[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2017-1093; Product Identifier 2017-NM-018-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 series airplanes; Model A319 series airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. This proposed AD was prompted by reports of early cracking on certain holes of the crossbeam splicing at certain fuselage frames. This proposed AD would require repetitive inspections for cracking of the fastener holes in certain fuselage frames, and depending on airplane configuration, would provide an optional terminating action to the repetitive inspections. We are proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

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: 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, 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 Standards Branch, 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-2017-1093; 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 Section, Transport Standards Branch, 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 proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include "Docket No. FAA-2017-1093; Product Identifier 2017-NM-018-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 2016-0139, dated July 14, 2016 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or "the MCAI"), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Model A318 series airplanes;

A319 series airplanes; A320-211, - 212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. The MCAI states:

> Following addition of a new airworthiness limitation item (ALI) task 531110 in the Airworthiness Limitation Section (ALS) Part 2 in the revision dated April 2012, numerous findings have been reported of early cracks on the four holes of the crossbeam splicing at frame (FR)16 and FR20 on both left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) sides.
>
> This condition, if not detected and corrected, could affect the structural integrity of the airframe.
>
> To allow an earlier crack detection, Airbus decided to transfer the repetitive inspections from ALI task 531110 to Airbus Service Bulletin (SB) A320-53-1286, later revised, including new recommended inspection thresholds.
>
> For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive special detailed [rototest] inspections (SDI) of the two upper rows of fasteners of the crossbeam splicing at FR16 and FR20, on both LH and RH sides, [installation of new fasteners on crack-free frames, related investigative and corrective actions,] and, depending on aeroplane configuration, provides an optional terminating action to the repetitive inspections required by this [EASA] AD.

Related investigative actions include checking the edge margins of the holes. Corrective actions include reaming affected crossbeams and frames and cold working the frames. 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-2017-1093.

Related Service Information under 1 CFR part 51

Airbus has issued the following service information:

- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1286, Revision 01, dated December 22, 2015, which describes procedures for rototest inspections for cracking of the holes in certain fuselage frames and crossbeams.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1295, including Appendixes 01 and 02, dated June 29, 2015, which describes procedures for modifying the airplane, including cold working instructions in certain fuselage frames and crossbeams.

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 these same type designs.

Difference Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI or Service Information

Where the MCAI, paragraph (4), specifies a repair approved by EASA or under a Design Organization Approval (DOA) other than Airbus, paragraph (j) of this proposed AD refers to a repair approved by the FAA, EASA, or an EASA DOA other than Airbus. The MCAI did not specify whether FAA approved repairs are acceptable for compliance.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD affects 928 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
Inspections	116 work-hours X $85 per hour = $9,860 per inspection	$960	$10,820	$10,040,960
Optional Modification	28 work-hours X $85 per hour = $2,380	$3,020	$5,400	Up to $5,011,200

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

This proposed 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 adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):

Airbus: Docket No. FAA-2017-1093; Product Identifier 2017-NM-018-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 A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes; A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231,

and -232 airplanes, certificated in any category, all manufacturer serial numbers, except the airplanes specified in paragraphs (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(3) of this AD.

(1) Airplanes on which Airbus modification 161255 has been embodied in production.

(2) Model A319 series airplanes on which Airbus modifications 28238, 28162, and 28342 have been concurrently embodied in production.

(3) Model A318 series airplanes on which Airbus modification 39195 has been embodied in production.

(d) Subject

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

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by reports of early cracking on the four holes of the crossbeam splicing at certain fuselage frames (FR). We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking at two upper rows of fasteners of the crossbeam splicing at FR16 and FR20, on both the left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) sides, which can result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane due to the failure of structural components.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Repetitive Rototest Inspections

Before exceeding the threshold specified in table 1 to paragraph (g) of this AD, or table 2 to paragraph (g) of this AD, as applicable to airplane configuration (pre- or post-modification 20416 or pre- or post-modification 21999): Do a special detailed (rototest)

inspection of the two upper rows of fasteners of the crossbeam splicing at FR16 and FR20 on both LH and RH sides, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1286, Revision 01, dated December 22, 2015. Thereafter, repeat the inspection at the intervals specified in table 1 to paragraph (g) of this AD, or table 2 to paragraph (g) of this AD, as applicable to airplane configuration (pre- or post-modification 20416 or pre- or post-modification 21999).

Table 1 to paragraph (g) of this AD – *Inspection of pre-modification 20416 or pre-modification 21999 airplanes*

Threshold (**A** or **B** or **C**, whichever occurs later)	**A**: Before exceeding 36,800 flight cycles (FC) or 73,600 flight hours (FH), whichever occurs first since the first flight of the airplane
	B: Within 27,400 FC or 54,900 FH, whichever occurs first since the last inspection as specified in airworthiness limitation item (ALI) task 531110-01-1 accomplished before the effective date of this AD
	C: Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, without exceeding 38,800 FC or 77,600 FH, whichever occurs first since the first flight of the airplane
Repetitive Inspection Interval (Not to exceed)	27,400 FC or 54,900 FH, whichever occurs first

Table 2 to paragraph (g) of this AD – *Inspection of post-modification 20416 or post-modification 21999 airplanes*

