

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:** Tom Groves, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-1503; 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-179-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-179-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

**Discussion**

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on all Airbus Model A310 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that an operator reported that the two half fittings holding the ejection jack for the ram air turbine (RAT) were found cracked. Investigation showed that the cracks were due to stress corrosion. Conductivity testing revealed that the heat treatment of the half fittings aluminum alloy was incorrect. Incorrect heat treatment of the half fittings decreased the material behavior against stress corrosion, and was identified as the cause of the cracking. This condition, if not corrected, could result in decreased structural integrity of the half fittings and loss of the RAT during extension, which could lead to reduced controllability of the airplane in the event of a dual engine failure, or in the event of loss of two or all hydraulic systems.

**Explanation of Relevant Service Information**

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A310-57A2084, including Appendix 01, dated May 3, 2002, which describes procedures for a one-time electrical conductivity test of the half fittings, to check for the heat treatment status. The service bulletin also describes procedures for a detailed inspection of the half fittings for cracks or corrosion, if necessary. The service bulletin also describes procedures for replacement of the half fittings. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 2002-263(B), dated May 15, 2002, in order to ensure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

**FAA's Conclusions**

This airplane model is manufactured in France and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the

DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

**Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule**

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below.

**Differences Between Proposed Rule, the Foreign Airworthiness Directive, and the Service Bulletin**

The proposed AD would differ from the parallel French airworthiness directive in that it would require all replacement half fittings to have successfully passed the electrical conductivity test per Airbus Service Bulletin A310-57A2084, including Appendix 01, dated May 3, 2002. Operators should note that the parallel French airworthiness directive requires that replacement half fittings have a certain part number and should either have been ordered after November 2001, or have successfully passed the electrical conductivity test. The FAA does not consider the "order date" as sufficient assurance that the replacement half fittings have the correct heat treatment.

Operators should also note that, although the service bulletin specifies reporting to Airbus the result of the inspections and any corrective actions, the proposed AD does not include such a requirement.

**Cost Impact**

The FAA estimates that 48 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$2,880, or \$60 per airplane.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include