

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-194-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A310 and A300-600 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking; reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: This document revises an earlier proposed airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A310 and A300-600 series airplanes, that would have required modifying the rudder trim switch and control knob. That proposal was prompted by reports of in-flight uncommanded rudder trim activation due to inadvertent activation of the rudder trim switch, failure of the switch, or incorrect installation of the switch. This new action revises the proposed rule by requiring replacement of the rudder trim switch in the flight compartment with a new switch having a longer shaft; modification of wiring in panel 408VU; and replacement of the control knob with a new knob, as necessary. This actions specified by this new proposed AD are intended to prevent inadvertent and uncommanded rudder trim activation, which could result in yaw and roll excursions and consequent reduced controllability of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 9, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-NM-194-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 the 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-194-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.

96-NM-194-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to add an airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A310 and A300-600 series airplanes, was published as a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) in the **Federal Register** on April 1, 1997 (62 FR 15431). That NPRM would have required modifying the rudder trim switch and control knob. That proposal was prompted by reports of in-flight uncommanded rudder trim activation due to inadvertent activation of the rudder trim switch, failure of the switch, or incorrect installation of the switch. Such activation, if not corrected, could result in uncommanded yaw/roll excursions and consequent reduced controllability of the airplane.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Proposal

Since the issuance of the originally proposed NPRM, the Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that the unsafe condition addressed in the NPRM may continue to exist on certain Airbus Model A310 and A300-600 series airplanes that were modified previously in accordance with two of the service bulletins cited in that NPRM:

1. Airbus Service Bulletin A300-27-6027, Revision 2, dated August 22, 1995, or Revision 3, dated March 13, 1996 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes); and
2. Airbus Service Bulletin A310-27-2071, Revision 2, dated August 22, 1995, or Revision 3, dated March 13, 1996 (for Model A310 series airplanes).

The DGAC advises the FAA of two reports indicating that a rudder trim switch that was replaced in accordance with these service bulletins did not return to a centered (neutral) position after release. Because the replacement and modification procedures in these service bulletins do not adequately prevent inadvertent and uncommanded rudder trim activation, the DGAC has issued a new French airworthiness directive, 97-111-219(B), dated May 7, 1997, to correct the unsafe condition.

Airbus has issued two new and two revised service bulletins, as described below. The FAA has determined that

accomplishment of the actions specified in these service bulletins will ensure the appropriate clearance between the rudder trim control knob and panel 408VU, which will correct the identified unsafe condition.

1. Two new Airbus Service Bulletins, A300-27-6037 and A310-27-2084, both dated February 12, 1997, describe procedures for replacement of the existing rudder trim switch with a switch having a new part number, and modification of the wiring in panel 408VU. The new switch, which has a longer shaft, was designed to prevent interference with the panel by ensuring the appropriate clearance between the control knob and the panel.

2. Revisions to Airbus Service Bulletins A300-27-6022, Revision 3 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes), and A310-27-2058, Revision 3 (for Model A310 series airplanes), both dated September 26, 1996, describe procedures for replacement of the rudder trim control knob in panel 408VU, and an inspection to ensure the appropriate clearance between the rudder trim control knob and panel 408VU. The configuration of the knob was changed in Revision 2 of these service bulletins and was proposed in the NPRM.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

The DGAC classified the Airbus service bulletins as mandatory, and issued French airworthiness directives 95-246-193(B), dated December 6, 1995, and 97-111-219(B), dated May 7, 1997, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

FAA's Conclusions

The FAA concludes that the new design change to the rudder trim switch and the previous design change to the control knob specified in the service bulletins described previously will reduce the possibility of inadvertent and uncommanded activation of the rudder.

The FAA has determined that, in order to adequately address the identified unsafe condition (inadvertent and uncommanded rudder trim activation), the originally proposed rule must be revised to require the actions specified in the service bulletins described previously, except as described below.

Differences Between Service Bulletins and the Supplemental NPRM

Although Revision 3 of Airbus Service Bulletins A310-27-2058 and A300-27-6022 provides inspection procedures for

setting the appropriate clearance between panel 408VU and the rudder trim control knob, this supplemental NPRM does not require such an inspection. The FAA has determined that installation of the new switch will ensure the appropriate clearance between the control knob and panel when the new switch is installed, and that this design change precludes the necessity for an inspection.

Conclusion

Because these changes expand the scope of the originally proposed rule, the FAA has determined that it is necessary to reopen the comment period to provide additional opportunity for public comment.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 90 Airbus Model A310 and A300-600 series airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

- Replacement of the rudder trim switch and modification of the wiring would take approximately 7 hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would be provided by the manufacturer at no cost to the operators. Based on these figures, the cost impact on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$37,800, or \$420 per airplane.

- Replacement of the rudder trim control knob would take approximately 1 hour per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$296 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$32,040, or \$356 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are 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 to follow:

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 96-NM-194-AD.

Applicability: Model A310 and A300-600 series airplanes on which Airbus Modifications 8566 and 11662 have not been incorporated, 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 prevent inadvertent and uncommanded rudder trim activation, which could result in yaw and roll excursions and consequent reduced controllability of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 90 days after the effective date of this AD, accomplish the actions required by paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this AD.

(1) Replace rudder trim switch, part number (P/N) 097-023-00, in the flight compartment with a new switch, P/N 097-023-01; and modify the wiring in panel 408VU; in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A310-27-2084 (for Model A310 series airplanes), and Airbus Service Bulletin A300-27-6037 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes), both dated February 12, 1997.

(2) Replace the rudder trim control knob on the rudder trim switch with a new knob in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A310-27-2058, Revision 3, dated September 26, 1996, or Revision 2, dated August 28, 1995 (for Model A310 series airplanes); and Airbus Service Bulletin A300-27-6022, Revision 3, dated September 26, 1996, or Revision 2, dated August 28, 1995 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes).

(b) As of the effective date of this AD, no person shall install in the flight compartment of any airplane a rudder trim switch having P/N 097-023-00.

(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.

(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 directives 95-246-193(B), dated December 6, 1995, and 97-111-219(B), dated May 7, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 5, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-3515 Filed 2-11-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-186-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Fokker F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 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 Fokker F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes. This proposal would require a modification of the lapjoint below the chine line at certain fuselage stations. 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 fatigue cracking in the lapjoint below the chine line at certain fuselage stations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 16, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-NM-186-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 Fokker Services B.V., Technical Support Department, P.O. Box 75047, 1117 ZN Schiphol Airport, the Netherlands. 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 96-NM-186-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. 96-NM-186-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Rijksluchtvaartdienst (RLD), which is the airworthiness authority for the Netherlands, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Fokker F27 Mark 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, and 700 series airplanes. The RLD advises that fatigue analysis of Fokker Model F27 series airplanes has shown that the lapjoints below the chine line, between fuselage station 1400 and 16660, are vulnerable to multiple-site fatigue cracking. Such fatigue cracking occurs when the airplane is operated, or has been operated, at 5.5 pounds per square inch (psi) differential cabin pressure, and the affected bottom fuselage skin panels have a thickness of 0.6 millimeters (mm) (between fuselage station 1400 and station 12975) or 0.7 mm (between fuselage station 12975 and station 16660). This condition, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

Other Relevant Rulemaking

The FAA has previously issued AD 96-13-07, amendment 39-9675 (61 FR 34718, July 3, 1996), which currently requires repetitive inspections of the subject lapjoints below the chine line of certain fuselage stations. These inspections are conducted as part of the Fokker Model F27 Structural Integrity Program (SIP).

This proposed AD will affect items 53-30-02, 53-30-03, and 53-30-04 of the Fokker Model F27 SIP.