unsafe condition is addressed on all gliders in a reasonable time period.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 5 gliders in the U.S. registry would be affected by the proposed AD, that it would take approximately 2 workhours per glider to accomplish the proposed action, and that the average labor rate is approximately $60 an hour. Parts cost approximately $20 per glider. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $700, or $140 per glider.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a ''significant rule'' under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action has been placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES.**

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

Glaser-Dirks Flugzeugbau GMBH: Docket No. 98–CE–31–AD.

Applicability: Model DG–500M gliders, all serial numbers, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each glider identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For gliders that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (e) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated in the body of this AD, unless already accomplished.

To prevent the center of gravity (C.G.) tow release cable from coming off the pulley because of incorrect positioning, which could result in the pilot being unable to release from tow operations, accomplish the following:

(a) Within the next 30 calendar days after the effective date of this AD, inspect the C.G. tow release cable pulley for correct positioning in accordance with the Instructions section of Glaser-Dirks Technical Note No. 843–9, dated November 21, 1997. If any tow release pulley is found out-of-center during this inspection, prior to further flight, replace the C.G. tow release cable pulley with one made of aluminum, part no. S 30. Accomplish this replacement in accordance with the technical note.

(b) Within the next 6 calendar months after the effective date of this AD, unless already accomplished as required by paragraph (a) of this AD, replace the C.G. tow release cable pulley with one made of aluminum, part no. S 30. Accomplish this replacement in accordance with the Instructions section of Glaser-Dirks Technical Note No. 843–9, dated November 21, 1997.

(c) The replacement required by paragraph (b) of this AD may be accomplished at any time prior to the required time, including in lieu of the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD.

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the glider to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(e) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance times that provides an equivalent level of safety may be approved by the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1201 Walnut, suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. The request shall be forwarded through an appropriate FAA Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Small Airplane Directorate.

(f) Questions or technical information related to Glaser-Dirks Technical Note No. 843–9, dated November 21, 1997, should be directed to DG Flugzeugbau GmbH, Postfach 4120, D–76625 Bruchsal 4, Germany; telephone: +49 7257–89–0; facsimile: +49 7257–8922. This service information may be examined at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in German AD 1998–023, dated January 15, 1998.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on April 17, 1998.

James E. Jackson,

Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–11013 Filed 4–24–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–NM–77–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A320 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 A320 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections to detect cracking in the pressurized floor pick-up angles on the rear spar of the wing, and replacement of any cracked pick-up angle and its associated diaphragms with improved parts. Such replacement would terminate the repetitive inspections for that angle. This proposal is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct cracking in the pressurized floor pick-up angles at the rear spar of the wing, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airframe.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 27, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98–NM–77–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

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: Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056; telephone (425) 227–2110; 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 notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

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 notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: ''Comments to Docket Number 98–NM–77–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. 98–NM–77–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 or develop on certain Airbus Model A320 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that, during fatigue testing, cracking was found on a test article in the pressurized floor pick-up angles at the rear spar of the wing. Such fatigue cracking, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in reduced structural integrity of the airframe.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1090, Revision 01, dated June 10, 1997, which describes procedures for repetitive eddy current inspections to detect cracking in the pressurized floor pick-up angles on the rear spar of the wing. The manufacturer also has issued Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1025, Revision 05, dated June 26, 1997, which describes procedures for replacing any cracked pick-up angle and its associated diaphragms with improved parts. Accomplishment of the replacement involves removing existing fasteners, diaphragms, and pick-up angles; installing improved pick-up angles, diaphragms, and fasteners; cold expanding certain fastener holes; and performing a rotating probe inspection for cracking of the fastener holes. Such replacement would eliminate the need for the repetitive inspection requirement for that pick-up angle. Accomplishment of the replacement is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition.

The DGAC classified Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1090 as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive CN 97–084–097 (B), dated March 12, 1997, in order to assure the 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. 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 inspections specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1090, Revision 01, except as discussed below. This proposed AD also would provide for optional terminating action for the repetitive inspections.

Operators should note that, in consonance with the findings of the DGAC, the FAA has determined that the repetitive inspections proposed by this AD can be allowed to continue in lieu of accomplishment of a terminating action. In making this determination, the FAA considers that, in this case, long-term continued operational safety will be adequately assured by accomplishing the repetitive inspections to detect cracking before it represents a hazard to the airplane.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Service Bulletin

Operators should note that, unlike the procedures described in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1090, this proposed AD would not permit further flight if cracks are detected in any pressurized floor pick-up angle. The FAA has determined that, because of the safety implications and consequences associated with such cracking, any subject pressurized floor pick-up angle that is found to be cracked must be replaced prior to further flight.

Operators also should note that, although Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1025 specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of certain repair conditions associated with accomplishment of the replacement, this proposal would require the repair of those conditions to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by either the FAA or the DGAC (or its delegated agent). In light of the type of repair that would be required to address the identified unsafe condition, and in consonance with existing bilateral airworthiness agreements, the FAA has determined that, for this proposed AD, a repair approved by either the FAA or the DGAC would be acceptable for compliance with this proposed AD.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 120 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 8 work hours per airplane (including access and close) to accomplish the proposed inspection, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the inspection proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $57,600, or $480 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

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.

Should an operator elect to accomplish the optional terminating action that would be provided by this proposed AD action, it would take approximately 140 work hours to accomplish, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. The cost of required parts would be approximately $10,103 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of that optional terminating action would be $18,503 per airplane.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a 'significant regulatory action' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a 'significant rule' under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Airbus Industrie: Docket 98–NM–77–AD.

Applicability: Model A320 series airplanes, as listed in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1090, Revision 01, dated June 10, 1997; certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (d) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To detect and correct cracking in the pressurized floor pick-up angles at the rear spar of the wing, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airframe, accomplish the following:

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total flight cycles, or within 60 days after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later: Perform an eddy current inspection to detect cracking in the pressurized floor pick-up angles on the rear spar of the wing, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1090, Revision 01, dated June 10, 1997.

(1) If no cracking is found, repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 10,000 flight cycles.

(2) If any cracking is found during any inspection required by this AD, prior to further flight, replace each cracked pick-up angle and its associated diaphragms with improved parts, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1025, Revision 05, dated June 26, 1997. For all pick-up angles not replaced with improved angles, repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 10,000 flight cycles.

(b) Replacement of a pick-up angle and its associated diaphragms with improved parts, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–57–1025, Revision 05, dated June 26, 1997, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspection requirements for that pick-up angle.

(c) If any crack is detected during any inspection required by this AD, and the applicable service bulletin specifies to contact Airbus for appropriate action: Prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by either the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate; or the Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (or its delegated agent).

(d) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116. Operators shall submit their request through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM–116.

(e) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive CN 97–084–097 (B), dated March 12, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 21, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–11090 Filed 4–24–98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–NM–110–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC–9 and C–9 (Military) 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 McDonnell Douglas Model DC–9 and C–9 (military) series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections to detect fatigue cracking of the fuselage frames and longerons 16R