



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2014-0449; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-259-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 A318 series airplanes, Model A319 series airplanes, Model A320-211, -212, -214, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes, and Model A321 series airplanes.

This proposed AD was prompted by a report of a circumferential crack at the gland retaining-ring groove of certain retraction actuators on the main landing gear (MLG).

This proposed AD would require an inspection to identify the part numbers of MLG retraction actuators and replacement of certain MLG retraction actuators. We are proposing this AD to prevent MLG retraction actuator failure that could prevent the full extension and/or down-locking of the MLG, possibly resulting in MLG collapse during landing or rollout, and consequent damage to the airplane and injury to the occupants.

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 – EIAS, 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 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-2014-0449; 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; telephone (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-2014-0449; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-259-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 2013-0283R1, dated December 9, 2013 [Corrected December 11, 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:

During routine pre-flight inspection of an Airbus A319, a hydraulic fluid leak was detected, coming from the retraction actuator of the main landing gear (MLG). The results of subsequent investigations revealed that a galvanic difference between materials induced an internal corrosion which was the crack initiator of the component. Actuators from 201590 series were identified as potentially affected, unless inspected and corrected during MLG overhaul.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to retraction actuator failure, preventing the full extension and/or down-locking of the MLG, possibly resulting in MLG collapse during landing or rollout and consequent damage to the aeroplane and injury to occupants.

To address this potential unsafe condition, Airbus published Service Bulletin (SB) A320-32-1408, providing instructions to identify and replace the affected actuators that have already exceeded 20 000 flight cycles (FC) or 10 years of operation since new, or since last overhaul.

For the reason described above, EASA AD 2013-0283 was issued to require a one-time identification and replacement of each affected MLG retraction actuator.

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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-2014-0449.

Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-32-1408, dated July 22, 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.

“Contacting the Manufacturer” Paragraph in this Proposed AD

Since late 2006, we have included a standard paragraph titled “Airworthy Product” in all MCAI ADs in which the FAA develops an AD based on a foreign authority’s AD.

The MCAI or referenced service information in an FAA AD often directs the owner/operator to contact the manufacturer for corrective actions, such as a repair. Briefly, the Airworthy Product paragraph allowed owners/operators to use corrective actions provided by the manufacturer if those actions were FAA-approved. In addition, the paragraph stated that any actions approved by the State of Design Authority (or its delegated agent) are considered to be FAA-approved.

In another NPRM, Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-101-AD (78 FR 78285, December 26, 2013), we proposed to prevent the use of repairs that were not specifically developed to correct the unsafe condition, by requiring that the repair approval provided by the State of Design Authority or its delegated agent specifically refer to the FAA AD. This change was 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 proposed to change the phrase “its delegated agent” to include a design approval holder (DAH) with State of Design Authority design organization approval (DOA), as applicable, to refer to a DAH authorized to approve required repairs for the proposed AD.

One commenter to the other NPRM, Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-101-AD (78 FR 78285, December 26, 2013), stated the following: “The proposed wording, being specific to repairs, eliminates the interpretation that Airbus messages are acceptable for approving minor deviations (corrective actions) needed during accomplishment of an AD mandated Airbus service bulletin.”

This comment has made the FAA aware that some operators have misunderstood or misinterpreted the Airworthy Product paragraph to allow the owner/operator to use messages provided by the manufacturer as approval of deviations during the accomplishment of an AD-mandated action. The Airworthy Product paragraph does not approve messages or other information provided by the manufacturer for deviations to the requirements of the AD-mandated actions. The Airworthy Product paragraph only addresses the requirement to contact the manufacturer for corrective actions for the identified unsafe condition and does not cover deviations from other AD requirements. However, deviations to AD-required actions are addressed in 14 CFR 39.17, and anyone may request the approval for an alternative method of compliance to the AD-required actions using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19.

To address this misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the Airworthy Product paragraph, we have changed that paragraph and retitled it “Contacting the Manufacturer.” This paragraph now clarifies that for any requirement in this proposed AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the FAA, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), or Airbus’s EASA DOA. Where necessary throughout this proposed AD, we also replaced any reference to approvals of corrective actions with a reference to the Contacting the Manufacturer paragraph.

The Contacting the Manufacturer paragraph also clarifies that, if approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature. The DOA signature indicates that the data and information contained in the document are EASA-approved, which is also FAA-approved. Messages and other information provided by the manufacturer that do not contain the DOA-authorized signature approval are not EASA-approved, unless EASA directly approves the manufacturer’s message or other information.

