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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2024-0764; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01017-T; Amendment 39-22716; AD 2024-06-11]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

AGENCY:

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION:

Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY:

The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus SAS Model A310 series airplanes. This AD was prompted by a determination that new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations are necessary. This AD requires revising the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations, 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 2, 2024.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of May 2, 2024.

The FAA must receive comments on this AD by June 3, 2024.

ADDRESSES:

You may send comments, using the procedures found in [14 CFR 11.43](#) and [11.45](#), by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal*: Go to *regulations.gov*. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- *Fax*: 202-493-2251.
- *Mail*: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.
- *Hand Delivery*: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

AD Docket: You may examine the AD docket at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA-2024-0764; 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 street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

Material Incorporated by Reference:

- For EASA material that is incorporated by reference in this final rule, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; website easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at ad.easa.europa.eu.
- You may view this material that is incorporated by reference 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 at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA-2024-0764.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone 206-231-3225; email dan.rodina@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written data, views, or arguments about this final rule. Send your comments to an address listed under **ADDRESSES**. Include “Docket No. FAA-2024-0764; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01017-T” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the final rule, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this final rule because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in [14 CFR 11.35](#), the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to

regulations.gov, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this final rule.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) ([5 U.S.C. 552](#)), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this AD contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this final rule, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this final rule. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone 206-231-3225; email dan.rodina@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2023-0173, dated September 20, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0173) (referred to after this as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition on all Airbus A310-203, A310-204, A310-221, A310-222, A310-203C, A310-304, A310-308, A310-322, A310-324, and A310-325 airplanes. Model A310-203C and A310-308 airplanes are not certificated by the FAA and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet; this AD therefore does not include those airplanes in the applicability. The MCAI states that new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations have been developed.

EASA AD 2023-0173 specifies that it requires a task (limitation) already in Airbus A310 ALS Part 1 SL-ALI Revision 02 that is required by EASA AD 2017-0204 (which corresponds to FAA AD 2018-18-19, Amendment 39-19398 ([83 FR 47056](#), September 18, 2018) (AD 2018-18-19)) or EASA AD 2022-0172 (which corresponds to FAA AD 2023-04-09, Amendment 39-22356 ([88 FR 20746](#), April 7, 2023) (AD 2023-04-09)), and that incorporation of EASA AD 2017-0204 or EASA AD 2022-0172 invalidates (terminates) prior instructions for that task. This AD therefore terminates the limitations required by paragraph (g) of AD 2018-18-19 and AD 2023-04-09, for the tasks identified in the service information referenced in EASA AD 2023-0173 only.

The FAA is issuing this AD to address fatigue damage in principal structural elements. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA-2024-0764.

Related Service Information Under [1 CFR Part 51](#)

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2023-0173. This service information specifies new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations for airplane structures and safe life limits. 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.

FAA's Determination

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country and is approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with this State of Design Authority, it has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA is issuing this AD after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

AD Requirements

This AD requires revising the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations, which are specified in EASA AD 2023-0173 described previously, as incorporated by reference. Any differences with EASA AD 2023-0173 are identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this AD.

This AD requires revisions to certain operator maintenance documents to include new actions (*e.g.*, inspections). Compliance with these actions is required by [14 CFR 91.403\(c\)](#). For airplanes that have been previously modified, altered, or repaired in the areas addressed by this AD, the operator may not be able to accomplish the actions described in the revisions. In this situation, to comply with [14 CFR 91.403\(c\)](#), the operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance (AMOC) according to paragraph (k)(1) of this AD.

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some civil aviation authority (CAA) ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, EASA AD 2023-0173 is incorporated by reference in this AD. This AD requires compliance with EASA AD 2023-0173 through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2023-0173 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to “all required actions and compliance times,” compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in EASA AD 2023-0173. Service information required by EASA AD 2023-0173 for compliance will be available at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2024-0764 after this final rule is published.

Airworthiness Limitation ADs Using the New Process

The FAA's process of incorporating by reference MCAI ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with corresponding FAA ADs has been limited to certain MCAI ADs (primarily those with service bulletins as the primary source of information for accomplishing the actions required by the FAA AD). However, the FAA is now expanding the process to include MCAI ADs that require a change to airworthiness limitation documents, such as airworthiness limitation sections.

For these ADs that incorporate by reference an MCAI AD that changes airworthiness limitations, the FAA requirements are unchanged. Operators must revise the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate the information specified in the new airworthiness limitation

document. The airworthiness limitations must be followed according to [14 CFR 91.403\(c\)](#) and [91.409\(e\)](#).

