

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. FAA-2018-0277; Product Identifier 2017-NM-124-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2017-15-17, which applies to certain Airbus Model A300 B4-600R series airplanes, Model A300 C4-605R Variant F airplanes, and Model A300 F4-600R series airplanes. AD 2017-15-17 requires an inspection of the lower area of a certain frame radius for cracking, and corrective action if necessary. Since we issued AD 2017-15-17, we have determined that repetitive inspections and applicable corrective actions are necessary. This proposed AD would add new repetitive inspections of the lower area of a certain frame radius for cracking, and corrective actions if necessary. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by June 1, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax:* 202-493-2251.
- *Mail:* U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Hand Delivery:* Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and

5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this NPRM, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office—EAW, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0277; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the **ADDRESSES** section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3225.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposed AD. Send your comments to an address listed under the **ADDRESSES** section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2018-0277; Product Identifier 2017-NM-124-AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each

substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

Discussion

We issued AD 2017-15-17, Amendment 39-18977 (82 FR 35644, August 1, 2017) (“AD 2017-15-17”), for certain Airbus Model A300 B4-600R series airplanes, Model A300 C4-605R Variant F airplanes, and Model A300 F4-600R series airplanes. AD 2017-15-17 was prompted by the detection of cracking that originated from the fastener holes in the forward fitting lower radius of frame (FR) 40. AD 2017-15-17 requires an inspection of the lower area of a certain frame radius for cracking, and corrective action if necessary. We issued AD 2017-15-17 to detect and correct cracking in the forward fitting lower radius of FR 40. Such cracking could reduce the structural integrity of the fuselage.

Since we issued AD 2017-15-17, we have determined that new repetitive inspections of the lower area of a certain frame radius for cracking, and corrective actions are necessary.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2017-0158, dated August 25, 2017 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus Model A300 B4-600R series airplanes, Model A300 C4-605R Variant F airplanes, and Model A300 F4-600R series airplanes. The MCAI states:

Following a full stress analysis of the Frame (FR) 40 lower area, supported by a Finite Element Model (FEM), of the post-mod [modification] 10221 configuration, it was demonstrated that, for the FR40 forward fitting lower radius, a crack could occur after a certain number of flight cycles (FC).

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could reduce the structural integrity of the fuselage.

To address this potential unsafe condition, Airbus established that crack detection could be achieved through a special detailed inspection (SDI) using a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) method, and issued Alert Operators Transmission (AOT) A57W009-16 to provide those inspection instructions.

Consequently, EASA issued AD 2016-0085 to require a one-time SDI of the FR40 lower area and, depending on findings, accomplishment of applicable corrective action(s). After that [EASA] AD was issued, further cracks were detected, originating from

the fastener hole, and, based on these findings, it was determined that the inspection area must be enlarged, and Airbus issued AOT A57W009–16 Revision (Rev.) 01 accordingly. Consequently, EASA issued AD 2016–0179 [which corresponds to FAA AD 2017–15–17], retaining the requirements of EASA AD 2016–0085, which was superseded, to extend the area of inspection, and to require an additional inspection for aeroplanes that were previously inspected.

The one-time SDI for high cycle A300–600 aeroplanes was intended to mitigate the highest risks within the fleet, pending development of instructions for repetitive inspections.

Since EASA AD 2016–0179 was issued, Airbus published SB A300–57–6120 * * * [for] the inspection programme for A300–600 * * * post-mod 10221 * * * [airplanes]. The AOT one-time inspection is superseded by these repetitive inspection SBs. These SBs include alternative inspection methods and repair solutions in case of findings together with the associated inspection programme.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD retains the requirements of EASA AD 2016–0179, which is superseded, * * * and defines new inspections methods with new compliance times, including repetitive inspections, depending on the aeroplane inspection status.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA–2018–0277.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A300–57–6120, including Appendices 1 through 7, dated April 28, 2017. This service information describes procedures for repetitive inspections of the forward fitting lower radius of FR 40 for cracking, and corrective action. This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the **ADDRESSES** section.

