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Dated: April 3, 2003

John D. Hawke, Jr.,

Comptroller of the Currency.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-NM-39-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 B4-600, B4-600R, and F4-600R (Collectively Called A300-600) Series Airplanes; and Model A310 Series Airplanes; Equipped With Pratt & Whitney JT9D-7R4 or 4000 Series Engines

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the superseding of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A300-600 and A310 series airplanes, that currently requires deactivating both thrust reversers and revising the airplane flight manual (AFM) to ensure safe and appropriate performance during certain takeoff conditions. This action would require installing modifications that will add an independent third line of defense on the thrust reversers, which would enhance their redundancy and terminate the requirements of the existing AD. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent in-flight deployment of the thrust reversers, which could result in reduced controllability of the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 14, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-39-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Comments may be submitted via fax to (425) 227-1232. Comments may also be sent via the Internet using the following address: 9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov. Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2002-NM-39-AD" in the subject line and need not be submitted in triplicate. Comments sent via the Internet as attached electronic files must be formatted in Microsoft Word 97 for Windows or ASCII text.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Backman, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2797; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this action may be changed in light of the comments received.

Submit comments using the following format:

- Organize comments issue-by-issue. For example, discuss a request to change the compliance time and a request to change the service bulletin reference as two separate issues.
- For each issue, state what specific change to the proposed AD is being requested.
- Include justification (*e.g.*, reasons or data) for each request.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic,

environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this action must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 2002-NM-39-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-39-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

On December 15, 1998, the FAA issued AD 98-25-51, amendment 39-10952 (63 FR 70637, December 22, 1998), applicable to certain Airbus Model A300-600 and A310 series airplanes. That AD requires deactivating both thrust reversers and revising the airplane flight manual (AFM) to ensure safe and appropriate performance during certain takeoff conditions. That action was prompted by a report indicating that the thrust reverser of engine number 1 on an Airbus Model A300-600 series airplane deployed during climb. The requirements of that AD are intended to prevent in-flight deployment of a thrust reverser, which could result in reduced controllability of the airplane.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

Since AD 98-25-51 was issued, Airbus issued service information that provides instructions for reactivating the thrust reversers through the implementation of a program that involves parts replacement and repetitive inspections of the thrust reversers. The FAA approved this program as an alternative method of compliance (AMOC) with the requirements of AD 98-25-51, allowing for reactivation of the thrust reversers and removal of the AFM limitations.

The actions required by AD 98-25-51 and the reactivation program are considered "interim action." Since issuance of that AD and the AMOC, the manufacturer has developed a modification to address the unsafe