

FAA, is authorized to approve alternative methods of compliance (AMOCs) for this AD.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on November 28, 2003.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-NM-183-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A319 and A320 Series Airplanes

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 all Airbus Model A320 series airplanes, that currently requires repetitive ultrasonic inspections to detect fatigue cracking in the wing/fuselage joint cruciform fittings, and corrective actions if necessary. This action would require repetitive ultrasonic inspections for fatigue cracking in the wing/fuselage joint cruciform fittings at a reduced inspection threshold and repetitive interval. This action also would add airplanes to the applicability of the existing AD. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracks on the wing/fuselage joint cruciform fittings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing/fuselage. This action is intended to address the identified unsafe condition.

DATES: Comments must be received by January 5, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-NM-183-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-183-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 or 2000 or ASCII text.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Airbus, 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: Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2125; 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-183-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-183-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

On February 13, 1998, the FAA issued AD 98-04-49, amendment 39-10360 (63 FR 9934, February 27, 1998), applicable to all Airbus Model A320 series airplanes. That AD requires repetitive ultrasonic inspections to detect fatigue cracking in the wing/fuselage joint cruciform fittings, and corrective actions if necessary. That action was prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The requirements of that AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracks on the wing/fuselage joint cruciform fittings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing/fuselage.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

The inspection threshold and repetitive intervals specified in AD 98-04-49 were based on full-scale fatigue tests. Since the issuance of that AD, the airplane manufacturer has surveyed the Model A320 series airplane fleet and found that parameters such as the weight of fuel at landing and the mean flight duration are higher than those defined for the analysis of fatigue-related tasks. Thus, the manufacturer has adjusted the reference fatigue mission. This adjustment has resulted in a reduction in the threshold and repetitive inspection intervals required by the existing AD. In addition, it has been determined that Model A319 series airplanes should also be subject to these same inspections at the reduced threshold and interval.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320-57-1051, Revision 04, dated November 27, 2001. (The existing AD refers to Revision 01 of that service bulletin, dated March 21, 1996, as the acceptable source of service information for the actions required by that AD.) Revision 04 of the service bulletin describes procedures for repetitive ultrasonic inspections for cracking around fastener “a” on the rear section of the cruciform fitting at rib 1 on both wings. This inspection is similar to that described in Revision 01 of the service