safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule with the changes described previously. The FAA has determined that these changes will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 12 British Aerospace Model BAe 146 and Model Avro 146–RJ series airplanes of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 4 work hours per airplane to accomplish the required actions, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $2,880, or $240 per airplane.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will 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 final rule does 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) 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 final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends 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:

98–15–08 British Aerospace Regional Aircraft (Formerly British Aerospace Regional Aircraft Limited, Avro International Aerospace Division; British Aerospace, PLC; British Aerospace Commercial Aircraft Limited): Amendment 39–10659. Docket 97–NM–02–AD.

Applicability: Model BAe 146 and Model Avro 146–RJ series airplanes, as listed in British Aerospace Service Bulletin SB.57–49, Revision 1, dated June 19, 1997, and having wing skins made from 7150–T651 aluminum; 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 (b) 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 stress corrosion cracking in the wing skin, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 4 months after the effective date of this AD; and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 4,000 landings or 2 years, whichever occurs first: Perform a detailed visual inspection of the top wing skins to detect stress corrosion cracking, and any damaged or missing surface protective finish that exposes the metallic surfaces, in accordance with British Aerospace Service Bulletin SB.57–49, dated June 4, 1996, or Revision 1, dated June 19, 1997.

(1) If any damaged or missing surface protective finish is detected, and no cracking or corrosion is detected, prior to further flight, reapply the protective finish in accordance with the service bulletin. Repeat the detailed visual inspection, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 4,000 landings or 2 years, whichever occurs first.

(2) If any cracking is detected, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

Note 2: During the detailed visual inspections of the top wing skins, pay particular attention to the edge of cutouts, skin edges, and attachment bolt holes.

(b) 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 requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM–116.

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 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.

(d) Except as provided by paragraph (a)(2) of this AD, the inspections and repairs shall be done in accordance with British Aerospace Service Bulletin SB.57–49, dated June 4, 1996; or British Aerospace Service Bulletin SB.57–49, Revision 1, dated June 19, 1997. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from AI(R) American Support, Inc., 13850 Mclearen Road, Herndon, Virginia 20171. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in British airworthiness directive 005–06–96, dated June 4, 1996.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on August 20, 1998.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 8, 1998.

S.R. Miller,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–18770 Filed 7–15–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97–NM–160–AD; Amendment 39–10660; AD 98–15–09]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A320–111 and –211 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A320–111 and –211 series airplanes. This action requires repetitive inspections to detect fatigue cracking of the frames of the sliding windows in the cockpit, and repair, if necessary. This amendment is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified in this AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the frames of the sliding windows in the cockpit, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the pressure vessel of the fuselage of the airplane.

DATES: Effective July 31, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of July 31, 1998.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before August 17, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97–NM–160–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

The service information referenced in this AD 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; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

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: 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 A320–111 and –211 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that, during full-scale fatigue testing, fatigue cracking was found on the frame of a sliding window in the cockpit, at the junction with a doubler. Such fatigue cracking of the frames of the sliding windows in the cockpit, if not corrected, could result in reduced structural integrity of the pressure vessel of the fuselage of the airplane.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

The manufacturer has issued Airbus Service Bulletin A320–53–1065, dated May 4, 1992. This service bulletin describes procedures for repetitive ultrasonic inspections to detect fatigue cracking around fasteners A, B, and C of the frames of the sliding windows in the cockpit; and repetitive eddy current inspections to detect fatigue cracking around fasteners D and E of the frames of the sliding windows. The service bulletin also specifies that the inspections for fatigue cracking of the frames of the sliding windows should be accomplished only on the left side of certain airplanes, and only on the right side of certain other airplanes. In the case of one airplane, the inspections should be accomplished on both sides of the airplane. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 96–235–088(B), dated October 23, 1996, in order to assure 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 21.19) 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 the 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, this AD is being issued to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the frames of the sliding windows in the cockpit, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the pressure vessel of the fuselage of the airplane. This AD requires accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletin described previously, except as discussed below.

Differences Between This Rule and Service Bulletin

Operators should note that, unlike the procedures described in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–53–1065, this amendment would not permit further flight if cracking of the frame of a sliding window in the cockpit is detected. The FAA has determined that, because of the safety implications and consequences associated with such cracking, any subject window frame that is found to be cracked must be repaired prior to further flight.

Operators also should note that, although the service bulletin specifies that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of repair conditions, this AD requires 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 is required to address the identified unsafe condition, and in consonance with existing bilateral airworthiness agreements, the FAA has determined that, for this AD, a repair approved by either the FAA or the DGAC is acceptable for compliance with this AD.

Cost Impact

None of the airplanes affected by this action are on the U.S. Register. All airplanes included in the applicability of this rule currently are operated by non-U.S. operators under foreign registry; therefore, they are not directly affected by this AD action. However, the FAA considers that this rule is necessary to ensure that the unsafe condition is addressed in the event that any of these subject airplanes are imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future.

Should an affected airplane be imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future, it would require approximately 4 work hours (2 work hours for each side of the airplane) to accomplish the required inspections, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this AD would be $240 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

Determination of Rule's Effective Date

Since this AD action does not affect any airplane that is currently on the U.S. register, it has no adverse economic impact and imposes no additional burden on any person. Therefore, prior notice and public procedures hereon are unnecessary and the amendment may be made effective in less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule and was not preceded by notice and opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this 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 under the caption **ADDRESSES.** All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: ''Comments to Docket Number 97–NM–160–AD.'' The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will 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 final rule does 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) 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 final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES.**

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends 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:

98–15–09 Airbus Industrie: Amendment 39–10660. Docket 97–NM–160–AD.

