab of the flight control unit to ensure that the system operates correctly, and repair, if necessary.

Consideration of Comments Received

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

Two commenters support the proposed AD.

Requests to Withdraw the AD

Two commenters suggest that the proposed AD is no longer required because the proposed action already is being performed by the operators in accordance with their usual maintenance procedures. One commenter states that it is redundant to issue an AD that would require the operational tests to be performed when those checks are already a mandatory task in its maintenance program. The manufacturer states that procedures for these tests have been included in the Saab Maintenance Review Board (MRB) Document (task 27-3210), which specifies repetitive checks every 150 flight hours. In addition, commenters state that Saab Service Bulletin 340-27-079, dated December 22, 1995, which describes procedures for the tests required by the proposed AD, has been canceled.

The FAA acknowledges that the operator's maintenance program and manufacturer's MRB document may include the same information as the proposed AD and service bulletin. However, the FAA has determined that such programs and documents are not the appropriate means to address the unsafe condition; an airworthiness directive is issued to address an unsafe condition. In addition, the FAA has determined that allowing each operator to determine whether and how often operational tests should be conducted will not ensure an acceptable level of safety, and that allowing this degree of operator discretion is not appropriate in this case. Therefore, this AD is necessary to ensure that operators accomplish operational tests in a common manner and at common intervals to ensure compliance and public safety.

Request to Limit the Applicability of the AD

The manufacturer states that, on all Saab Model SAAB 2000 series airplanes, the mechanical elevator control system (MECS) has been replaced by the powered elevator control system (PECS). For this reason, the manufacturer maintains that operational tests for the pitch trim system on these airplanes are no longer required.

The FAA infers that the manufacturer requests that the FAA limit the applicability of the proposed AD to exclude Model SAAB 2000 series airplanes equipped with PECS. The FAA concurs with this request and agrees that, for Model SAAB SF340A, SAAB 340B, and SAAB 2000 series airplanes equipped with PECS, the actions required by the proposed AD are no longer required. Therefore, the FAA has removed such airplanes from the applicability of the final rule.

Requests to Incorporate the Manufacturer's Repair Instructions Into the Final Rule

Two commenters request that the proposed AD be revised to incorporate the manufacturer's repair instructions into the final rule. In support of these requests, the manufacturer has provided repair instructions in its comments. The commenters state that, if a problem is encountered during an inspection, the requirement to contact the FAA for repair instructions could cause operators to incur long down times while waiting for such instructions.

Although the FAA does not concur with the requests to incorporate the manufacturer's repair instructions into the final rule, it has taken into account the commenters' concerns about potential delays in receiving repair instructions. The FAA has been advised by the manufacturer that it has developed a repair procedure to isolate the fault and has developed a repair for the elevator trim synchronizer system in the event that the operational test fails. The FAA also has been advised that this repair procedure now has been included in the Saab 340 Aircraft Maintenance Manual (AMM) 27-32-30, dated January 1, 1998. The FAA has reviewed this procedure and finds that it may be used as an acceptable means of compliance for the repair required by paragraph (a)(2) of this AD. Accordingly, the FAA has revised this final rule to include a new NOTE specifying that the repair may be accomplished in accordance with the Saab 340 AMM.

In addition, the FAA has revised paragraph (a)(2) of the final rule to

specify that repairs may be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by either the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, or the Luftfartsverket (LFV), which is the airworthiness authority for Sweden. In light of the type of repair required to ensure that the pitch trim system operates correctly, and in consonance with existing bilateral airworthiness agreements, the FAA has determined that, for this AD, such a repair approved by either the FAA or the LFV (or its delegated agent) would be acceptable for compliance with this AD.

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 with the changes previously described. The FAA has determined that these changes will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

Interim Action

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

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 235 Model SAAB SF340A and SAAB 340B series airplanes of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD. Currently, there are no Model SAAB 2000 series airplanes of U.S. registry that would be affected by this AD. The FAA estimates that it will take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the required actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$14,100, or \$60 per airplane, per operational test.

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:

98-13-36 SAAB Aircraft AB: Amendment 39-10627. Docket 96-NM-212-AD.

Applicability: Model SAAB SF340A series airplanes, serial numbers -004 through -159, inclusive; Model SAAB 340B series airplanes, serial numbers -160 and subsequent; and SAAB 2000 series airplanes, serial numbers -005 and -007 through -009, inclusive; equipped with a mechanical elevator control system (MECS); 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 uncommanded movement of the right-hand elevator trim-tab to a maximum deflection position, which could lead to structural overload of the horizontal stabilizers at speeds above 180 knots, and consequent reduced controllability of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 150 hours time-in-service after the effective date of this AD, perform an operational test of the pitch trim system that moves the elevator trim-tab of the flight control unit to ensure that the system operates correctly, in accordance with Saab Service Bulletins 340-27-079 (for Model SAAB SF340A and SF340B series airplanes); or 2000-27-018 (for Model SAAB 2000 series airplanes); both dated December 22, 1995; as applicable.

(1) If no discrepancy is found, repeat the operational test of the pitch trim system thereafter at intervals not to exceed 150 hours time-in-service.

(2) If any discrepancy is found, prior to further flight, accomplish repairs in accordance with a method approved by either the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, or the Luftfartsverket (LFV), or its delegated agent.

Note 2: Accomplishment of the repair required by paragraph (a)(2) of this AD, in accordance with Saab 340 Aircraft Maintenance Manual 27-32-30, dated January 1, 1998, is considered acceptable for compliance with the applicable action specified in this AD.

(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. 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.

(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 operational test shall be done in accordance with Saab Service Bulletin 340-27-079, dated December 22, 1995, or Saab Service Bulletin 2000-27-018, dated December 22, 1995, as applicable. This incorporation by reference was previously 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 SAAB Aircraft AB, SAAB Aircraft Product Support, S-581.88, Linköping, Sweden. 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 Swedish airworthiness directive SAD No. 1-083, Revision 1, dated January 2, 1996.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on July 30, 1998.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on June 17, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-16697 Filed 6-24-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-NM-81-AD; Amendment 39-10628; AD 98-13-37]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 and A300-600 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A300 and all Model A300-600 series airplanes, that requires a one-time inspection for cracking of the gantry lower flanges in the main landing gear (MLG) bay area; and repair, 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 cracking of the gantry lower flanges in the MLG bay area, which could result in decompression of the airplane.

DATES: Effective July 30, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the **Federal Register** as of July 30, 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.