This clarification does not remove flexibility previously afforded by the Airworthy Product paragraph. Consistent with long-standing FAA policy, such flexibility was never intended for required actions. This is also consistent with the recommendation of the Airworthiness Directive Implementation Aviation Rulemaking Committee to increase flexibility in complying with ADs by identifying those actions in ‘manufacturers’ service instructions that are “Required for Compliance” with ADs. We continue to work with manufacturers to implement this recommendation. But once we

determine that an action is required, any deviation from the requirement must be approved as an alternative method of compliance.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 851 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We also estimate that it would take about 11 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this proposed AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Required parts would cost about \$36,135 per MLG actuator. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this proposed AD on U.S. operators to be \$31,546,570, or \$37,070 per product.

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-2014-0449; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-259-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 the Airbus airplanes specified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (c)(4) of this AD, certificated in any category, all manufacturer serial numbers.

(1) Airbus Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes.

(2) Airbus Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes.

(3) Airbus Model A320-211, -212, -214, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes.

(4) Airbus Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 32, Landing Gear.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report of a circumferential crack at the gland retaining-ring groove of certain retraction actuators on the main landing gear (MLG). We are issuing this AD to prevent MLG retraction actuator failure that could prevent the full extension and/or down-locking of the MLG, possibly resulting in MLG collapse during landing or rollout, and consequent damage to the airplane and injury to the occupants.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Inspection to Determine Part Number (P/N) and Time-in-Service

Within 18 months after the effective date of this AD: Do an inspection of each MLG retraction actuator to determine whether the actuator has P/N 201590001, 201590002, 201590002-010, 201590002-020, 201590003; and to determine the time-in-service accumulated on actuators having those part numbers. The actuator flight cycles and calendar time are those accumulated since first installation on an airplane, or since last actuator overhaul, or since the most recent accomplishment of the actions described in Maintenance Review Board Review (MRBR) Task 321147-01-1, whichever occurs latest. A review of airplane delivery or maintenance records is acceptable, provided that the actuator part number and time-in-service can be conclusively identified from that review.

(h) MLG Actuator Replacement

At the applicable time specified in paragraphs (h)(1) and (h)(2) of this AD: Replace each MLG actuator having a part number identified in paragraph (g) of this AD with a new or serviceable actuator, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-32-1408, dated July 22, 2013. The actuator flight cycles and calendar time specified in paragraphs (h)(1) and (h)(2) of this AD are those accumulated since first installation on an airplane, or since last actuator overhaul, or since doing the actions described in MRBR Task 321147-01-1; whichever occurs later.

(1) For actuators with accumulated time-in-service equal to or more than 20,000 flight cycles or 10 years as of the effective date of this AD: Within 18 months after the effective date of this AD.

(2) For actuators with accumulated time-in-service less than 20,000 flight cycles and 10 years as of the effective date of this AD: Before the accumulation of 10 years since first installation on an airplane.

(i) MLG Actuator Replacement with Unknown Time-in-Service

Within 18 months after the effective date of this AD: Replace each MLG retraction actuator having a part number specified in paragraph (g) of this AD, and for which the in-service history is unknown, with a new or serviceable actuator, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-32-1408, dated July 22, 2013.

(j) Exception to Paragraphs (g), (h), and (i) of this AD

An airplane that does not have Airbus Modification 26644 or Modification 150820 (for all airplane models), or Modification 27151 (for Model A321 series airplanes), applied in production, as applicable, is not affected by the requirements of paragraphs (g), (h), and (i) of this AD, provided that it can be conclusively determined that no MLG retraction actuator having a part number identified in paragraph (g) of this AD has been installed on that airplane since first flight.

(k) Parts Installation Limitation

As of the effective date of this AD, installation of an MLG retraction actuator having a part number identified in paragraph (g) of this AD is allowed, provided that the MLG retraction actuator has not accumulated or exceeded 20,000 flight cycles or 10 years since new; or 20,000 flight cycles or 10 years since last actuator overhaul.

(l) 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: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone (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) Contacting the Manufacturer: 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 Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, 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.

(m) Special Flight Permits

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 airplane can be modified (if the operator elects to do so), provided the MLG remains extended.

(n) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) European Aviation Safety Agency Airworthiness Directive Airworthiness Directive 2013-0283R1, dated December 9, 2013, [Corrected December 11, 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-2014-0449.

(2) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office – EIAS, 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 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 July 3, 2014.

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

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