

Airbus Service Bulletin A300–28–6069, dated September 4, 2001, is acceptable for compliance with the modification required by paragraph (d) of this AD.

#### Alternative Methods of Compliance

(g)(1) In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, is authorized to approve alternative methods of compliance for this AD.

(2) Alternative methods of compliance, approved previously in accordance with AD 99–27–07, amendment 39–11488, are approved as alternative methods of compliance with the applicable actions in this AD.

**Note 2:** The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 2002–132(B), dated March 20, 2002.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on September 3, 2003.

**Ali Bahrami,**

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

[FR Doc. 03–22891 Filed 9–8–03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910–13–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002–NM–125–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 Series Airplanes

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes the superseding of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes, that currently requires modifying the fuel pipe couplings and installing bonding leads in specified locations within the fuel tank. This action would continue to require the modification and installation, but would add new modifications of the bonding leads for certain airplanes. This action also would change the applicability in the existing AD. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent ignition sources and consequent fire/explosion in the fuel tank. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by October 9, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114,

Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002–NM–125–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227–1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: *9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov*. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain “Docket No. 2002–NM–125–AD” in the subject line and need not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 or 2000 or ASCII text.

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:** Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–2125; 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 action may be changed in light of the comments received.

Submit comments using the following format:

- Organize comments issue-by-issue. For example, discuss a request to change the compliance time and a request to change the service bulletin reference as two separate issues.
- For each issue, state what specific change to the proposed AD is being requested.
- Include justification (*e.g.*, reasons or data) for each request.

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 action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: “Comments to Docket Number 2002–NM–125–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. 2002–NM–125–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

#### Discussion

On July 13, 2000, the FAA issued AD 2000–14–15, amendment 39–11825 (65 FR 45513, July 24, 2000), applicable to certain Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes, to require modifying the fuel pipe couplings and installing bonding leads in specified locations within the fuel tank. That action was prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The requirements of that AD are intended to prevent ignition sources and consequent fire/explosion in the fuel tank.

#### Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

Since the issuance of AD 2000–14–15, Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320–28–1077, Revision 04, dated December 14, 2001; and Revision 05, dated August 27, 2002. The original issue of the service bulletin was referenced as the appropriate source of service information for doing the actions required by that AD. Revisions 01, 02, and 03 of the service bulletin contain revised procedures, which include increasing the quantity of bonding leads installed. Revision 04 adds procedures for airplanes modified per the original issue of the service bulletin. The added procedures in Revision 04 involve installing an additional bonding lead at Rib 15 on the jet pump system for Model A319 and A320 series airplanes, or on the recirculation system for Model A321 series airplanes. Revision 04 also describes procedures for an electrical bonding resistance check upon completion of the modification. Revision 05 adds no additional work for airplanes modified by any of the previous revisions.

Airbus also has issued Service Bulletin A320-28-1079, dated November 30, 1998. The service bulletin describes procedures for modification of the fuel system of the additional center fuel tank. The modification includes cleaning certain bonding point attachments, sealing the bonding point attachments, and installing new bonding leads between the flanges of the fuel and vent pipes. The service bulletin also describes procedures for an electrical bonding resistance check upon completion of the modification.

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 2002-202(B), dated April 17, 2002, 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 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 supersede AD 2000-14-15 to continue to require modifying the fuel pipe couplings and installing bonding leads in specified locations within the fuel tank. The proposed AD also would add new modifications of the bonding lead for certain airplanes, and would change the applicability in the existing AD by excluding airplanes having the new modification. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletins described previously.

#### Changes to 14 CFR Part 39/Effect on the Proposed AD

On July 10, 2002, the FAA issued a new version of 14 CFR part 39 (67 FR 47997, July 22, 2002), which governs the

FAA's airworthiness directives system. The regulation now includes material that relates to altered products, special flight permits, and alternative methods of compliance (AMOCs). Because we have now included this material in part 39, only the office authorized to approve AMOCs is identified in each individual AD.

#### Change to Labor Rate Estimate

We have reviewed the figures we have used over the past several years to calculate AD costs to operators. To account for various inflationary costs in the airline industry, we find it necessary to increase the labor rate used in these calculations from \$60 per work hour to \$65 per work hour. The cost impact information, below, reflects this increase in the specified hourly labor rate.

#### Cost Impact

There are approximately 227 airplanes of U.S. registry that would be affected by this proposed AD.

The actions that are currently required by AD 2000-14-15 take between 20 and 100 work hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of \$65 per work hour. The cost of required parts is negligible. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the currently required actions on U.S. operators is estimated to be between \$295,100 and \$1,475,500; or between \$1,300 and \$6,500 per airplane.

Should an operator be required to accomplish the actions specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320-28-1077, Revision 04, it would take approximately 2 work hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of \$65 per work hour. The cost of required parts is negligible. Based on these figures, the cost impact of these new proposed requirements on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$130 per airplane.

Should an operator be required to accomplish the actions specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320-28-1079, it would take approximately 6 work hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of \$65 per work hour. The cost of required parts is negligible. Based on these figures, the cost impact of these new proposed requirements on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$390 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the current or proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD

rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

#### Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have a substantial direct effect 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, it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

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 removing amendment 39-11825 (65 FR 45513, July 24, 2000), and by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD), to read as follows:

**Airbus:** Docket 2002-NM-125-AD.

Supersedes AD 2000-14-15, amendment 39-11825.

