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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2022-0091; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-01123-T; Amendment 39-22011; AD 2022-08-08]

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 A318 series airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. This AD was prompted by reports that, during inspections accomplished as specified in certain airworthiness limitation items (ALIs), cracks were detected in the double joggle areas at frame (FR) 16 and FR20 in the nose forward fuselage. This AD requires repetitive special detailed inspections of certain areas and applicable on-condition actions, 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 May 26, 2022.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of May 26, 2022.

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 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 at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0091.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2022-0091; 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, the mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI), 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: Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone 206-231-3229; email vladimir.ulyanov@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2021-0227, dated October 11, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0227) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus SAS Model A318 series airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 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 A318 series airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on February 8, 2022 (87 FR 7062). The NPRM was prompted by reports that during inspections accomplished in accordance with certain ALIs, cracks were detected in double joggle areas at FR16 and FR20, right hand and left hand sides. The NPRM proposed to require repetitive special detailed inspections of certain areas and applicable on-condition actions, as specified in EASA AD 2021-0227. The NPRM also proposed an optional modification of the double joggle area, which terminates the repetitive inspections.

The FAA is issuing this AD to address cracks in the double joggle areas at FR16 and FR20 in the nose forward fuselage, which, if not detected and corrected, could reduce the structural integrity of the fuselage. See the MCAI for additional background information.

Discussion of Final Airworthiness Directive

Comments

The FAA received comments from the Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA) who supported the NPRM without change.

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, this AD is adopted as proposed in the NPRM. None of the changes will increase the economic burden on any operator. Accordingly, the FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2021-0227 specifies procedures for repetitive special detailed inspections (rototest inspections) of double joggle areas at FR16 and FR20, right hand and left hand sides for cracking, applicable on-condition actions (repair) and an optional modification of the double joggle area, which terminates the repetitive inspections. The modification includes a rotating probe inspection of certain fastener holes for cracks, a check of the fastener holes for a minimum diameter, and applicable on-condition actions (repair and oversizing holes). 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 would affect 1,549 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 55 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$4,675 | \$0 | Up to \$4,675 | Up to \$7,241,575. |

Estimated Costs for Optional Actions

| Labor cost | Parts cost | Cost per product |
|---|------------|------------------|
| 60 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$5,100 | \$1,624 | \$6,724 |

The FAA has received no definitive data on which to base the cost estimates for the on-condition repairs specified in this AD.

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.

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:



2022-08-08 Airbus SAS: Amendment 39-22011; Docket No. FAA-2022-0091; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-01123-T.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective May 26, 2022.

(b) Affected ADs

This AD affects AD 2020-20-05, Amendment 39-21261 (85 FR 65197, October 15, 2020) (AD 2020-20-05).

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus SAS Model airplanes specified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (4) of this AD, certificated in any category, as identified in European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2021-0227, dated October 11, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0227).

- (1) Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes.
- (2) Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes.
- (3) Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes.
- (4) Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes.

(d) Subject

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

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by reports that, during inspections accomplished as specified in certain airworthiness limitation items (ALIs), cracks were detected in the double joggle areas at frame (FR) 16 and FR20 in the nose forward fuselage. The FAA is issuing this AD to address cracks in these areas, which, if not detected and corrected, could reduce the structural integrity of the fuselage.

(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 2021-0227.

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2021-0227

(1) Where EASA AD 2021-0227 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2021-0227 does not apply to this AD.

(3) Where paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2021-0227 specifies to “contact Airbus for approved repair instructions and, within the compliance time specified therein, accomplish those instructions accordingly” if any cracks are detected, for this AD if any cracking is detected, the cracking must be repaired before further flight using a method approved by Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(4) Where paragraphs (3) and (4) of EASA AD 2021-0227 specify “Airbus approved repair instructions,” or “post-repair inspection instructions approved by Airbus,” for this AD, to be acceptable for credit, the repair instructions must be approved by Airbus SAS's EASA DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA authorized signature.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2021-0227 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

(j) Terminating Action for Certain Requirements in AD 2020-20-05

Accomplishing the initial inspections required by this AD terminates ALI Tasks 531153-02-1, 531153-02-2, 531155-02-1 and 531155-02-2, as required by paragraph (i) of AD 2020-20-05 only for the airplanes identified in paragraph (c) of this AD.

(k) Additional 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 (l) 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 DOA. If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(3) Required for Compliance (RC): Except as required by paragraphs (h)(3), (i), and (k)(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.

(l) Related Information

For more information about this AD, contact Vladimir Ulyanov, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone 206-231-3229; email vladimir.ulyanov@faa.gov.

(m) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference 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 2021-0227, dated October 11, 2021.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For EASA AD 2021-0227, 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.

(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 fr.inspection@nara.gov, or go to: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on April 4, 2022.

Lance T. Gant,

Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

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