FAA's Determination and Requirements of This Proposed AD

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country, and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with the State of Design Authority, we have been notified of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI and service information referenced above. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all pertinent information and determined an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 94 airplanes of U.S. registry.

The actions required by AD 2017–15–17, and retained in this proposed AD, take about 4 work-hours per product, at an average labor rate of \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, the estimated cost of the actions that are required by AD 2017–15–17 is \$340 per product.

We also estimate that it would take about 4 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this proposed AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this proposed AD on U.S. operators to be \$31,960, or \$340 per product.

We have received no definitive data that would enable us to provide cost estimates for the on-condition actions specified in this proposed AD.

Paperwork Reduction Act

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB control number. The control number for the collection of information required by this AD is 2120–0056. The paperwork cost associated with this AD has been detailed in the Costs of Compliance section of this document and includes time for reviewing instructions, as well as completing and reviewing the collection of information. Therefore, all reporting associated with this AD is mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to the FAA at 800 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20591, ATTN: Information Collection Clearance Officer, AES–200.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures

the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

This AD is issued in accordance with authority delegated by the Executive Director, Aircraft Certification Service, as authorized by FAA Order 8000.51C. In accordance with that order, issuance of ADs is normally a function of the Compliance and Airworthiness Division, but during this transition period, the Executive Director has delegated the authority to issue ADs applicable to transport category airplanes to the Director of the System Oversight Division.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD 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.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify 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);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. 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.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 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. The FAA amends § 39.13 by removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2017–15–17, Amendment 39–18977 (82

FR 35644, August 1, 2017), and adding the following new AD:

Airbus: Docket No. FAA–2018–0277; Product Identifier 2017–NM–124–AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by June 1, 2018.

(b) Affected ADs

This AD replaces AD 2017–15–17, Amendment 39–18977 (82 FR 35644, August 1, 2017) (“AD 2017–15–17”).

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus airplanes, certificated in any category, identified in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) of this AD, on which Airbus Modification 10221 was embodied in production.

(1) Airbus Model A300 B4–605R and B4–622R airplanes.

(2) Airbus Model A300 C4–605R Variant F airplanes.

(3) Airbus Model A300 F4–605R and F4–622R airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 57, Wings.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by the detection of cracking that originated from the fastener

holes in the forward fitting lower radius of frame (FR) 40. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking in the forward fitting lower radius of FR 40. Such cracking could reduce the structural integrity of the fuselage.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Definitions

(1) For the purpose of this AD, the average flight time (AFT) can be established by dividing the flight hours (FHs) by the flight cycles (FCs) counted:

(i) From first flight, for selecting the inspection threshold of the non-repaired area,

(ii) From repair, for selecting the inspection threshold of the repaired area,

(iii) From the last inspection, for selecting the inspection interval.

(2) For the purpose of this AD, Group 1 airplanes are those airplanes already inspected in accordance with paragraph 4.2.2 in Alert Operators Transmission (AOT) A57W009–16, Revision 01, dated July 13, 2016, before the effective date of this AD. Group 2 airplanes are those airplanes not inspected in accordance with paragraph 4.2.2 in AOT A57W009–16, Revision 01, dated

July 13, 2016, as of the effective date of this AD.

(3) For the purpose of this AD, inspection method A is a high frequency (HFEC) inspection of the radius and fastener area. Inspection method B is a HFEC inspection of the radius and fastener area and a rototest of the fastener hole. Both are defined as a special detailed inspection (SDI) in this AD.

(h) Repetitive Inspections for Non-Repaired Areas

Within the compliance time specified in table 1 to paragraph (h) of this AD (Group 1 airplanes) or table 2 to paragraph (h) of this AD (Group 2 airplanes), as applicable, and, thereafter, at intervals not exceeding the values specified in table 3 to paragraph (h) of this AD, do a SDI for cracking of any non-repaired radius, fastener areas, and fastener holes, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6120, including Appendices 1 through 7, dated April 28, 2017; except where Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6120, including Appendices 1 through 7, dated April 28, 2017, specifies contacting Airbus for appropriate action, before further flight, obtain instructions using the procedures specified in paragraph (l) of this AD and accomplish those instructions.