**Applicability:** Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes; certificated in any

category; excluding those on which Airbus Modifications 27150, 27955, and 27472 have been installed.

*Compliance:* Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent ignition sources and consequent fire/explosion in the fuel tank, accomplish the following:

#### Restatement of Requirements of AD 2000-14-15

##### *Modification and Installation*

(a) Within 36 months after August 28, 2000 (the effective date of AD 2000-14-15, amendment 39-11825), modify the fuel pipe couplings and install bonding leads in the specified locations of the fuel tank, per the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-28-1077, dated July 9, 1999; Revision 01, dated April 26, 2000; Revision 02, dated June 28, 2000; Revision 03, dated October 3, 2000; Revision 04, dated December 14, 2001; or Revision 05, dated August 27, 2002. As of the effective date of this AD, only Revisions 01, 02, 03, 04, and 05 may be used.

#### New Requirements of This AD

##### *Modification and Installation*

(b) Do the applicable actions required by paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this AD at the times specified.

(1) For airplanes on which the actions required by paragraph (a) of this AD have been done per Airbus Service Bulletin A320-28-1077, dated July 9, 1999: Within 36 months after the effective date of this AD, install an additional bonding lead (including an electrical resistance check) by doing all the actions per paragraphs 3.B.(3) and 3.C. of the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-28-1077, Revision 04, dated December 14, 2001; or Revision 05, dated August 27, 2002.

(2) For airplanes on which an additional center fuel tank is installed, as described in Airbus Service Bulletin A320-28-1079, dated November 30, 1998: Within 20 months after the effective date of this AD, modify the fuel system of the additional center fuel tank (including an electrical resistance check) by doing all the actions per paragraphs 2.A. through 2.E. of the Accomplishment Instructions of the service bulletin.

##### *Alternative Methods of Compliance*

(c)(1) In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, is authorized to approve alternative methods of compliance for this AD.

(2) Alternative methods of compliance, approved previously in accordance with AD 2000-14-15, amendment 39-11825, are not considered to be approved as alternative methods of compliance with this AD.

**Note 1:** The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 2002-202(B), dated April 17, 2002.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on September 3, 2003.

**Ali Bahrami,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*  
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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Highway Administration

#### 23 CFR Part 650

**[FHWA Docket No. FHWA-2001-8954]**

**RIN 2125-AE86**

#### National Bridge Inspection Standards

**AGENCY:** Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM); request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** The FHWA is requesting comments on proposed revisions to its National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS). This proposed action is necessary to address perceived ambiguities in the NBIS that have been identified since the last update to the regulation fourteen years ago. The proposed changes would clarify the NBIS language that is vague or ambiguous; reorganize the NBIS into a more logical sequence; and make the regulation easier to read and understand, not only by the inspector in the field, but also by those administering the highway bridge inspection programs at the State and Federal agency level.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before November 10, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Mail or hand deliver comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Dockets Management Facility, Room PL-401, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590, or submit electronically at <http://dmses.dot.gov/submit>. All comments should include the docket number that appears in the heading of this document. All comments received will be available for examination and copying at the above address from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Those desiring notification of receipt of comments must include a self-addressed, stamped postcard or you may print the acknowledgment page that appears after submitting comments electronically. Anyone is able to search the electronic form of all comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if

submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review DOT's complete Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published on April 11, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 70, Pages 19477-78) or you may visit <http://dms.dot.gov>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Wade F. Casey, P.E., Federal Lands Highway, HFPD-9, (202) 366-9486, or Mr. Robert Black, Office of the Chief Counsel, HCC-30, (202) 366-1359, Federal Highway Administration, 400 Seventh Street, SW., Washington, DC 20590-0001. Office hours are from 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. e.t., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Electronic Access and Filing

You may submit or retrieve comments online through the Document Management System (DMS) at: <http://dmses.dot.gov/submit>. Acceptable formats include: MS Word (versions 95 to 97), MS Word for Mac (versions 6 to 8), Rich Text File (RTF), American Standard Code Information Interchange (ASCII)(TXT), Portable Document Format (PDF), and WordPerfect (versions 7 to 8). The DMS is available 24 hours each day, 365 days each year. Electronic submission and retrieval help and guidelines are available under the help section of the Web site.

An electronic copy of this document may also be downloaded by using a computer, modem and suitable communications software from the Government Printing Office's Electronic Bulletin Board Service at (202) 512-1661. Internet users may also reach the Office of the Federal Register's home page at: <http://www.archives.gov> and the Government Printing Office's web page at: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara>.

##### Background

The FHWA bridge inspection program regulations were developed as a result of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 (sec. 26, Public Law 90-495, 82 Stat. 815, at 829) that required the Secretary of Transportation to establish national bridge inspection standards (NBIS). The primary purpose of the NBIS is to locate and evaluate existing bridge deficiencies to ensure the safety of the traveling public.

The 1968 Federal-Aid Highway Act directed the States to maintain an inventory of Federal-aid highway system bridges. The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1970 (sec. 204, Public Law 91-605, 84 Stat. 1713, at 1741) limited the NBIS to bridges on the Federal-aid highway system. After the Surface Transportation Assistance Act