

(2) If any crack is found, and the crack cannot be eliminated using the method specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A310-53-2037, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992: Prior to further flight, repair the crack in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

(h) Modification of the passenger/crew door frames in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A310-53-2017, Revision 7, dated February 25, 1992, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (f) of this AD.

(i) 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 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.

(j) 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 January 23, 1997.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-42-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300-600 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 Airbus Model A300-600 series airplanes. This proposal would require inspections of the lower door surrounding structure to detect cracks and corrosion, and repair, if necessary. This proposal also would require inspections to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames of the door structures; and repair, if necessary. In addition, this proposal would

provide for optional terminating action for certain inspections. This proposal is prompted by reports indicating that corrosion was found behind the scuff plates at exit and cargo doors, and fatigue cracks originated from certain fastener holes located in adjacent structure. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct such corrosion and fatigue cracking, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the door surroundings.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 10, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-NM-42-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-42-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-42-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, has notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on all Airbus Model A300-600 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that it has received reports indicating that corrosion was found behind the scuff plates at passenger/crew doors, emergency exits, and the bulk cargo door. The DGAC also advises that results of structural fatigue testing have revealed that cracks were found on the corner doublers of the forward, mid, and aft passenger/crew door frames; and, after various simulated flights, on the fail-safe ring and frames 14 and 16A of the forward passenger/crew door. After 50,000 simulated flights, cracks measuring between 8.0 mm and 109.0 mm were found on the forward door frames and fail-safe ring. On the mid door frame, a 53.0 mm crack was found after 60,493 simulated flights. A crack that measured 32.0 mm was found on the aft door frame after 106,000 simulated flights. In all cases, the cracks originated at the fastener holes. In addition, cracks originating from corner doubler edges were found at the aft passenger/crew doors.

Such corrosion and fatigue cracking, if not detected and corrected, could result in reduced structural integrity of the door surroundings.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A300-53-6011, Revision 3, dated February 4, 1991, which describes procedures for a one-time inspection to detect cracks and corrosion in the areas behind the scuff plates at passenger/crew doors, emergency exits, and the bulk cargo door, and repair, if necessary. Airbus also has issued Service Bulletin A300-53-6022, dated February 4, 1991,

which describes procedures for corresponding repetitive inspections in these areas, and repair, if necessary.

In addition, Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A300-53-6018, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992. This service bulletin describes procedures for repetitive inspections to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames at the left- and right-hand forward, mid, and aft passenger/crew door structures; and repair, if necessary.

Airbus also has issued Service Bulletin A300-53-6002, Revision 3, dated February 22, 1992, which describes procedures for modification of the passenger/crew door frames. This modification consists of performing cold expansion procedures on the fastener holes in door frames, corner doublers, and fail-safe rings; and installing oversized Hi-Lok fasteners and additional steel doublers at door frame corners, where necessary, to improve the fatigue life of the corner doublers, fail-safe rings, and door frames. Accomplishment of the modification eliminates the need for the repetitive inspections specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6018.

The DGAC classified the inspection service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 91-132-124(B), dated June 26, 1991, as amended by a Correction, dated August 21, 1991, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France. (The DGAC did not classify the modification service bulletin as mandatory.)

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 inspections of the lower door surrounding structure to detect cracks

and corrosion, and repair, if necessary. The proposed AD also would require inspections to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames of the door structures; and repair, if necessary. In addition, the proposed AD would provide for optional terminating action for certain inspections. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletins described previously.

The FAA has considered the following criteria in allowing repetitive inspections of the crack-prone area to be permitted to continue indefinitely, even though a positive fix for the unsafe condition exists: (1) the design of the airplane is damage tolerant; and (2) the proposed interval of the repetitive inspections does not require that numerous inspections will be accomplished over the life of the airplane.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 35 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 700 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspections (including access and close-up), and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$1,470,000, or \$42,000 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.

Should an operator elect to accomplish the optional terminating action that would be provided by this AD action, it would take approximately 147 work hours to accomplish it, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. The cost of required parts would be approximately \$5,581 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the optional terminating action would be \$14,401 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: Docket 96-NM-42-AD.