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Table 1 to Paragraph (h) of this AD – Group 1 Inspection Thresholds – Non-repaired Areas

AFT	Compliance Time (whichever occurs later, A or B)
Greater than 1.5	<p>A: Before exceeding 14,700 FC or 31,900 FH since first flight of the airplane, whichever occurs first.</p> <p>B: Within 1,900 FC or 4,300 FH, whichever occurs first after the one-time inspection performed as per AOT A57W009-16 Revision 01, dated July 13, 2016.</p>
1.5 or less	<p>A: Before exceeding 15,900 FC or 23,900 FH since first flight of the airplane, whichever occurs first.</p> <p>B: Within 2,100 FC or 3,200 FH, whichever occurs first after the one-time inspection performed as per AOT A57W009-16 Revision 01, dated July 13, 2016.</p>

Table 2 to Paragraph (h) of this AD – Group 2 Inspection Thresholds – Non-repaired Areas

AFT	Compliance Time (whichever occurs later, A or B)
Greater than 1.5	<p>A: Before exceeding 14,700 FC or 31,900 FH since first flight of the airplane, whichever occurs first.</p> <p>B: Within 12 months after the effective date of this AD, without exceeding (whichever occurs later):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 19,000 FC or 41,000 FH, whichever occurs first since airplane first flight.- 300 FC or 630 FH, whichever occurs first after September 5, 2017 (the effective date of AD 2017-15-17).
1.5 or less	<p>A: Before exceeding 15,900 FC or 23,900 FH since first flight of the airplane, whichever occurs first.</p> <p>B: Within 12 months after the effective date of this AD, without exceeding (whichever occurs later):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 19,000 FC or 41,000 FH, whichever occurs first since airplane first flight.- 300 FC or 630 FH, whichever occurs first after September 5, 2017 (the effective date of AD 2017-15-17).

Table 3 to Paragraph (h) of this AD – Repetitive Inspections – Non-repaired Areas

Inspection Method	Compliance Time (not to exceed, whichever occurs first, FC or FH)	
	AFT greater than 1.5	AFT 1.5 or less
A	1,900 FC or 4,300 FH	2,100 FC or 3,200 FH
B	6,600 FC or 14,300 FH	7,100 FC or 10,700 FH

BILLING CODE 4910–13–C**(i) Repetitive Inspections for Repaired Areas**

Within the compliance time values as specified in table 4 to paragraph (i) of this AD, and, thereafter, at intervals not exceeding those same values, do a SDI for

cracking of the repaired radius, fastener areas, and fastener holes, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6120, including Appendices 1 through 7, dated April 28, 2017; except where Airbus Service Bulletin

A300–57–6120, including Appendices 1 through 7, dated April 28, 2017, specifies contacting Airbus for appropriate action, before further flight, obtain instructions using the procedures specified in paragraph (l) of this AD and accomplish those instructions.

Table 4 to Paragraph (i) of this AD – Inspection Thresholds and Intervals – Repaired Areas

Repair (Number)	Compliance Time (FC or FH, whichever occurs first after repair embodiment, or since last inspection, as applicable)	
	AFT greater than 1.5	AFT 1.5 or less
Stop Drilling (R53810799)	1,500 FC or 3,400 FH	1,700 FC or 2,500 FH
Cut-Out (R53810798)	4,500 FC or 9,800 FH	4,900 FC or 7,300 FH

(j) Corrective Action

If any crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (h) or (i) of this AD: Before further flight, repair in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6120, including Appendices 1 through 7, dated April 28, 2017.

(k) Reporting

Submit a report of the findings (both positive and negative) of each inspection required by paragraph (h) and (i) of this AD to Airbus, in accordance with the instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6120, including Appendices 1 through 7, dated April 28, 2017, at the applicable time specified in paragraph (k)(1) or (k)(2) of this AD.

(1) If the inspection was done on or after the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 30 days after the inspection.

