

the inspection specified in paragraph (a) of this AD thereafter at intervals not to exceed 12 months or 2,400 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

#### Replacement and Inspection

(b) Prior to the accumulation of 10,000 total flight hours, or within 12 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, replace all 7x7 elevator trim cables with 7x19 cables in accordance with Shorts Service Bulletin SD3-60-27-27, Revision 1, dated April 1, 1999. Repeat the inspection specified in paragraph (a) of this AD thereafter at intervals not to exceed 12 months or 2,400 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

#### Alternative Methods of Compliance

(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 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.

#### Special Flight Permits

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 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 the British airworthiness directive 016-11-98.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 28, 1999.

**D.L. Riggin,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*  
[FR Doc. 99-20066 Filed 8-3-99; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-NM-96-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A319-131, A320-232 and -233, and A321-131 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 A319-131, A320-232 and -233, and A321-131 and -231 series airplanes. This proposal would require replacement of all titanium thrust links with steel thrust links. 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 prevent failure of the titanium thrust links due to the life limit of the thrust links, which in combination with other failures, could result in the separation of an engine from the airplane.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by September 3, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-NM-96-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 99-NM-96-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. 99-NM-96-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, recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Airbus Model A319-131, A320-232 and -233, and A321-131 and -231 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that fatigue tests have revealed that the fatigue life limit of the thrust link was not appropriate for the objective life limit of the airplane. Failure of the titanium thrust link in combination with other failures, if not corrected, could result in the separation of an engine from the airplane.

#### Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-71-1020, dated May 25, 1998, which describes procedures for replacement of all titanium thrust links with steel thrust links. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC) classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 1999-050-126(B), dated February 10, 1999, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

#### FAA's Conclusions

These airplane models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of § 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 actions specified in the service bulletin described previously.

### Other Relevant Rulemaking

The FAA has previously issued notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), Docket No. 98-NM-284-AD (63 FR 64654, November 23, 1998), that concerns the forward engine mount on certain Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes. The NPRM would require a one-time inspection of the forward engine mount assembly of the left and right engines to verify that the part number on each assembly is correct; re-identification of the forward engine mount assembly; and follow-on actions, if necessary. These actions should be accomplished prior to or concurrently with the actions of this proposed AD. This proposed AD would not affect the proposed requirements of NPRM, Docket No. 98-NM-284-AD.

### Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 65 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 3 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed replacement, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts would be supplied by the engine manufacturer at no cost to the operators. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$11,700, or \$180 per airplane.

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.

### 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 99-NM-96-AD.

**Applicability:** Model A319-131, A320-232 and -233, and A321-131 and -231 series airplanes; except those airplanes on which Airbus Modification 26506 (reference Airbus Service Bulletin A320-71-1020, dated May 25, 1998) has been accomplished in production; 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 (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 failure of the titanium thrust links due to the life limit of the thrust links, which in combination with other failures, could result in the separation of an engine from the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Replace all titanium thrust links with steel thrust links in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320-71-1020, dated May 25, 1998; at the later of the times specified in paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this AD.

(1) Prior to the accumulation of the total flight cycles specified for each particular model in the tables of paragraph B.(5), "Accomplishment Timescale," of the service bulletin.

(2) Within 15 months after the effective date of this AD, or at the next engine removal, whichever occurs first.

### Alternative Methods of Compliance

(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.

### Special Flight Permits

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 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 1999-050-126(B), dated February 10, 1999.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 28, 1999.

**D.L. Riggins,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*  
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