DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99–NM–82–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300–600 and A310 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 A300–600 and A310 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections to detect cracking of the inner flange of fuselage frame FR73A, between beams 5 and 7, and corrective actions, if necessary. 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 fatigue cracking of the inner flange of fuselage frame FR73A, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 4, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99–NM–82–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 99–NM–82–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. 99–NM–82–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 on certain Airbus Model A300–600 and A310 series airplanes on which a certain fuselage frame FR73A modification has been accomplished. The DGAC advises that, during the A330/A340 full-scale fatigue test, a crack was found on the right-hand side of fuselage frame FR73A between beams 5 and 6. The crack ran the full width of the inner flange and extended 1.3 inches into the frame web. Such cracking, if not detected and corrected, could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

Identical Structures

Frame FR73A of Airbus Model A330/A340 series airplanes is identical to frame FR73A of certain Model A300–600 and A310 series airplanes. Therefore, Model A300–600 and A310 series airplanes are also subject to the unsafe condition identified by this proposed AD.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletins A310–53–2107 (for Model A310 series airplanes) and A300–53–6116 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes), both Revision 01, both dated July 2, 1999. These service bulletins describe procedures for repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections to detect cracking of the inner flange (left and right sides) of fuselage frame FR73A, between beams 5 and 7; and corrective actions, if necessary. The corrective actions involve rework of frame FR73A or replacement with a new frame section between beams 5 and 7. However, accomplishment of these actions would not eliminate the need for repetitive HFEC inspections. Furthermore, the service bulletins recommend that operators report all findings (both positive and negative) to Airbus.

The DGAC classified the service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 1999–013–276(B), dated January 13, 1999, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

FAA's Conclusions

These airplane models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 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 actions specified in Airbus Service Bulletins A310–53–2107 and A300–53–6116, described previously, except as discussed below.

The proposed AD also would require that operators report results of inspection findings (both positive and negative) directly to Airbus.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Relevant Service Information

Operators should also note that, although both service bulletins specify that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of certain repair conditions, this proposal would require the repair of those conditions to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the FAA or the DGAC (or its delegated agent).

Interim Action

This is considered to be interim action. The inspection reports that would be required by this proposed AD will enable the manufacturer to obtain better insight into the nature, cause, and extent of the cracking, and eventually to develop final action to fully address the unsafe condition. Once final action has been identified, the FAA may consider further rulemaking.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 198 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspection, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $11,880, or $60 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.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have a substantial direct effect 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, it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

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 99–NM–82–AD.

Applicability: Model A300–600 and A310 series airplanes, certificated in any category, on which Airbus Modification 6925 has been accomplished.

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 (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 fatigue cracking of the inner flange of fuselage frame FR73A, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage, accomplish the following:

HFEC Inspection

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 18,000 total flight cycles, or within 3,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later: Perform a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect cracking of the inner flange (left and right sides) of the rear fuselage frame FR73A, between beams 5 and 7, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A310–53–2107, Revision 01 (for Model A310 series airplanes), or A300–53–6116, Revision 01 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); both dated July 2, 1999; as applicable.

(1) If no crack is detected, repeat the HFEC inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5,000 flight cycles.

(2) For any crack that is less than or equal to 0.20 inch (5.0 millimeters) in length: Prior to further flight, accomplish either paragraph (a)(2)(i) or (a)(2)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Rework the frame in accordance with the applicable service bulletin. Within 3,000 flight cycles after accomplishing the rework, replace the fuselage frame FR73A between beams 5 and 7 with a new frame section in accordance with the applicable service bulletin. Or

(ii) Replace the fuselage frame FR73A between beams 5 and 7 with a new frame section, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(3) For any crack greater than 0.20 inch (5.0 millimeters) in length: Prior to further flight, accomplish either paragraph (a)(3)(i) or (a)(3)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate; or the Direction Generale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC) (or its delegated agent). Or

(ii) Replace the fuselage frame FR73A between beams 5 and 7 with a new section, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(b) Within 18,000 flight cycles after any replacement accomplished in accordance with paragraph (a)(2)(i), (a)(2)(ii), or (a)(3)(ii) of this AD: Repeat the inspection specified by paragraph (a) of this AD. Thereafter, repeat the inspection at intervals not to exceed 5,000 flight cycles.

(c) Submit a report of inspection findings (both positive and negative) of any inspection required by this AD to Airbus Industrie, Customer Services Directorate, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; at the applicable time specified in paragraph (c)(1) or (c)(2) of this AD. The report must include the inspection results, a description of any discrepancies found, the airplane serial number, the age of the airplane since entry into service, and the number of landings and flight hours on the airplane. Information collection requirements contained in this regulation have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*) and have been assigned OMB Control Number 2120–0056.

(1) For airplanes on which the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD is accomplished after the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 10 days after performing the inspection.

(2) For airplanes on which the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD has been accomplished prior to the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 10 days after the effective date of this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(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, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. 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.

Special Flight Permits

(e) 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.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 1999–013–276(B), dated January 13, 1999.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on December 29, 1999.

D.L. Riggin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 00–137 Filed 1–4–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99–NM–261–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Construcciones Aeronauticas, S.A. (CASA) Model CN–235–100 and CN–235–200 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 all CASA Model CN–235–100 and CN–235–200 series airplanes. This proposal would require replacement of existing anti-icing distributor valves with new, improved valves. 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 prevent ice accumulation on the wings or tail of the airplane, which could result in reduced controllability of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by February 4, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99–NM–261–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.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Construcciones Aeronauticas, S.A., Getafe, Madrid, Spain. 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 99–NM–261–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. 99–NM–261–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

On December 26, 1989, a British Aerospace Jetstream Model BA–3101 series airplane impacted the ground approximately 400 feet short of the runway while executing an instrument landing system (ILS) approach. The accident occurred at the Tri-Cities Airport, Pasco, Washington. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) determined that the probable cause of the accident was the flightcrew's decision to continue an unstabilized ILS approach that led to a stall, most likely of the horizontal stabilizer, and loss of control at low altitude. Contributing to the stall and loss of control was the accumulation of leading edge ice, which degraded the aerodynamic performance of the airplane.

One result of the NTSB investigation was the determination that the flight deck wing de-icing light illuminated at a lower pressure than the pressure required to fully inflate the de-icing boots. The premature illumination of the wing de-icing light was due to a failure within the wing de-icing boot system, which allowed sufficient air pressure to give the appearance of normal operation based on the de-icing light, without actually inflating the boots sufficiently to remove ice.

Based on an NTSB Safety Recommendation, the FAA reviewed the pneumatic de-icing boot system designs for airplanes operated under parts 121 and 135 of the Federal Aviation Regulations to ensure that the pneumatic pressure threshold at which each de-icing boot indication light is designed to illuminate is sufficient pressure for effective operation of the pneumatic de-icing boots. The FAA has determined that the existing design of the flight deck pneumatic de-icing boot pressure indicator switch on CASA Model CN–235–100 and CN–235–200 series airplanes may allow the flight deck indicator light to illuminate at a lower pressure than the pressure required to fully inflate the de-icing boots [15 pounds per square inch gage (psig)]. Illumination of the light at a lower pressure would indicate to the flightcrew that the pneumatic ice boots are operating normally, though the boots may not be sufficiently inflated to shed ice. This condition, if not corrected, could result in ice accumulation on the wings or tail of the airplane, which could result in reduced controllability of the airplane.