

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

Note 2: The subject of this AD is addressed in Dutch airworthiness directive 2001-094, dated July 31, 2001.

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

Kevin Mullin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 03-30224 Filed 12-4-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2001-NM-284-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A330 and A340-200 and -300 Series Airplanes

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 A330 and A340-200 and -300 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections for proper installation of the parachute pins located in the escape slides/rafts at the door 3 Type I emergency exits on the left and right sides of the airplane; a one-time inspection of the associated electrical harnesses for the escape slides/rafts for proper routing and installation; and corrective actions if necessary. This proposal also would require adjustment of the speed lacing for the soft covers of the escape slides/rafts, which would terminate the repetitive inspections. This action is necessary to prevent failure of the escape slides/rafts to deploy correctly at door 3 Type I emergency exits, which could result in the escape slides/rafts being unusable during an emergency evacuation, and consequent injury to passengers or crew members. 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. 2001-NM-284-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. 2001-NM284-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, 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 2001-NM-284-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. 2001-NM-284-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

The Direction Generale 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 A330 and A340-200 and -300 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that, during a scheduled maintenance operation, an escape slide/raft at a door 3 Type I emergency exit did not deploy. Further investigation revealed that the parachute pin was not correctly installed and had rotated from its normal position and dropped through the first section of lacing on the soft cover of the escape slide/raft, which prevented the soft cover from opening the escape slide/raft. During another inspection it was discovered that the electrical harness associated with the escape slide/raft was not correctly installed and was not properly routed. Incorrect installation and/or routing of the electrical harness could prevent slide/raft detachment from the door after inflation. These conditions, if not corrected, could result in failure of the escape slides/rafts to deploy correctly at door 3 Type I emergency exits, on the left and right sides of the airplane, which could result in the escape slides/rafts being unusable during an emergency evacuation, and consequent injury to passengers or crew members.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued All Operator Telexes (AOT) A330-25A3154 (for Model A330 series airplanes) and A340-25A4172 (for Model A340-200 and -300 series airplanes), both dated July 26, 2001. These AOTs describe procedures for repetitive inspections for proper installation of the parachute pins located in the escape slides/rafts at the door 3 Type I emergency exits, on the