Applicability: Model A320–111 and –211 series airplanes, serial numbers 002 through 004 inclusive, and 023; on which Airbus Modification 20473 has not been accomplished; certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise 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 (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, unless accomplished previously.

To detect and correct fatigue cracking of the frames of the sliding windows in the cockpit, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the pressure vessel of the fuselage of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total flight cycles, or within 2,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, accomplish the requirements of paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this AD, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–53–1065, dated May 4, 1992.

(1) Perform an ultrasonic inspection to detect fatigue cracking around fasteners A, B, and C of the frame of the sliding window in the cockpit, on the left or right side of the airplane, as applicable.

(2) Perform an eddy current inspection to detect fatigue cracking around fasteners D and E of the frame of the sliding window in the cockpit, on the left or right side of the airplane, as applicable.

(b) If no cracking is detected during the inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD, repeat the inspections thereafter at intervals not to exceed 13,000 flight cycles.

(c) If any cracking is detected during the inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD, and the total length of the cracks is less than 20 mm: 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 (DGAC) (or its delegated agent). Accomplishment of such repair constitutes terminating action for the inspection requirements of paragraph (a) of this AD.

(d) If any cracking is detected during the inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD, and the total length of the cracks is 20 mm or greater: Prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116; or the DGAC (or its delegated agent).

(e) 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 requests 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.

(f) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 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.

(g) The inspections shall be done in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–53–1065, dated May 4, 1992. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 96–235–088(B), dated October 23, 1996.

(h) This amendment becomes effective on July 31, 1998.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 8, 1998.

S.R. Miller,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–18769 Filed 7–15–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 94–NM–94–AD; Amendment 39–10657; AD 98–15–06]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A320 and Model A321 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A320 and Model A321 series airplanes, that requires repetitive inspections to verify proper installation of the plain bushings of the upper and lower connection links on the forward and aft passenger/crew doors, and correction of discrepancies. This amendment also requires installation of shouldered bushings on the frame segment used for attachment of the connection links or modification of the frame segment bushing (as applicable), which terminates the repetitive inspection requirements. This amendment is prompted by a report that, during an emergency evacuation of in-service airplanes, the left aft passenger/crew door jammed against the fuselage structure in a nearly closed position due to bushing migration. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent jamming of the passenger/crew door, which could delay or impede the evacuation of passengers during an emergency.

DATES: Effective August 20, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of August 20, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

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: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Airbus Model A320 and A321 series airplanes was published as a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) in the **Federal Register** on February 25, 1997 (62 FR 8408). That action proposed to require repetitive inspections to verify proper installation of the plain bushings of the upper and lower connection links on the forward and aft passenger/crew doors, and correction of discrepancies. That action also proposed to require replacement of the shouldered bushing on the locking mechanism with a new oversized bushing or modification of the frame segment bushing (as applicable), which terminates the repetitive inspection requirements.

Comments

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comments received.

Request to Revise Applicability

One commenter, Airbus, requests that the applicability of the supplemental NPRM be revised to specify that the AD applies to (1) airplanes on which Airbus Modification 24497 has not been installed in production; and (2) airplanes on which Airbus Service Bulletin A320–52–1027, Revision 2, dated February 18, 1993, Revision 3, dated December 10, 1993, or Airbus Service Bulletin A320–52–1064, Revision 1, dated September 8, 1995, has not been installed.

Airbus advises that installation of Airbus Modification 22422 in production is not equivalent to accomplishment of Airbus Service Bulletin A320–52–1027. (The applicability of the supplemental NPRM incorrectly equates Modification 22422 to Airbus Service Bulletin A320–52–1027.) The commenter adds that airplanes on which Airbus Service Bulletin A320–52–1027 has been accomplished are not affected by the requirements of the supplemental NPRM. The commenter states further that Airbus Service Bulletin A320–52–1064 must be accomplished on airplanes on which Airbus Modification 22422 was installed in production.

The FAA concurs with the commenter's request. Installation of shouldered bushings on the segment frame is necessary in order to provide a full solution and adequately address the identified unsafe condition. Airbus Modification 22422 installed in production added interference fit plain bushings, in place of plain bushings. However, several occurrences of migration of the bushings were reported on those airplanes having Modification 22422 installed in production. Subsequently, Airbus has developed a further modification of the frame segment bushing, which entails removing the plain bushings and installing shouldered bushings on the frame used for attachment of the connection links. Airbus Modification 24497 accomplishes this installation for airplanes in production, using interference fit shouldered bushings. (For retrofit solutions, installation of the shouldered bushings is accomplished with Loctite sealant rather than interference fit).

Airbus Service Bulletin A320–52–1027 is the retrofit solution equivalent to Modification 24497, to be accomplished on those airplanes in a pre-Modification 22422 configuration. For those airplanes on which Modification 22422 was installed in production, installation of shouldered bushings is also necessary, and is to be accomplished in accordance with the procedures described in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–52–1064. Accomplishment of the retrofit solution described in A320–52–1027 or A320–52–1064, as applicable, would terminate the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD. The FAA has revised the applicability and paragraphs (a), (b), (c), and (d) of the final rule to clarify the effectivity of the AD.

Request to Extend Compliance Time

One commenter requests that the compliance time for accomplishing the initial detailed visual inspection be extended from the proposed 450 flight hours to 460 flight hours, and that the repetitive interval be extended from the proposed 900 flight hours to 920 flight hours. The commenter states that such an extension will allow the inspection to be accomplished during a regularly scheduled ''A'' and ''2A'' check, and thereby eliminate any additional expenses that would be associated with special scheduling. The FAA does not concur. In developing an appropriate compliance time for this action, the