

the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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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-175-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-175-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

Discussion

On April 21, 1998, the FAA issued AD 98-09-20, amendment 39-10501 (63 FR 23377, April 29, 1998), applicable to certain Airbus Model A310 series airplanes, to require repetitive inspections of the fuselage skin to detect corrosion or fatigue cracks around and under the chafing plates of the wing root; and corrective actions, if necessary. That AD also provides an optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections. That action was prompted by notification from the Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, that it received reports of the presence of corrosion under the chafing plates and around the fasteners of the wing root between fuselage frames 36 and 39. The requirements of that AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracks and corrosion around and under the chafing plates of the wing root, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

Actions Since Issuance of Previous Rule

Although AD 98-09-20 provides an optional terminating action for repetitive inspections for fatigue cracking around and under the chafing plates of the wing root, it has been determined that repetitive inspections for fatigue cracking are still necessary on the left and right sides of frame 39, stringer 35, if any corrosion was reworked in this area.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Since the issuance of AD 98-09-20, Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A310-53-2069, Revision 02, dated September 23, 1996; Revision 03, dated October 28, 1997; and Revision 04, dated November 8, 2000. These service bulletins describe the same procedures as specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A310-53-2069, Revision 01, dated September 19, 1995, for repetitive inspections to detect corrosion and fatigue cracks around and under the chafing plates of the wing root between fuselage frame 36 and frame 39. These service bulletins also include the same procedures for follow-on and corrective actions as Service Bulletin A310-53-2069, Revision 01. The corrective actions include reworking corroded areas, oversizing and reaming holes, installing doublers, and performing a high frequency eddy current inspection and an x-ray inspection. Revision 01 of the service bulletin is cited in AD 98-09-20 as the appropriate source of service information.

Airbus has also issued Service Bulletin A310-53-2070, Revision 02, dated November 8, 2000, which describes procedures for replacement of the stainless steel chafing plates with new chafing plates made of aluminum alloy. Accomplishment of this service bulletin eliminates the need for the repetitive inspections for fatigue cracking, unless corrosion was detected and reworked on the left and/or right side of frame 39, stringer 35. If corrosion was detected and reworked in this area, repetitive inspections for fatigue cracking are still necessary. The original issue of this service bulletin, dated October 3, 1994, is cited in AD 98-09-20 as an acceptable source of service information for the optional terminating action.

The DGAC classified Airbus Service Bulletin A310-53-2069, Revision 04, dated November 8, 2000, as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 2000-514-326(B) R1, dated May 15, 2002, 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 § 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. We have 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 supersede AD 98-09-20 to continue to require repetitive inspections of the fuselage skin to detect corrosion or fatigue cracking around and under the chafing plates of the wing root; and corrective actions, if necessary. The inspections would be required to be accomplished in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A310-53-2069, Revision 04; Revision 03; Revision 02; or Revision 01; described previously; except as discussed below. The replacement of the chafing plates would be required to be accomplished in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin