Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA–2025–0479; Project Identifier MCAI–2024–00436–T]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus SAS Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2016–14–03, which applies to all Airbus SAS Model A319–111, –112, –113, –114, –115, –131, –132, and –133 airplanes; Model A320–211, –212, –214, –231, –232, and –233 airplanes; and Model A321–111, –112, –131, –211, –212, –213, –231, and –232 airplanes. AD 2016–14–03 requires reinforcing the forward pressure bulkhead at a certain stringer on both the left-hand and right-hand sides and doing related investigative and corrective actions if necessary. Since the FAA issued AD 2016–14–03, new crack findings have prompted the need for repetitive inspections of the area. This proposed AD would continue to require the actions in AD 2016–14–03, add repetitive inspections of structure at a certain frame and applicable corrective actions, provide a terminating action for the repetitive inspections, and remove airplanes from the applicability, as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference (IBR). The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by May 12, 2025.

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–2025–0479; 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 NPRM, 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 identified in this proposed AD, 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.* It is also available at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA–2025–0479.
- 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nicholas Benson, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 206–231–3647; email: *nicholas.h.benson@faa.gov.*

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under the **ADDRESSES** section. Include ''Docket No. FAA–2025–0479; Project Identifier MCAI–2024–00436–T'' at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, 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 proposal 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 NPRM.

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 NPRM 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 NPRM, 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 NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Nicholas Benson, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 206–231–3647; email: *nicholas.h.benson@faa.gov.* Any commentary that the FAA receives that is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

The FAA issued AD 2016–14–03, Amendment 39–18584 (81 FR 44496, July 8, 2016) (AD 2016–14–03), for all Airbus SAS Model A319–111, –112, –113, –114, –115, –131, –132, and –133 airplanes; Model A320–211, –212, –214, –231, –232, and –233 airplanes; and Model A321–111, –112, –131, –211, –212, –213, –231, and –232 airplanes. AD 2016–14–03 was prompted by an MCAI originated by EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union. EASA issued AD 2014–0209, dated September 19, 2014, to correct an unsafe condition.

AD 2016–14–03 requires reinforcing the forward pressure bulkhead at a certain stringer on both the left-hand and right-hand sides and doing related investigative and corrective actions if necessary. The FAA issued AD 2016–14–03 to prevent fatigue cracking of the forward pressure bulkhead, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

Actions Since AD 2016–14–03 Was Issued

Since the FAA issued AD 2016–14–03, EASA superseded AD 2014–0209, dated September 19, 2014, and issued EASA AD 2024–0147R1, dated August 7, 2024 (EASA AD 2024–0147R1) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus SAS Model A318–111, –112, –121, –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 proposed AD therefore does not include those airplanes in the applicability. The MCAI states that after EASA AD 2014–0209 was issued, several findings of cracks were reported in service during application of Airworthiness Limitation Item (ALI) tasks 532166 and 533186. As a result of these findings, Airbus has developed different thresholds and inspection requirements compared to those specified in ALI tasks 532166 and 533186; and requires those inspections until a modification is done.

EASA AD 2014–0209, dated September 19, 2014 applied to all airplanes of the identified airplane models. EASA AD 2024–0147R1 removes airplanes on which certain Airbus modifications were embodied in production or in service.

The FAA is proposing this AD to prevent cracking of the forward center bulkhead. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in reduced structural integrity of the fuselage. You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA–2025–0479.

Explanation of Retained Requirements

Although this proposed AD does not explicitly restate the requirements of AD 2016–14–03, this proposed AD would retain all requirements of AD 2016–14–03. Those requirements are referenced in EASA AD 2024–0147R1, which, in turn, is referenced in paragraph (g) of this proposed AD.

Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2024–0147R1 specifies procedures for repetitive inspections for cracking of the airplane structure at frame (FR) 35 and stringer (STGR) 30 on the left-hand and right-hand sides for Airbus SAS Model A318, Model A319, and Model A320 airplanes; and at FR 35.8 and STGR 30 on the left-hand and right-hand sides for Airbus SAS Model A321 airplanes. EASA AD 2024–0147R1 also specifies obtaining and following instructions for crack repair. EASA AD 2024–0147R1 specifies that accomplishment of that inspection on an airplane terminates ALI tasks 532166 and task 533186 requirements.

