

[Federal Register Volume 82, Number 114 (Thursday, June 15, 2017)]

[Rules and Regulations]

[Pages 27408-27411]

From the Federal Register Online via the Government Publishing Office [www.gpo.gov]

[FR Doc No: 2017-12170]

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## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

#### **14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2016-9571; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-139-AD; Amendment 39-18925; AD 2017-12-10]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

#### **Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes**

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

**ACTION:** Final rule.

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**SUMMARY:** We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. This AD was prompted by a full scale fatigue test campaign on these airplanes in the context of the extended service goal. This AD requires inspections of the affected frame locations, and repair if necessary. We are issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** This AD is effective July 20, 2017.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in this AD as of July 20, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** For service information identified in this final rule, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office–EIAS, 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. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-9571.

#### **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-9571; 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 Office (telephone 800-647-5527) is 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 20590.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-1405; 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 all Airbus Model A321 series airplanes. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on February 21, 2017 (82 FR 11162). The NPRM was prompted by a full scale fatigue test campaign on these airplanes in the context of the extended service goal. The NPRM proposed to require inspections of the affected frame locations, and repair if necessary. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking of the fastener holes at certain frame locations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2016-0146, dated July 20, 2016 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus Model A321 series airplanes. The MCAI states:

Following the results of a new full scale fatigue test campaign on the A321 airframe in the context of the A321 extended service goal, it was identified that cracks could develop on the fastener holes of frame (FR) 35.1, FR 35.2, and FR 35.3 between stringers (STR) 29 and STR 32 and at the FR 35.2 to Slidebox junction (Triform fitting), both left hand (LH) and right hand (RH) sides.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could reduce the structural integrity of the fuselage. Prompted by these findings, Airbus developed an inspection programme, published in Service Bulletin (SB) A320-53-1308, SB A320-53-1309, SB A320-53-1310, SB A320-53-1311, SB A320-53-1312 and SB A320-53-1313, each containing instructions for a different location. For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive special detailed (rototest) inspections (SDI) of the affected frame locations and, depending on findings, accomplishment of a repair.

This [EASA] AD is considered an interim action, pending the development of a permanent solution.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-9571.

### **Comments**

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD. We considered the comment received. Attiya Jaura supported the NPRM.

## Conclusion

We reviewed the relevant data, considered the comment received, and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this AD as proposed, except for minor editorial changes. We have determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for correcting the unsafe condition; and
- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM.

## Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

Airbus issued the following service information. This service information describes procedures for repetitive rototest inspections for cracking of the affected frame locations, and contacting Airbus for repair instructions. These service bulletins are distinct because they apply to different frame locations.

- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1308, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1309, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1310, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1311, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1312, dated November 4, 2015.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1313, dated November 4, 2015.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

## Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects 176 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We estimate the following costs to comply with this AD:

### Estimated Costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspection	54 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$4,590 per inspection cycle	\$1,070 per inspection cycle	\$5,660 per inspection cycle	\$996,160 per inspection cycle.

We have no way to estimate the costs to do any necessary repairs that would be required based on the results of the inspection. We have no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need these repairs.

## 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.

## **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):



**2017-12-10 Airbus:** Amendment 39-18925; Docket No. FAA-2016-9571; Directorate Identifier 2016-NM-139-AD.

**(a) Effective Date**

This AD is effective July 20, 2017.

**(b) Affected ADs**

None.

**(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to Airbus Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes, certificated in any category.

**(d) Subject**

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53, Fuselage.

**(e) Reason**

This AD was prompted by a full scale fatigue test campaign on Airbus Model A321 series airplanes in the context of the extended service goal. It was determined that cracks could develop on the fastener holes of certain frames on the left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) sides of the affected airplanes. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct cracking of the fastener holes at certain frame locations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage.

**(f) Compliance**

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

**(g) Repetitive Inspections of the Frames, Stringers, and Slidebox Junctions**

At the applicable time specified in table 1 to the introductory text of paragraph (g) of this AD, do a rototest inspection for cracking at frame (FR) 35.1, FR 35.2, and FR 35.3 on the LH and RH sides, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of the Airbus service information specified in paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), (g)(3), (g)(4), (g)(5), and (g)(6) of this AD. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5,300 flight cycles.

**Table 1 to the Introductory Text of Paragraph (g) of This AD–Inspection Threshold**

<b>Airplane accumulated total flight cycles at the effective date of this AD</b>	<b>Compliance time</b>
For airplanes with 18,300 total flight cycles or less	Before exceeding 18,300 total flight cycles, or within 5,300 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.
For airplanes with more than 18,300 total flight cycles	Before exceeding 23,600 total flight cycles, or within 2,100 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

- (1) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1308, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.1 LH side).
- (2) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1309, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.1 RH side).
- (3) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1310, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.2 LH side).
- (4) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1311, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.2 RH side).
- (5) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1312, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.3 LH side).
- (6) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1313, dated November 4, 2015 (FR 35.3 RH side).

**(h) Corrective Action**

If any crack is found during any inspection required by the introductory text to paragraph (g) of this AD: Before further flight, repair 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). Although the service information specified in paragraph (g) of this AD specifies to contact Airbus for repair instructions, and specifies that action as “RC” (Required for Compliance), this AD requires repair as specified in this paragraph. Repair of an airplane as required by this paragraph does not constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by the introductory text to paragraph (g) of this AD for that airplane, unless specified otherwise in the repair instructions approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA.

**(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 the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j)(2) of this AD. 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.

(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 EASA; or Airbus's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Required for Compliance (RC): Except as required by paragraph (h) of this AD: If any service information contains procedures or tests that are identified as RC, those procedures and tests must be done to comply with this AD; any procedures or tests that are not identified as RC are recommended. Those procedures and tests that are not identified as RC may be deviated from using

accepted methods in accordance with the operator's maintenance or inspection program without obtaining approval of an AMOC, provided the procedures and tests identified as RC can be done and the airplane can be put back in an airworthy condition. Any substitutions or changes to procedures or tests identified as RC require approval of an AMOC.

**(j) Related Information**

(1) Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2016-0146, dated July 20, 2016, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-9571.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-1405; fax 425-227-1149.

**(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 A320-53-1308, dated November 4, 2015.

(ii) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1309, dated November 4, 2015.

(iii) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1310, dated November 4, 2015.

(iv) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1311, dated November 4, 2015.

(v) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1312, dated November 4, 2015.

(vi) Airbus Service Bulletin A320-53-1313, dated November 4, 2015.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus, Airworthiness Office–EIAS, 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](mailto: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 June 2, 2017.

Michael Kaszycki,  
Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate,  
Aircraft Certification Service.