

compliance with the requirements of paragraph (b) of this AD.

#### Acceptable for Compliance

(g) McDonnell Douglas Report No. MDC 91K0263, "DC-9/MD-80 Aging Aircraft Repair Assessment Program Document," dated July 1997, provides inspection/replacement programs for certain repairs to the fuselage pressure shell. These repairs and inspection/replacement programs are considered acceptable for compliance with the requirements of paragraphs (b) and (d) of this AD for repairs subject to that document.

#### Alternative Methods of Compliance

(h) In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, the Manager, Los Angeles ACO, is authorized to approve alternative methods of compliance (AMOCs) for this AD.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on October 1, 2003.

**Kalene C. Yanamura,**

*Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-NM-92-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 Series Airplanes Equipped with Certain Litton Air Data Inertial Reference Units

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes equipped with certain Litton air data inertial reference units (ADIRU). This proposal would require modifying the shelf (floor panel) above ADIRU 3, and for certain airplanes modifying the polycarbonate guard which covers the ADIRUs, and the ladder located in the avionics compartment, as applicable. This action is necessary to prevent failure of ADIRU 3 during flight, which could result in loss of one source of critical attitude and airspeed data and reduce the ability of the flightcrew to control the airplane. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

**DATES:** Comments must be received by November 7, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-92-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](mailto:9-anm-nprmcomment@faa.gov). Comments sent via fax or the Internet must contain "Docket No. 2002-NM-92-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 or 2000 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 Dulin, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2141; 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-92-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-92-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 certain Airbus Model A319, A320, and A321 series airplanes equipped with certain Litton air data inertial reference units (ADIRU). The DGAC advises that operators have reported that "NAV IR FAULT" messages have occurred during takeoff on several of these airplanes due to failure of ADIRU 3. Investigation revealed that vibrations during takeoff may cause contact between ADIRU 3 and the shelf (floor panel) above it, due to minimal clearance between the shelf and the ADIRU. Such contact may cause excessive vertical acceleration, which could result in failure of ADIRU 3. Due to its location on the shelf, ADIRU 3 is more sensitive to vibration than the other two ADIRUs. Failure of ADIRU 3 during flight could result in loss of one source of critical attitude and airspeed data and reduce the ability of the flightcrew to control the airplane.

#### Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-25-1248, dated February 16, 2001, which describes procedures for modifying the shelf (floor panel) above the Litton ADIRUs by installing shims on the webs of the shelf support structure in the avionics rack. In addition, for certain airplanes, the service bulletin includes procedures for modifying the polycarbonate guard