

fuselage frame(s) is greater than the limits shown in the 757 Structural Repair Manual, accomplish the repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA. Reactivate the cargo loader system only in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

Special Flight Permits

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Incorporation by Reference

(e) Except as provided by paragraph (b) of this AD, the actions shall be done in accordance with Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 757-25A0233, dated August 10, 2000. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Effective Date

(f) This amendment becomes effective on October 26, 2000.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on September 29, 2000.

Donald L. Riggins,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 00-25532 Filed 10-10-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-NM-207-AD; Amendment 39-11926; AD 2000-20-15]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 and A300-600 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A300 and A300-600 series airplanes, that requires a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, and repetitive inspections or repair, as applicable. In lieu of accomplishing the repetitive inspections, this amendment requires a modification that would allow the inspection to be deferred for a certain period of time. This amendment is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by this AD are intended to detect and correct fatigue cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

DATES: Effective November 15, 2000.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of November 15, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Norman B. Martenson, Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (425) 227-2110; fax (425) 227-1149.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD)

that is applicable to certain Airbus Model A300 and A300-600 series airplanes was published in the **Federal Register** on May 10, 2000 (65 FR 30033). That action proposed to require a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, and repetitive inspections or repair, as applicable. In lieu of accomplishing the repetitive inspections, that action proposed to require a modification that would allow the inspection to be deferred for a certain period of time.

Comment Received

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the single comment received.

Request To Revise Compliance Times

The commenter questions the compliance times specified in the proposed AD. The commenter notes that there are small discrepancies between the compliance thresholds recommended in the referenced service bulletins for Airbus Model A300 B2, B4-100, and B4-600 series airplanes, and the thresholds specified by the proposed AD. The commenter suggests that it would be preferable for the compliance times in the AD to be in line with those in the service bulletins, since this would avoid confusion by operators and reduce the number of questions that may be raised.

The FAA concurs. For the reasons stated in the proposed AD, the FAA specified fixed compliance times for accomplishment of the required actions, rather than permitting use of the "adjustment-for-range" formula for calculating compliance times. During discussions with the manufacturer to determine an interim method of calculating the fixed compliance times, flight cycle thresholds and intervals for certain models were recommended for reduction from those in the service bulletins, based on the average flight times of those models. Subsequently, a revised method for calculation of such fixed compliance times was defined by the manufacturer. This method allows use of the flight cycle thresholds and intervals specified in the referenced service bulletins.

The FAA has determined that, consistent with the manufacturer's revised method for calculation of fixed compliance times, the flight cycle thresholds and intervals recommended in the referenced service bulletins constitute acceptable compliance times for this AD. The final rule has been

revised accordingly. Because the flight cycle compliance times for certain airplane models have been increased rather than reduced, and the flight hour compliance times are unchanged, such revision imposes no additional restrictions on operators.

Conclusion

After careful review of the available data, including the comment noted above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule with the change described previously. The FAA has determined that this change will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 85 airplanes of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 1 work hour per airplane to accomplish the required HFEC inspection, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the inspection on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$5,100, or \$60 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

Should an operator be required to accomplish the modification rather than the repetitive inspections, it will take approximately 3 work hours per airplane to accomplish. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the modification required by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$15,300, or \$180 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted. The cost impact figures discussed in AD rulemaking actions represent only the time necessary to perform the specific actions actually required by the AD. These figures typically do not include incidental costs, such as the time required to gain access and close up, planning time, or time necessitated by other administrative actions.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein 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. Therefore, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); 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. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (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. Section 39.13 is amended by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

2000–20–15 **Airbus Industrie:** Amendment 39–11926. Docket 98–NM–207–AD.

Applicability: Model A300 and A300–600 series airplanes, on which Airbus Modification 11525 has not been accomplished; certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (h) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To detect and correct fatigue cracking of the rear fittings of fuselage frame FR40 at stringer 27, which could result in reduced

structural integrity of the airplane, accomplish the following:

Inspection

(a) Perform a high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspection to detect cracks in the stiffeners at stringer 27 of the rear fitting of fuselage frame FR40, left and right, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–53–0332, dated November 24, 1997 (for Model A300 B2 and B4 series airplanes), or Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6075, dated November 24, 1997 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); as applicable; at the applicable time specified in paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3), (a)(4), (a)(5), (a)(6), (a)(7), or (a)(8) of this AD.