Applicability: All Model A300-600 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 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 (i) 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 corrosion behind the scuff plates at exit and cargo doors, and fatigue cracking in certain fastener holes located in adjacent structure, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the door surroundings, accomplish the following:

(a) Perform an initial inspection of the areas behind the scuff plates below the passenger/crew doors and bulk cargo door to detect cracks and corrosion, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6011, Revision 3, dated February 4, 1991; at the time specified in paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) of this AD. If any crack or corrosion is found during this inspection, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with the service bulletin. Accomplishment of this inspection is not required for the mid and aft passenger/crew doors if a steel doubler that covers the entire inspection area is installed.

(1) For airplanes on which Modification 5382S6526 (for forward doors) and Modification 5382D4741 (for all other doors) have been accomplished prior to delivery of the airplane: Perform the initial inspection within 9 years since manufacture, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For airplanes on which Modification 5382S6526 (for forward doors) and Modification 5382D4741 (for all other doors) have not been accomplished; and on which the procedures described in Airbus Service Information Letter (SIL) A300-53-033, Revision 2 (for all doors), dated November 23, 1984, have been accomplished: Perform the initial inspection within 5 years after accomplishment of the procedures described in the SIL, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(3) For airplanes on which Modification 5382S6526 (for forward doors), Modification 5382D4741 (for all other doors), and the procedures described in Airbus SIL A300-53-033, Revision 2, dated November 23, 1984, have not been accomplished: Perform the initial inspection within 4 years since manufacture, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(b) Perform repetitive inspections of the areas behind the scuff plates below the passenger/crew doors and bulk cargo door to detect cracks and corrosion, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6022, dated February 4, 1991; at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this AD. Accomplishment of these inspections is not required for the mid and aft passenger/crew doors if a steel doubler that covers the entire inspection area is installed.

(1) For the forward and mid passenger/crew doors, the bulk cargo door, and the aft passenger/crew doors, except the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler: Perform the first inspection within 5 years after accomplishing the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD; and repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5 years.

(2) For the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler of the aft passenger/crew doors: Perform the first inspection within 5 years or 6,000 landings after accomplishing the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, whichever occurs first; and repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5 years or 6,000 landings, whichever occurs first.

(c) If cracks are found as a result of any inspection required by paragraph (b) of this

AD, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6022, dated February 4, 1991. Thereafter, perform the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (b) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this AD.

(d) If corrosion is found as a result of any inspection required by paragraph (b) of this AD, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6022, dated February 4, 1991. Thereafter, perform the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (b) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this AD.

(1) For the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler of the aft passenger/crew doors, and for the mid passenger/crew door: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 5 years or 5,000 landings, whichever occurs first.

(2) For the forward passenger/crew doors and bulk cargo doors: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 5 years.

(e) Perform an inspection to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames of the left- and right-hand forward, mid, and aft passenger/crew door structures, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6018, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992, and at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (e)(1), (e)(2), (e)(3), or (e)(4) of this AD.

(1) For the upper corners of the forward doors: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings, or within 2,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For the lower corners of the forward doors: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings, or within 4,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(3) For the upper and lower corners of the mid doors: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(4) For the upper and lower corners of the aft doors, and for the parts underneath the corners of the upper door frames: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings, or within 4,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(f) Repeat the inspections required by paragraph (e) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (f)(1), (f)(2), (f)(3), (f)(4), and (f)(5).

(1) For the upper corners of the forward doors: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 6,000 landings.

(2) For the lower corners of the forward doors: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 10,000 landings.

(3) For the upper and lower corners of the mid and aft doors on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using a Roto test technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 8,000 landings.

(4) For the upper and lower corners of the mid and aft doors on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using an X-ray technique:

Inspect at intervals not to exceed 3,500 landings.

(5) For the areas around the fasteners in the vicinity of stringer 12 on the upper door frames of the aft doors on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using a visual technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 6,900 landings.

(g) If any crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (e) or (f) of this AD: Prior to further flight, accomplish the requirement of paragraph (g)(1) or (g)(2) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) If any crack is found, and the crack can be eliminated using the method specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6018, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992: Prior to further flight, repair the crack in accordance with that service bulletin.

(2) If any crack is found, and the crack cannot be eliminated using the method specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6018, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992: Prior to further flight, repair the crack in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

(h) Modification of the passenger/crew door frames in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6002, Revision 3, dated February 22, 1992, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (f) of this AD.

(i) 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 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.

(j) 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 January 23, 1997.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-43-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.