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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2014-0055; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-167-AD; Amendment 39-17907; AD 2014-15-05]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus Model A310-304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes. This AD was prompted by reports of insufficient clearance between the fuel quantity indicator (FQI) probes and the adjacent structure and metallic components in the wing fuel tanks. This AD requires a one-time detailed visual inspection for sufficient clearance between FQI probes on both the left-hand side and right-hand side of the trim horizontal stabilizer and the adjacent structure and metallic components in the fuel tanks, and modification if necessary. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct insufficient clearance, which could lead to electrical arcing in a fuel tank during a lightning strike, which could result in ignition and consequent fire or explosion in the fuel tank.

DATES: This AD becomes effective September 2, 2014.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of September 2, 2014.

ADDRESSES: You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=FAA-2014-0055>; or in person at the Docket Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC.

For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office–EAW, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-2125; fax 425-227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

We issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to certain Airbus Model A310-304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on February 25, 2014 (79 FR 10431).

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Community, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2013-0188, dated August 19, 2013 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information to correct an unsafe condition on certain Airbus Model A310-304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes. The MCAI states:

Airbus investigations on A300 aeroplanes revealed insufficient clearance between the Fuel Quantity Indicator (FQI) probes and adjacent structure or metallic components in the wing fuel tanks. A300-600 and A310 aeroplanes are also affected as they are identical in design.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to electric arcing in a fuel tank in case of lightning strike, which could result in ignition and consequent fire or explosion in the fuel tank.

To address this potential unsafe condition, Airbus issued Service Bulletin (SB) A300-28-0080, SB A300-28-6065 and SB A310-28-2145 and DGAC [Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile] France issued [an] AD * * * to cover A300 aeroplanes and [an] AD * * * to cover A300-600 and A310 aeroplanes (both EASA ADs were later revised). [Both EASA ADs correspond to FAA AD 2004-05-05, Amendment 39-13499 (69 FR 10319, dated March 5, 2004)].

Since those [EASA] ADs were issued, further analysis showed that they do not cover all potentially affected aeroplanes: A310 aeroplanes with optional Mod. no. 12248 embodied were excluded from the applicability of [a] DGAC France AD * * * but are potentially affected, and therefore addressed through this [EASA] AD.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires a one-time [detailed visual] inspection of the affected aeroplanes for sufficient clearance between FQI probes [on both the left-hand (LH) side and right-hand (RH) side of the trim horizontal stabilizer] and adjacent structure/metallic parts and, depending on findings, modification of the FQI probes.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=FAA-2014-0055-0002>.

Comments

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD. We received no comments on the NPRM (79 FR 10431, February 25, 2014) or on the determination of the cost to the public.

"Contacting the Manufacturer" Paragraph in This AD

Since late 2006, we have included a standard paragraph titled "Airworthy Product" in all MCAI ADs in which the FAA develops an AD based on a foreign authority's AD.

The MCAI or referenced service information in an FAA AD often directs the owner/operator to contact the manufacturer for corrective actions, such as a repair. Briefly, the Airworthy Product paragraph allowed owners/operators to use corrective actions provided by the manufacturer if those actions were FAA-approved. In addition, the paragraph stated that any actions approved by the State of Design Authority (or its delegated agent) are considered to be FAA-approved.

In the NPRM (79 FR 10431, February 25, 2014), we proposed to prevent the use of repairs that were not specifically developed to correct the unsafe condition, by requiring that the repair approval provided by the State of Design Authority or its delegated agent specifically refer to this FAA AD. This change was intended to clarify the method of compliance and to provide operators with better visibility of repairs that are specifically developed and approved to correct the unsafe condition. In addition, we proposed to change the phrase "its delegated agent" to include a design approval holder (DAH) with State of Design Authority design organization approval (DOA), as applicable, to refer to a DAH authorized to approve required repairs for the proposed AD.

No comments were provided to the NPRM (79 FR 10431, February 25, 2014) about these proposed changes. However, a comment was provided for another NPRM, Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-101-AD (78 FR 78285, December 26, 2013), in which the commenter stated the following: "The proposed wording, being specific to repairs, eliminates the interpretation that Airbus messages are acceptable for approving minor deviations (corrective actions) needed during accomplishment of an AD mandated Airbus service bulletin."

This comment has made the FAA aware that some operators have misunderstood or misinterpreted the Airworthy Product paragraph to allow the owner/operator to use messages provided by the manufacturer as approval of deviations during the accomplishment of an AD-mandated action. The Airworthy Product paragraph does not approve messages or other information provided by the manufacturer for deviations to the requirements of the AD-mandated actions. The Airworthy Product paragraph only addresses the requirement to contact the manufacturer for corrective actions for the identified unsafe condition and does not cover deviations from other AD requirements. However, deviations to AD-required actions are addressed in 14 CFR 39.17, and anyone may request the approval for an alternative method of compliance to the AD-required actions using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19.

To address this misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the Airworthy Product paragraph, we have changed that paragraph and retitled it "Contacting the Manufacturer." This paragraph now clarifies that for any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the FAA, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), or Airbus's EASA DOA.