EASA AD 2024–0147R1 also specifies procedures for modifying the forward pressure bulkhead at the frame coupling on the left-hand and right-hand sides of FR 35 and STGR 30, including applicable related investigative and corrective actions, for Airbus SAS Model A318, Model A319, and Model A320 airplanes; and at FR 35.8 and STGR 30 for Airbus SAS Model A321 airplanes. EASA AD 2024–0147R1 specifies that this modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections for that airplane.

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 NPRM after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop in other products of the same type design.

Proposed AD Requirements in This NPRM

This proposed AD would retain all requirements of AD 2016–14–03. This proposed AD would remove airplanes from the applicability and require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2024–0147R1 described previously, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed 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, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2024–0147R1 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2024–0147R1 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2024–0147R1 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 2024–0147R1. Material required by EASA AD 2024–0147R1 for compliance will be available at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA–2025–0479 after the FAA final rule is published.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 1,922 airplanes of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD:

The FAA estimates that it would take up to 21 work-hours per product to comply with the retained actions from AD 2016–14–03. The average labor rate is $85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, FAA estimates the cost for U.S. operators is up to $3,430,770, or up to $1,785 per product.

The FAA estimates that it would take up to 11 work-hours per product to comply with the new proposed actions. The average labor rate is $85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, FAA estimates the cost for U.S. operators is up to $1,797,070, or up to $935 per product.

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

According to the manufacturer, some or all of the costs of this proposed AD may be covered under warranty, thereby reducing the cost impact on affected individuals. The FAA does not control warranty coverage for affected individuals. 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

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would 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 this proposed regulation:

(1) Is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866,

(2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and

(3) Would 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 Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 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) 2016–14–03, Amendment 39–18584 (81 FR 44496, July 8, 2016); and

■ b. Adding the following new AD:

Airbus SAS: Docket No. FAA–2025–0479; Project Identifier MCAI–2024–00436–T.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by May 12, 2025.

(b) Affected ADs

This AD replaces AD 2016–14–03, Amendment 39–18584 (81 FR 44496, July 8, 2016) (AD 2016–14–03).

(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 2024–0147R1, dated August 7, 2024 (EASA AD 2024–0147R1).

(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 the need to complete certain mandated programs intended to support the airplane reaching its limit of validity (LOV) of the engineering data that support the established structural maintenance program. This AD was also prompted by reports that during inspections accomplished as specified in certain Airworthiness Limitation Items (ALIs), cracks were detected on the fastener holes at frame (FR) 35 or FR 35.8 between stringers (STGRs) 28 and 31. The FAA is issuing this AD to prevent fatigue cracking on the forward pressure bulkhead. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in reduced 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 2024–0147R1.

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2024–0147R1

(1) Where EASA AD 2024–0147R1 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2024–0147R1 specifies ''If, during any inspection as required by paragraph (1) of this AD, discrepancies are detected, before next flight, contact Airbus to obtain approved instructions for corrective action and accomplish those instructions accordingly,'' this AD requires replacing that text with the following: ''If, during any inspection as required by paragraph (1) of this AD, any cracking is detected, the cracking must be repaired before further flight using a method approved by the Manager, AIR–520, Continued Operational Safety 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) Where EASA AD 2024–0147R1 refers to ''03 October 2014 [the effective date of EASA AD 2014–0209],'' this AD requires using August 12, 2016 (the effective date of AD 2016–14–03).

(4) Where paragraph (6) of EASA AD 2024–0147R1 specifies ''repaired using Airbus approved instructions, accomplish the (repetitive) inspection for each repaired hole in accordance with the applicable Airbus approved instructions within the compliance time herein specified,'' this AD requires replacing that text with the following: ''repaired using a method approved by the Manager, AIR–520, Continued Operational Safety Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus SAS's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA), provided the DOA approval includes the DOA-authorized signature: accomplish the (repetitive) inspection for each repaired hole in accordance with the applicable approved instructions within the compliance time herein specified.''

(5) This AD does not adopt the ''Remarks'' section of EASA AD 2024–0147R1.

(i) Additional AD Provisions

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) *Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs):* The Manager, AIR–520, Continued Operational Safety 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 Continued Operational Safety Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j) of this AD and email to: *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, AIR–520, Continued Operational Safety 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 material 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) Additional Information

For more information about this AD, contact Nicholas Benson, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone: 206–231–3647; email: *nicholas.h.benson@faa.gov.*

(k) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference (IBR) of the material listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this material as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2024–0147R1, dated August 7, 2024.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For EASA material identified in this AD, 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.*

(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 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 21, 2025.

Peter A. White,

Deputy Director, Integrated Certificate Management Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2025–05215 Filed 3–26–25; 8:45 am]

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