



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2012-1074; Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-027-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Model A330-200 Freighter series airplanes; Model A330-200 and -300 series airplanes; and Model A340-200 and -300 series airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by a report of a manufacturing defect in certain rods installed in the belly fairing, which could lead to cracks at the crimped end of the rod. This proposed AD would require an inspection of the rods to determine the manufacturer; and for affected parts, an inspection for any cracking of the rods, and related investigative and corrective actions if necessary. We are proposing this AD to detect and correct cracking of the rods, which could result in rupture of rods that attach the belly fairing to the airframe, leading to separation of the belly fairing from the airframe, and consequent damage to airplane structure and airplane systems.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments 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: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For service information identified in this proposed AD, contact Airbus SAS – Airworthiness Office – EAL, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 45 80; email airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may review copies of the referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov>; or in person at the Docket Operations office 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: Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone (425) 227-1138; fax (425) 227-1149.

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-2012-1074; Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-027-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

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Community, has issued EASA Airworthiness

Directive 2012-0005, dated January 10, 2012 (referred to after this as “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for the specified products. The MCAI states:

A rod manufacturing process defect has been identified at the supplier, Technical Airborne Components Industries (TAC), which could lead to cracks at the crimped end of the rod.

A design review of all affected rods has demonstrated that rupture of rods which attach the belly fairing can lead to separation of the belly fairing from the airframe, which would constitute an unsafe condition.

For the reasons described above, this AD requires detailed visual inspections of the 21 affected rods installed in the belly fairing for manufacturer identification, and if TAC is identified as manufacturer, or if the manufacturer cannot be identified, to further inspect the rods to find any crack, using a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) method and, depending on findings, accomplishment of the applicable [related investigative and] corrective actions, to ensure structural integrity of the belly fairing rods. This AD also prohibits installation of an affected TAC rod as replacement part in the belly fairing to all aeroplanes.

A design review of all affected rods has demonstrated that rupture of rods which attach the belly fairing can lead to separation of the belly fairing from the airframe, which can cause damage to airplane structure and airplane systems. The related investigative actions include an inspection to determine the manufacturer and an HFEC inspection of any affected replacement rod for any cracking. The corrective actions include replacing the cracked rod with a new rod. You may obtain further information by examining the MCAI in the AD docket.

Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Mandatory Service Bulletins A330-53-3186 and A340-53-4185, both including Appendix 01, both Revision 01, both dated April 7, 2011. The actions described in this service information are intended to correct the unsafe condition identified in the MCAI.

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

Based on the service information, we estimate that this proposed AD would affect about 54 products of U.S. registry. We also estimate that it would take about 13 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 the proposed AD on U.S. operators to be \$59,670, or \$1,105 per product.

In addition, we estimate that any necessary follow-on actions would take 28 work-hours and require parts costing \$0, for a cost of \$2,380 per product. Where the service information lists required parts costs that are covered under warranty, we have assumed that there will be no charge for these parts. As we do not control warranty

coverage for affected parties, some parties may incur costs higher than estimated here.

We have no way of determining the number of products that may need these actions.

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.

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.

We prepared a regulatory evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this proposed AD and placed it in the AD docket.

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 adding the following new AD:

Airbus: Docket No. FAA-2012-1074; Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-027-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this AD, certificated in any category.

(1) Airbus A330-201, -202, -203, -223, -223F, -243, -243F, -301, -302, -303, -321, -322, -323, -341, -342, and -343 airplanes.

(2) Airbus A340-211, -212, -213, -311, -312, and -313 airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53; Fuselage.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report of a manufacturing defect in certain rods installed in the belly fairing, which could lead to cracks at the crimped end of the rod. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking of the rods, which could result in rupture of rods that attach the belly fairing to the airframe, leading to separation of the belly fairing from the airframe, and consequent damage to airplane structure and airplane systems.

(f) Compliance

You are responsible for having the actions required by this AD performed within the compliance times specified, unless the actions have already been done.

(g) Actions

For Model A330-201, -202, -203, -223, -223F, -243, -243F, -301, -302, -303, -321, -322, -323, -341, -342, and -343 airplanes, having manufacturer serial number (MSN) 0002 to 1113 inclusive, except MSN 0996, 1039, 1054, 1059, 1105, 1107, 1108 and 1112; and Model A340-211, -212, -213, -311, -312, and -313 airplanes: Within 72 months after the effective date of this AD, accomplish the actions in paragraphs (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this AD, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Mandatory Service Bulletin A330-53-3186, excluding Appendix 01, Revision 01, dated April 7, 2011 (for Model A330 airplanes); or A340-53-4185, excluding Appendix 01, Revision 01, dated April 7, 2011 (for Model A340 airplanes).

(1) Do a detailed inspection of the 21 rods of the belly fairing identified in Airbus Mandatory Service Bulletin A330-53-3186, excluding Appendix 01, Revision 01, dated April 7, 2011 (for Model A330 airplanes); or A340-53-4185, excluding Appendix 01, Revision 01, dated April 7, 2011 (for Model A340 airplanes); for rod manufacturer identification. A review of airplane maintenance records is acceptable in lieu of this inspection if the manufacturer of the rods can be conclusively determined from that review.

(2) If the rod manufacturer is found to be Technical Airborne Components Industries (TAC), or if the manufacturer cannot be identified, do a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection for cracking of the crimped end of the rod body and, if any crack is found, before further flight, do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions.

(h) Parts Installation Limitations

As of the effective date of this AD, no person may install any affected TAC rod, as identified in Airbus Mandatory Service Bulletin A330-53-3186, Revision 01, dated April 7, 2011; or A340-53-4185, Revision 01, dated April 7, 2011; as applicable; on any airplane unless the rod has passed (found to have no cracking) the inspection as required by paragraph (g)(2) of this AD.

(i) Credit for Previous Actions

This paragraph provides credit for the inspections and corrective actions required by paragraph (g) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Mandatory Service Bulletin A330-53-3186, dated January 17, 2011; or A340-53-4185, dated January 17, 2011; which are not incorporated by reference.

(j) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, 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 Branch, send it to ATTN: Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; phone: (425) 227-1138; fax: (425) 227-1149.

Information may be e-mailed 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. The AMOC approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

(2) Airworthy Product: For any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer or other source, use these actions if they are FAA-approved. Corrective actions are considered FAA-approved if they are approved by the State of Design Authority (or their delegated agent). You are required to assure the product is airworthy before it is returned to service.

(k) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Airworthiness Directive 2012-0005, dated January 10, 2012, and the Airbus service information identified in paragraphs (k)(1)(i) and (k)(1)(ii) of this AD, for related information.

(i) Airbus Mandatory Service Bulletin A330-53-3186, excluding Appendix 01, Revision 01, dated April 7, 2011.

(ii) Airbus Mandatory Service Bulletin A340-53-4185, excluding Appendix 01, Revision 01, dated April 7, 2011.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus SAS – Airworthiness Office – EAL, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 45 80; email airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may review copies of the referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on October 4, 2012.

Dionne Palermo,
Acting Manager,
Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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