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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-0142; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-01400-T; Amendment 39-21665; AD 2021-16-03]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Airbus SAS Model A350-941 and -1041 airplanes. This AD was prompted by a report of in-production findings of missing or incorrect application of the lightning strike edge glow sealant protection at specific locations in the wing tanks. This AD requires an inspection for missing or incorrect application of the lightning strike edge glow sealant protection at certain locations in the wing tanks, and corrective action, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is incorporated by reference. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective September 30, 2021.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of September 30, 2021.

ADDRESSES: For EASA material incorporated by reference (IBR) in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this IBR material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this IBR material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. It is also available in the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0142.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0142; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5

p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this final rule, any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is 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: Nick Wilson, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3230; email nicholas.wilson@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2020-0220, dated October 13, 2020 (EASA AD 2020-0220) (also referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus SAS Model A350-941 and -1041 airplanes.

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to certain Airbus SAS Model A350-941 and -1041 airplanes. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on March 11, 2021 (86 FR 13833). The NPRM was prompted by a report of in-production findings of missing or incorrect application of the lightning strike edge glow sealant protection at specific locations in the wing tanks. The NPRM proposed to require an inspection for missing or incorrect application of the lightning strike edge glow sealant protection at certain locations in the wing tanks, and corrective action, as specified in EASA AD 2020-0220.

The FAA is issuing this AD to address missing or incorrectly applied sealant, which in combination with an undetected incorrect installation of an adjacent fastener and a lightning strike in the immediate area, could result in ignition of the fuel air mixture inside the affected fuel tanks and loss of the airplane. See the MCAI for additional background information.

Comments

The FAA gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this final rule. The FAA has considered the comment received. Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA) stated that it supports the NPRM.

Conclusion

The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered the comment received, and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this final rule as proposed, except for minor editorial changes. The FAA has determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for addressing 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

EASA AD 2020-0220 specifies procedures for an inspection for missing or incorrect application of the lightning strike edge glow sealant protection at certain locations in the wing tanks (discrepancies), and corrective action. Corrective actions include applying sealant in areas where sealant was found to be missing or incorrectly applied. This material 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

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 16 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated Costs for Required Actions

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Up to 67 work-hours × \$85 per hour = Up to \$5,695	\$0	Up to \$5,695	Up to \$91,120

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any necessary on-condition action that would be required based on the results of any required actions. The FAA has no way of determining the number of aircraft that might need this on-condition action:

Estimated Costs of On-Condition Actions

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product
1 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$85	\$0	\$85

According to the manufacturer, some or all of the costs of this AD may be covered under warranty, thereby reducing the cost impact on affected operators. The FAA does not control warranty coverage for affected operators. As a result, the FAA has included all known costs in the cost estimate.

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.

The FAA is 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

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) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, 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.

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:



2021-16-03 Airbus SAS: Amendment 39-21665; Docket No. FAA-2021-0142; Project Identifier MCAI-2020-01400-T.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective September 30, 2021.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus SAS Model A350-941 and -1041 airplanes, certificated in any category, as identified in European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020-0220, dated October 13, 2020 (EASA AD 2020-0220).

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 57, Wings.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by in-production findings of missing or incorrect application of the lightning strike edge glow sealant protection at specific locations in the wing tanks. The FAA is issuing this AD to address missing or incorrectly applied sealant, which in combination with an undetected incorrect installation of an adjacent fastener and a lightning strike in the immediate area, could result in ignition of the fuel-air mixture inside the affected fuel tanks and loss of the airplane.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2020-0220.

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2020-0220

(1) Where EASA AD 2020-0220 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2020-0220 does not apply to this AD.

(3) Where paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2020-0220 gives a compliance time of “the next scheduled maintenance tank entry, or before exceeding 6 years since Airbus date of manufacture, whichever occurs first after the effective date of this AD,” for this AD, the compliance time is the later of the times specified in paragraphs (h)(3)(i) and (ii) of this AD.

(i) The next scheduled maintenance tank entry, or before exceeding 6 years since Airbus date of manufacture, whichever occurs first after the effective date of this AD.

(ii) Within 6 months after the effective date of this AD.

(4) Where paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2020-0220 refers to “discrepancies,” for this AD, discrepancies include missing or incorrectly applied sealant.

(i) Other FAA AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, 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 responsible Flight Standards Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the responsible Flight Standards Office.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: For any requirement in this AD to obtain instructions from a manufacturer, the instructions must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Required for Compliance (RC): Except as required by paragraph (i)(2) 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

For more information about this AD, contact Nick Wilson, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3230; email nicholas.wilson@faa.gov.

(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) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2020-0220, dated October 13, 2020.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For EASA AD 2020-0220, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>.

(4) You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. This material may be found in the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0142.

(5) You may view this material that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email fedreg.legal@nara.gov, or go to: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on July 21, 2021.

Gaetano A. Sciortino,

Deputy Director for Strategic Initiatives, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2021-18332 Filed 8-25-21; 8:45 am]