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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-1063; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00826-T; Amendment 39-21987; AD 2022-06-21]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

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

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is superseding Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2018-09-09, which applied to certain Airbus Model A318 and A319 series airplanes; all Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and all Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. AD 2018-09-09 required modifying the holes of the upper cleat to upper stringer attachments at certain areas of the left- and right-hand wings. Since the FAA issued AD 2018-09-09, additional affected configurations were identified and, for certain airplanes, it was determined that additional modification work and revised compliance times are necessary. This AD retains the requirements of AD 2018-09-09 and adds airplanes, requires different compliance times for certain airplane configurations, and, for certain airplanes, requires additional modifications or reduces compliance times, 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 10, 2022.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of May 10, 2022.

ADDRESSES: For 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-2021-1063.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-1063; 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: Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone 206-231-3223; email sanjay.ralhan@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2021-0167, dated July 14, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0167) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus SAS Model A318-111, -112, -121, and -122 airplanes; Model A319-111, -112, -113, -114, -115, -131, -132, and -133 airplanes; Model A320-211, -212, -214, -215, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. Model A320-215 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 FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 to supersede AD 2018-09-09, Amendment 39-19266 (83 FR 19925, May 7, 2018; corrected May 15, 2018 (83 FR 22354)) (AD 2018-09-09). AD 2018-09-09 applied to certain Airbus Model A318 and A319 series airplanes; all Model A320-211, -212, -214, -216, -231, -232, and -233 airplanes; and all Model A321-111, -112, -131, -211, -212, -213, -231, and -232 airplanes. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on December 21, 2021 (86 FR 72195). The NPRM was prompted by a report indicating that additional affected configurations were identified to be subject to widespread fatigue damage and, for certain airplanes, it was determined that additional modification work (such as, for certain configurations, oversizing certain additional holes, replacing a certain fastener with a corrosion-resistant fastener, or cleat refit and sealant procedure) or revised compliance times are necessary. The NPRM proposed to retain the requirements of AD 2018-09-09 and add airplanes, require different compliance times for certain airplane configurations, and, for certain airplanes, require additional modifications or reduce compliance times, as specified in EASA AD 2021-0167.

The FAA is issuing this AD to prevent fatigue cracking in the stringer attachment holes of the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wings. See the MCAI for additional background information.

Discussion of Final Airworthiness Directive

Comments

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

Conclusion

The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered the comments received, and determined that air safety requires adopting this AD 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 2021-0167 specifies procedures for modifying the stringer attachments at rib 2 through rib 7 of the left- and right-hand wings. The modification includes oversizing the holes, doing an eddy current inspection of the affected holes for damage, and repairing damage. EASA AD 2021-0167 also specifies additional work for airplanes on which the modification actions were accomplished using certain service information. 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 1,446 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated Costs for Required Actions

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Retained actions from AD 2018-09-09	125 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$10,625	\$26,260	\$36,885	\$41,901,360 (1,136 airplanes).
New actions	125 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$10,625	1,520	12,145	\$17,561,670.

The FAA has received no definitive data on which to base the cost estimates for the on-condition actions or the additional work for certain previously modified airplanes, as 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:

- a. Removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2018-09-09, Amendment 39-19266 (83 FR 19925, May 7, 2018; corrected May 15, 2018 (83 FR 22354)); and
- b. Adding the following new AD:



2022-06-21 Airbus SAS: Amendment 39-21987; Docket No. FAA-2021-1063; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00826-T.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective May 10, 2022.

(b) Affected ADs

This AD replaces AD 2018-09-09, Amendment 39-19266 (83 FR 19925, May 7, 2018; corrected May 15, 2018 (83 FR 22354)).

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus SAS airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (4) of this AD, certificated in any category, as identified in European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2021-0167, dated July 14, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0167).

- (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 57, Wings.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report that additional affected configurations were identified to be subject to widespread fatigue damage at certain stringer attachments and, for certain airplanes, it was determined that additional modification work is necessary. The FAA is issuing this AD to prevent fatigue cracking in the stringer attachment holes of the wings, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wings.

(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 2021-0167.

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2021-0167

- (1) Where EASA AD 2021-0167 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.
- (2) The “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2021-0167 does not apply to this AD.

(i) 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 (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 Sanjay Ralhan, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, FAA, International Validation Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone 206-231-3223; email sanjay.ralhan@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 2021-0167, dated July 14, 2021.
 - (ii) [Reserved]
- (3) For EASA AD 2021-0167, 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 March 10, 2022.

Ross Landes,

Deputy Director for Regulatory Operations, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

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