[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2015-5814; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-247-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 A318, A319, and A320 series airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by reports of an operator finding chafing damage on the fuselage skin at the bottom of certain frames, underneath the fairing structure. This proposed AD would require a repetitive detailed inspection for damage on the fuselage skin at certain frames, and applicable related investigative and corrective actions. We are proposing this AD to detect and correct damage to the fuselage skin, which could lead to crack initiation and propagation, possibly resulting in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

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, 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: 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-2015-5814; 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-2015-5814; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-247-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 Union, has issued EASA AD 2014-0259, dated December 5, 2014 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness

Information, or "the MCAI"), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus Model A318, A319, and A320 series airplanes. The MCAI states:

> An operator reported finding chafing damage on the fuselage skin at the bottom of frame (FR) 34 junction between stringer (STR) 43 left hand (LH) side and right hand (RH) side on several aeroplanes, underneath the fairing structure.
>
> After investigation, a contact between the fairing nut plate and the fuselage was identified, causing damage to the fuselage.
>
> This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to crack initiation and propagation, possibly resulting in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.
>
> For the reason described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive detailed inspections (DET) of the fuselage [for chafing] at FR 34 and provides an optional terminating action [modification of the belly fairing] to the repetitive inspections required by this [EASA] AD.

Related investigative actions include a special detailed inspection of external fuselage skin panel for any cracking, and measurement of crack length and remaining thickness. Corrective actions include repair or modification of the fuselage skin panel. 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-2015-5814.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-53-1281, Revision 01, dated December 1, 2014; and Service Bulletin A320-53-1287, dated July 29, 2014. The service information describes procedures for a detailed inspection for damage (including chafing marks) on the fuselage skin at FR34 between STR43 LH and RH sides, and applicable

related investigative and corrective actions. 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 of this NPRM.

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 these same type designs.

Explanation of "RC" Procedures and Tests in Service Information

The FAA worked in conjunction with industry, under the Airworthiness Directive Implementation Aviation Rulemaking Committee (ARC), to enhance the AD system. One enhancement was a new process for annotating which procedures and tests in the service information are required for compliance with an AD. Differentiating these procedures and tests from other tasks in the service information is expected to improve an owner's/operator's understanding of crucial AD requirements and help provide consistent judgment in AD compliance. The procedures and tests identified as Required for Compliance (RC) in any service information have a direct effect on detecting, preventing, resolving, or eliminating an identified unsafe condition.

As specified in a NOTE under the Accomplishment Instructions of the specified service information, procedures and tests that are identified as RC in any service

information must be done to comply with the proposed AD. However, procedures and 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 alternative method of compliance (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 will require approval of an AMOC.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 642 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We also estimate that it would take about 12 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 $90 per product. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this proposed AD on U.S. operators to be $712,620, or $1,110 per product.

In addition, we estimate that any necessary follow-on actions would take about 21 work-hours and require parts costing $3,550, for a cost of $5,335 per product. We have no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need this action.

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-2015-5814; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-247-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 airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) of this AD, certificated in any category, all manufacturer serial numbers, except those on which Airbus Modification 37878 has been embodied in production, or Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1281 has been done in service.

(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

(d) Subject

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

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by reports of chafing damage on the fuselage skin at the bottom of certain frames, underneath the fairing structure. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct damage to the fuselage skin, which could lead to crack initiation and propagation, possibly resulting in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Repetitive Inspection and Corrective Action

(1) Within the compliance times identified in paragraphs (g)(1)(i) and (g)(1)(ii) of this AD, whichever occurs later, do a detailed inspection for damage (including chafing marks) on the fuselage skin at frame (FR)34 between stringer (STR)43 on the left-hand and right-hand sides, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1287, dated July 29, 2014. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 12,000 flight cycles or 24,000 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(i) Before exceeding 12,000 flight cycles or 24,000 flight hours, whichever occurs first since the airplane's first flight.

(ii) Within 5,000 flight cycles or 10,000 flight hours, whichever occurs first after the effective date of this AD.

(2) If any damage is detected during any inspection required by paragraph (g)(1) of this AD, before further flight, do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1287, dated July 29, 2014, except as required by paragraph (g)(3) of this AD.

(3) If any cracking is found during any related investigative action required by paragraph (g)(2) of this AD, or if any damage detected during the inspection required by paragraph (g)(1) of this AD exceeds the limits defined in the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1287, dated July 29, 2014, before further flight, repair 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).

(h) Non-terminating Repair Action

Accomplishment of a repair on an airplane as required by paragraphs (g)(2) and (g)(3) of this AD, does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive detailed inspection required by paragraph (g)(1) of this AD, unless the approved repair indicates otherwise.

(i) Terminating Action for the Repetitive Detailed Inspection

Modification of the belly fairing on any airplane in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1281, Revision 01,

dated December 1, 2014, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive detailed inspection required by paragraph (g)(1) of this AD for that airplane.

(j) Credit for Previous Actions

This paragraph provides credit for actions required by paragraph (i) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1281, dated July 29, 2014, which is not incorporated by reference in this AD.

(k) 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 EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Required for Compliance (RC): 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.

(l) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2014-0259, dated December 5, 2014, 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-2015-5814.

(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 November 17, 2015.

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

[FR Doc. 2015-30023 Filed: 11/25/2015 8:45 am; Publication Date: 11/27/2015]