The Contacting the Manufacturer paragraph also clarifies that, if approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature. The DOA signature indicates that the data and information contained in the document are EASA-approved, which is also FAA-approved. Messages and other information provided by the manufacturer that do not contain the DOA-authorized signature approval are not EASA-approved, unless EASA directly approves the manufacturer's message or other information.

This clarification does not remove flexibility previously afforded by the Airworthy Product paragraph. Consistent with long-standing FAA policy, such flexibility was never intended for required actions. This is also consistent with the recommendation of the Airworthiness Directive Implementation Aviation Rulemaking Committee to increase flexibility in complying with ADs by identifying those actions in manufacturers' service instructions that are "Required for Compliance" with ADs. We continue to work with manufacturers to implement this recommendation. But once we determine that an action is required, any deviation from the requirement must be approved as an alternative method of compliance.

Other commenters to the NPRM discussed previously, Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-101-AD (78 FR 78285, December 26, 2013), pointed out that in many cases the foreign manufacturer's service bulletin and the foreign authority's MCAI might have been issued some time before the FAA AD. Therefore, the DOA might have provided U.S. operators with an approved repair, developed with full awareness of the unsafe condition, before the FAA AD is issued. Under these circumstances, to comply with the FAA AD, the operator would be required to go back to the manufacturer's DOA and obtain a new approval document, adding time and expense to the compliance process with no safety benefit.

Based on these comments, we removed the requirement that the DAH-provided repair specifically refer to this AD. Before adopting such a requirement, the FAA will coordinate with affected DAHs and verify they are prepared to implement means to ensure that their repair approvals consider the unsafe condition addressed in this AD. Any such requirements will be adopted through the normal AD rulemaking process, including notice-and-comment procedures, when appropriate. We also have decided not to include a generic reference to either the "delegated agent" or "DAH with State of Design Authority design organization approval," but instead we have provided the specific delegation approval granted by the State of Design Authority for the DAH in the Contacting the Manufacturer paragraph of this AD.

Conclusion

We reviewed the relevant data and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this AD with the changes described previously and minor editorial changes. We have determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM (79 FR 10431, February 25, 2014) for correcting the unsafe condition; and
- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM (79 FR 10431, February 25, 2014).

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects 2 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We also estimate that it will take about 8 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Required parts will cost \$0 per product. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this AD on U.S. operators to be \$1,360, or \$680 per product.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD will 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.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this AD:

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);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. 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.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=FAA-2014-0055>; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

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

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 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. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):



2014-15-05 Airbus: Amendment 39-17907. Docket No. FAA-2014-0055; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-167-AD.

(a) Effective Date

This AD becomes effective September 2, 2014.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Model A310-304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes, certificated in any category, on which Airbus Modification Number 12248 has been embodied.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 28, Fuel.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by reports of insufficient clearance between the fuel quantity indicator (FQI) probes and the adjacent structure and metallic components in the wing fuel tanks. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct insufficient clearance, which could lead to electrical arcing in a fuel tank during a lightning strike, which could result in ignition and consequent fire or explosion in the fuel tank.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Inspection and Modification

Within 30 months after the effective date of this AD, do a one-time detailed visual inspection for clearance between the FQI probes located in the trimmable horizontal stabilizer tank and the adjacent structure and metallic components, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A310-28-2145, Revision 01, dated March 4, 2003.

(1) If the clearance of an FQI probe is found to be 3.0 millimeters (mm) (0.118 inch) or more: No further action is required by paragraph (g) of this AD.

(2) If the clearance of an FQI probe is found to be 2.5 mm (0.98 inch) or more, and less than 3.0 mm (0.118 inch): Before further flight, loosen the probe screws and move the probe up and down to get the required minimum gap of 3.0 mm (0.118 inch), in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A310-28-2145, Revision 01, dated March 4, 2003.

(3) If the clearance of an FQI probe is found to be less than 2.5 mm (0.118 inch): Before further flight, modify each affected FQI probe by installing new FQI probe supports, in accordance with Step 3.C., "Repair," of the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A310-28-2145, Revision 01, dated March 4, 2003.

(h) Credit for Previous Actions

This paragraph provides credit for the actions required by paragraph (g) of this AD, if those actions were performed before the effective date of this AD using Airbus Service Bulletin A310-28-2145, dated August 21, 2001, which is not incorporated by reference in this AD.

(i) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Branch, send it to ATTN: Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-2125; fax 425-227-1149. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office. The AMOC approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: For any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(j) Related Information

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) European Aviation Safety Agency Airworthiness Directive 2013-0188, dated August 19, 2013, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=FAA-2014-0055-0002>.

(2) Service information identified in this AD that is not incorporated by reference may be viewed at the addresses specified in paragraphs (k)(3) and (k)(4) of this AD.

(k) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference (IBR) of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Airbus Service Bulletin A310-28-2145, Revision 01, dated March 4, 2003.

(ii) Reserved.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office—EAW, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email account.airworth-eas@airbus.com; Internet <http://www.airbus.com>.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

(5) You may view this service information that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call 202-741-6030, or go to: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 13, 2014.

Jeffrey E. Duven,
Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.