The previous format of the airworthiness limitation ADs included a paragraph that specified that no alternative actions (*e.g.*, inspections or intervals) may be used unless the actions and intervals are approved as an AMOC in accordance with the procedures specified in the AMOCs paragraph under “Additional AD Provisions.” This new format includes a “New Provisions for Alternative Actions and Intervals” paragraph that does not specifically refer to AMOCs, but operators may still request an AMOC to use an alternative action or interval.

Justification for Immediate Adoption and Determination of the Effective Date

Section 553(b)(3)(B) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) ([5 U.S.C. 551 et seq.](#)) authorizes agencies to dispense with notice and comment procedures for rules when the agency, for “good cause,” finds that those procedures are “impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.” Under this section, an agency, upon finding good cause, may issue a final rule without providing notice and seeking comment prior to issuance. Further, section 553(d) of the APA authorizes agencies to make rules effective in less than thirty days, upon a finding of good cause.

There are currently no domestic operators of these products. Accordingly, notice and opportunity for prior public comment are unnecessary, pursuant to [5 U.S.C. 553\(b\)\(3\)\(B\)](#). In addition, for the foregoing reason(s), the FAA finds that good cause exists pursuant to [5 U.S.C. 553\(d\)](#) for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) do not apply when an agency finds good cause pursuant to [5 U.S.C. 553](#) to adopt a rule without prior notice and comment. Because the FAA has determined that it has good cause to adopt this rule without notice and comment, RFA analysis is not required.

Costs of Compliance

Currently, there are no affected U.S.-registered airplanes. For any affected airplane that may be imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future, the FAA provides the following cost estimates to comply with this AD:

The FAA has determined that revising the existing maintenance or inspection program takes an average of 90 work-hours per operator, although the agency recognizes that this number may vary from operator to operator. Since operators incorporate maintenance or inspection program changes for their affected fleet(s), the FAA has determined that a per-operator estimate is more accurate than a per-airplane estimate.

The FAA estimates the total cost per operator for the new actions to be \$7,650 (90 work-hours × \$85 per work-hour).

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](#), and
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska.

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:

2024-06-11 Airbus SAS: Amendment 39-22716; Docket No. FAA-2024-0764; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01017-T.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective May 2, 2024.

(b) Affected ADs

This AD affects AD 2018-18-19, Amendment 39-19398 ([83 FR 47056](#), September 18, 2018) (AD 2018-18-19) and AD 2023-04-09, Amendment 39-22356 ([88 FR 20746](#), April 7, 2023) (AD 2023-04-09).

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus SAS Model A310-203, -204, -221, -222, -304, -322, -324, and -325 airplanes, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 05, Time Limits/Maintenance Checks.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by a determination that new or more restrictive airworthiness limitations are necessary. The FAA is issuing this AD to address fatigue damage in principal structural elements. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in reduced structural integrity 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, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2023-0173, dated September 20, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0173). Where EASA AD 2023-0173 affects the same airworthiness limitations as those in EASA AD 2017-0204 or EASA AD 2022-0172, the airworthiness limitations referenced in EASA AD 2023-0173 prevail.

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2023-0173

(1) This AD does not adopt the requirements specified in paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2023-0173.

(2) Paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2023-0173 specifies revising “the approved AMP,” within 12 months after its effective date, but this AD requires revising the existing maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, within 90 days after the effective date of this AD.

(3) The initial compliance time for doing the tasks specified in paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2023-0173 is at the applicable “limitations” as incorporated by the requirements of paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2023-0173, or within 90 days after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(4) This AD does not adopt the “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2023-0173.

(i) Provisions for Alternative Actions and Intervals

After the existing maintenance or inspection program has been revised as required by paragraph (g) of this AD, no alternative actions (*e.g.*, inspections) and intervals are allowed unless they are approved as specified in the provisions of the “Ref. Publications” section of EASA AD 2023-0173.

(j) Terminating Action for Certain Tasks Required by AD 2018-18-19 and AD 2023-04-09

Accomplishing the actions required by this AD terminates the corresponding requirements of AD 2018-18-19 and AD 2023-04-09 for the tasks identified in the service information referenced in EASA AD 2023-0173 only.

(k) Additional AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)*: The Manager, 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 manager of the International Validation Branch, mail it to the address 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, 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.

(l) Additional Information

For more information about this AD, contact Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone 206-231-3225; email dan.rodina@faa.gov.

(m) 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.

(3) The following service information was approved for IBR on May 2, 2024.

(i) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2023-0173, dated September 20, 2023.

(ii) [Reserved]

(4) For EASA AD 2023-0173, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; website easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at ad.easa.europa.eu.

(5) You may view this material that is incorporated by reference 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.

(6) You may view this material at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, visit www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations, or email fr.inspection@nara.gov.

Issued on March 20, 2024.

Victor Wicklund,

Deputy Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

[[FR Doc. 2024-08109](#) Filed 4-16-24; 8:45 am]

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