Threshold (**A** or **B** or **C**, whichever occurs later)	**A**: Before exceeding 34,700 FC or 69,400 FH, whichever occurs first since the first flight of the airplane
	B: Within 12,900 FC or 25,800 FH, whichever occurs first since the last inspection as specified in ALI task 531110-01-2 accomplished before the effective date of this AD
	C: Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, without exceeding 38,900 FC or 77,900 FH, whichever occurs first since the first flight of the airplane
Repetitive Inspection Interval (Not to exceed)	12,900 FC or 25,800 FH, whichever occurs first

(h) Post-Inspection Actions

Depending on the results from any inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD, do the actions in paragraphs (h)(1) or (h)(2) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) If, during any inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD, any crack is detected: Before further flight, do all applicable related investigative and corrective actions in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1286, Revision 01, dated December 22, 2015; except where Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1286, Revision 01, dated December 22, 2015, specifies to contact Airbus for appropriate repair, and specifies that action as "RC" (Required for Compliance), accomplish corrective actions before further flight in accordance with the procedures specified in paragraph (r)(2) of this AD. Repair of an airplane as required by this paragraph does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (g) of this AD for that airplane, unless specified otherwise in the repair instructions.

(2) If, during any inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD, no cracks are detected: Before further flight, do all applicable fastener installations, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1286, Revision 01, dated December 22, 2015.

(i) Airplanes on which Airbus Repair Instruction R53112926 was Applied

For airplanes on which Airbus Repair Instruction R53112926 at issue A or B was applied on the frame and/or crossbeam at FR16 LH or RH, or at FR20 LH or RH: Within 24 months after the effective date of this AD, modify the repair 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.

(j) Airplanes on Which a Repair with Installation of EN6114 Countersunk Fasteners was Applied on the Frame and/or Crossbeam

For airplanes on which a repair with installation of EN6114 countersunk fasteners, approved by the FAA, EASA, or an EASA DOA other than Airbus, was applied on the frame and/or crossbeam at FR16 LH or RH, or at FR20 LH or RH, in the area covered by paragraph (g) of this AD: Within 24 months after the effective date of this AD, modify the repair using a method approved by the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch FAA; or EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(k) Optional Terminating Action for Airplanes Post-modification 20416 or Post-modification 21999

Modification of an airplane post-modification 20416 or post-modification 21999 in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1295, including Appendixes 01 and 02, dated June 29, 2015, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (g) of this AD for that airplane.

(l) Post-Repair Actions for Certain Airplanes

For an airplane that has been inspected per ALI task 531110 and repaired before the effective date of this AD using the instructions in an Airbus Repair Design Approval Sheet (RDAS): Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, contact the Manager,

International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA for instructions and accomplish those instructions accordingly. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature. Accomplishment of the instructions required by this paragraph, does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (g) of this AD for that airplane, unless specified otherwise in the instructions.

(m) Partial Terminating Action for Airplanes Post-modification 20416 or Post-modification 21999

For an airplane post-modification 20416 or post-modification 21999, modification in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1295, including Appendixes 01 and 02, dated June 29, 2015, for the applicable fastener holes, where no damage or cracks were detected (i.e., those not repaired) during the latest inspection as required by paragraph (g) of this AD, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections of those fastener holes as required by paragraph (g) of this AD for that airplane.

(n) Actions for Airplanes with Certain Repairs

For an airplane that has been repaired before the effective date of this AD in the areas described in this AD using the instructions in an Airbus RDAS unrelated to ALI task 531110: Before exceeding the compliance times specified in table 1 to paragraph (g) of this AD or table 2 to paragraph (g) of this AD, as applicable, contact the Manager, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA for corrective action instructions and accomplish those instructions accordingly. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

Accomplishment of corrective action(s) on an airplane, as required by this paragraph, does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (g) of this AD for that airplane, as applicable, unless specified otherwise in the instructions.

(o) Terminating Action for ALI Tasks

(1) Accomplishment of an inspection as required by paragraph (g) of this AD or instructions as required by paragraph (l) of this AD, as applicable, constitutes terminating action for the inspection requirements of ALI task 531110, for that airplane.

(2) Modification of the two upper rows of fasteners of the crossbeam splicing at FR16 and FR20 on both LH and RH sides of an airplane, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1295, including Appendixes 01 and 02, dated June 29, 2015, as specified in paragraphs (k) and (m) of this AD, constitutes terminating action for the inspection requirements of ALI task 531110, for those holes for that airplane.

(p) No Reporting Requirement

Although Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1286, Revision 01, dated December 22, 2015, specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, and specifies that action as "RC" (Required for Compliance), this AD does not include that requirement.

(q) Credit for Previous Actions

This paragraph provides credit for actions required by paragraph (g) and (h) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1286, dated June 29, 2015.

(r) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(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 manager of the International Section, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (s)(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: 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 EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Required for Compliance (RC): Except as required by paragraphs (h)(1) and (p) 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.

(s) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2016-0139, dated July 14, 2016, 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-2017-1093.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-1405; fax 425-227-1149.

(3) 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 Standards Branch, 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 7, 2017.

Dionne Palermo,
Acting Director,
System Oversight Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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