(2) If the inspection was done before the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

(l) Other FAA AD Provisions

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)*: The Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Section, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (m)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(2) *Contacting the Manufacturer*: As of the effective date of this AD, for any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's

EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) *Required for Compliance (RC)*: Except as required by paragraphs (g) and (h) of this AD: If any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC, those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

(m) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2017–0158, dated August 25, 2017, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket

on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA–2018–0277.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206–231–3225.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office—EAW, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206–231–3195.

Issued in Des Moines, Washington, on March 30, 2018.

Chris Spangenberg,

Acting Director, System Oversight Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2018–07626 Filed 4–16–18; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA–2018–0271; Product Identifier 2017–NM–111–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Saab AB, Saab Aeronautics (Formerly Known as Saab AB, Saab Aerosystems) Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2016–13–06, which applies to certain Saab AB, Saab Aeronautics Model 340A (SAAB/SF340A) and SAAB 340B airplanes. AD 2016–13–06 requires a revision of the applicable airplane flight manual (AFM), repetitive inspections of the horizontal stabilizer de-icing boots, and applicable corrective actions. Since we issued AD 2016–13–06, the manufacturer has developed an improved de-icing boot. This proposed AD would continue to require a revision of the applicable AFM, repetitive inspections of the horizontal stabilizer de-icing boots, and applicable corrective actions. This proposed AD would also require replacement of single stitched de-icing boots with improved double stitched boots, and re-identification of

the modified horizontal stabilizer leading edge. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by June 1, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- *Fax:* 202–493–2251.

- *Mail:* U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M–30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12–140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

- *Hand Delivery:* Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this NPRM, contact Saab AB, Saab Aeronautics, SE–581 88, Linköping, Sweden; telephone: +46 13 18 5591; fax: +46 13 18 4874; email: saab340techsupport@saabgroup.com; internet: <http://www.saabgroup.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206–231–3195.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA–2018–0271; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone: 800–647–5527) is in the **ADDRESSES** section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shahram Daneshmandi, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax: 206–231–3220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under the **ADDRESSES** section. Include “Docket No. FAA–

2018–0271; Product Identifier 2017–NM–111–AD” at the beginning of your comments. We specifically invite comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of this proposed AD. We will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposed AD based on those comments.

We will post all comments we receive, without change, to <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. We will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact we receive about this proposed AD.

Discussion

We issued AD 2016–13–06, Amendment 39–18570 (81 FR 41432, June 27, 2016) (“AD 2016–13–06”), for certain Saab AB, Saab Aeronautics Model 340A (SAAB/SF340A) and SAAB 340B airplanes. AD 2016–13–06 was prompted by reports of ruptured horizontal stabilizer de-icing boots. AD 2016–13–06 requires a revision of the applicable AFM, repetitive inspections of the horizontal stabilizer de-icing boots, and applicable corrective actions. We issued AD 2016–13–06 to detect and correct damage of the de-icing boot; such damage could lead to a ruptured boot, severe vibrations, and possible reduced control of the airplane.

Since we issued AD 2016–13–06, the manufacturer has developed an improved de-icing boot, reinforced through double stitch lines.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2017–0144, dated August 9, 2017 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Saab AB, Saab Aeronautics Model 340A (SAAB/SF340A) and SAAB 340B airplanes. The MCAI states:

Several occurrences were reported of rupture of the horizontal stabilizer de-icing boot in flight. In some of the reported events, the de-icing boot had formed a large open scoop.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to complete loss of the de-icing function within its associated zone and severe vibrations, possibly resulting in reduced control of the aeroplane.

To address this potential unsafe condition, Saab AB, Aeronautics (hereafter referred to as “Saab” in this [EASA] AD) issued Alert Operations Bulletin (AOB) No. 12 and AOB No. 23 as temporary measures, recommending to select Flaps 0 for landing in the event of a suspected rupture of the de-icing boot on the horizontal stabilizer. In addition, Saab issued SB [Service Bulletin] 340–30–094 providing instructions for inspection of de-icing boots.