



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2014-0004; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-143-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 certain Airbus Model A320-111, -211, -212, and -231 airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by reports of broken struts of the center wing box (CWB). This proposed AD would require a detailed inspection of the CWB struts for cracking, and repair if necessary. We are proposing this AD to detect and correct cracked or broken struts, which could result in strut failure and consequent reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

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, Airworthiness Office – EAS, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; e-mail account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this 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> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2014-0004; 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: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer,
International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind
Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; phone: 425-227-1405; 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-2014-0004; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-143-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 2013-0149, dated July 16, 2013 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for the specified products. The MCAI states:

Two cases of broken Centre Wing Box (CWB) struts have been reported on A320 aeroplanes. Investigation results indicated that strut thickness in the crack initiation area was lower than specified in the production drawings. Only a limited batch of aeroplanes is affected by this manufacturing defect.

This condition, if not corrected, could result in strut failure, reducing the residual life of the remaining struts to below the initial Design Service Goal, which would deteriorate the structural integrity of the aeroplane.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive Detailed Visual inspections (DVI) of the lower and upper ends of the CWB struts to detect cracks and, depending on findings, accomplishment of associated corrective actions [repair].

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at

<http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating it in Docket No. FAA-2014-0004.

Relevant Service Information

Airbus has Service Bulletin A320-57-1149, Revision 01, dated February 12, 2013.

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.

In many FAA transport ADs, when the service information specifies to contact the manufacturer for further instructions if certain discrepancies are found, we typically include in the AD a requirement to accomplish the action using a method approved by either the FAA or the State of Design Authority (or its delegated agent).

We have recently been notified that certain laws in other countries do not allow such delegation of authority, but some countries do recognize design approval organizations. In addition, we have become aware that some U.S. operators have used repair instructions that were previously approved by a State of Design Authority or a Design Approval Holder (DAH) as a method of compliance with this provision in FAA ADs. Frequently, in these cases, the previously approved repair instructions come from the airplane structural repair manual or the DAH repair approval statements that were not specifically developed to address the unsafe condition corrected by the AD. Using repair instructions that were not specifically approved for a particular AD creates the potential for doing repairs that were not developed to address the unsafe condition identified by the MCAI AD, the FAA AD, or the applicable service information, which could result in the unsafe condition not being fully corrected.

To prevent the use of repairs that were not specifically developed to correct the unsafe condition, this proposed AD would require that the repair approval specifically refer to the FAA AD. This change is intended to clarify the method of compliance and to

provide operators with better visibility of repairs that are specifically developed and approved to correct the unsafe condition. In addition, we use the phrase “its delegated agent, or the DAH with State of Design Authority design organization approval, as applicable” in this proposed AD to refer to a DAH authorized to approve required repairs for this proposed AD.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 16 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We estimate the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

Estimated costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspection	12 work-hours X \$85 per hour = \$1,020 per inspection cycle	\$0	\$1,020	\$16,320 per inspection cycle

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

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.

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 airworthiness directive (AD):

Airbus: Docket No. FAA-2014-0004; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-143-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 Airbus Model A320-211, -212, and -231 airplanes, certificated in any category, all manufacturer serial numbers up to 0136 inclusive.

(d) Subject

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

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by reports of broken struts of the center wing box (CWB) on certain airplanes. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracked or broken struts, which could result in strut failure and consequent reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Repetitive Inspections

At the applicable time specified in paragraph (g)(1) or (g)(2) of this AD: Do a detailed inspection of each strut of the CWB for cracking, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1149, Revision 01, dated February 12, 2013. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 16,800 flight cycles or 33,600 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(1) For airplanes on which the inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD has not been done as of the effective date of this AD: Do the inspection at the later of the times specified in paragraphs (g)(1)(i) and (g)(1)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Before the accumulation of 31,700 total flight cycles or 63,400 total flight hours since first flight, whichever occurs first.

(ii) Within 1,250 flight cycles or 2,500 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first.

(2) For airplanes on which the inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD has been done as of the effective date of this AD: Do the inspection within 16,800 flight cycles or 33,600 flight hours after the most recent inspection, whichever occurs first.

(h) Repair

If any crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD: Before further flight, repair using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; the EASA (or its delegated

agent, or the Design Approval Holder with EASA's design organization approval). For a repair method to be approved, the repair approval must specifically refer to this AD.

(i) Credit for Previous Actions

This paragraph provides credit for actions required by paragraph (g) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A320-57-1149, dated April 1, 2008.

(j) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International 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 Branch, send it to ATTN: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; phone: 425-227-1405; fax: 425-227-1149. 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. 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, use these actions if they are FAA-approved. Corrective

actions are considered FAA-approved if they were approved by the State of Design Authority (or its delegated agent, or the DAH with a State of Design Authority's design organization approval). You are required to ensure the product is airworthy before it is returned to service.

(k) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2013-0149, dated July 16, 2013, 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 it in Docket No. FAA-2014-0004.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EAS, 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>.

(3) You may view copies of this 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 January 18, 2014.

Jeffrey E. Duven,
Manager,
Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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