(1) For Model A300 B2 series airplanes that have accumulated less than 26,000 total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect at the earlier of the times specified in paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Prior to the accumulation of 11,600 total flight cycles, or within 3,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(ii) Prior to the accumulation of 14,300 total flight hours, or within 3,800 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For Model A300 B2 series airplanes that have accumulated 26,000 or more total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect within 2,200 flight cycles or 2,800 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first.

(3) For Model A300 B4–100 series airplanes that have accumulated less than 20,000 total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect at the earlier of the times specified in paragraphs (a)(3)(i) and (a)(3)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Prior to the accumulation of 9,200 total flight cycles, or within 3,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(ii) Prior to the accumulation of 15,700 total flight hours, or within 5,800 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(4) For Model A300 B4–100 series airplanes that have accumulated 20,000 or more total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect within 1,800 flight cycles or 3,400 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first.

(5) For Model A300 B4–200 series airplanes that have accumulated less than 14,000 total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect at the earlier of the times specified in paragraphs (a)(5)(i) and (a)(5)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Prior to the accumulation of 8,300 total flight cycles, or within 3,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(ii) Prior to the accumulation of 17,200 total flight hours, or within 6,200 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(6) For Model A300 B4–200 series airplanes that have accumulated 14,000 or more total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect within 1,700 flight cycles or 3,500 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first.

(7) For Model A300–600 series airplanes that have accumulated less than 18,000 total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect at the earlier of the times specified in paragraphs (a)(7)(i) and (a)(7)(ii) of this AD.

(i) Prior to the accumulation of 6,200 total flight cycles, or within 2,700 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(ii) Prior to the accumulation of 15,100 total flight hours, or within 7,000 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(8) For Model A300–600 series airplanes that have accumulated 18,000 or more total flight cycles as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect within 1,400 flight cycles or 3,600 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first.

Repetitive Inspections

(b) If no crack is detected during the initial inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, except as provided by paragraph (e) of this AD, repeat the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD at the time specified in paragraph (b)(1), (b)(2), (b)(3), or (b)(4) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) For Model A300 B2 series airplanes: Repeat at intervals not to exceed 2,200 flight cycles or 2,700 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(2) For Model A300 B4–100 series airplanes: Repeat at intervals not to exceed 1,800 flight cycles or 3,000 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(3) For Model A300 B4–200 series airplanes: Repeat at intervals not to exceed 1,700 flight cycles or 3,500 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

(4) For Model A300–600 series airplanes: Repeat at intervals not to exceed 1,400 flight cycles or 3,400 flight hours, whichever occurs first.

Repair Cracking Found During Inspections

(c) If any crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (a) or (b) of this AD and the crack is less than 0.787 inches long, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–53–0332, dated November 24, 1997 (for Model A300 B2 and B4 series airplanes), or Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6075, dated November 24, 1997 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); as applicable. Perform the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD one more time at the time specified in paragraph (c)(1), (c)(2), (c)(3), or (c)(4) of this AD, as applicable, and accomplish the actions specified in paragraph (f) or (g) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) For Model A300 B2 series airplanes: Within 44,500 flight cycles or 54,600 flight hours after accomplishment of the repair, whichever occurs first.

(2) For Model A300 B4–100 series airplanes: Within 35,200 flight cycles or 56,700 flight hours after accomplishment of the repair, whichever occurs first.

(3) For Model A300 B4–200 series airplanes: Within 31,900 flight cycles or 66,100 flight hours after accomplishment of the repair, whichever occurs first.

(4) For Model A300–600 series airplanes: Within 23,700 flight cycles or 57,500 flight

hours after accomplishment of the repair, whichever occurs first.

(d) If any crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (a) or (b) of this AD and the crack is 0.787 inches long or more, prior to further flight, repair it in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, or the Direction Generale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC) (or its delegated agent). For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, as required by this paragraph, the Manager's approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

Deferral of Repetitive Inspections by Modification

(e) In lieu of accomplishing the requirements of paragraph (b) of this AD, prior to further flight after accomplishing the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, modify the rear fitting at stringer 27 at FR40 of the center fuselage in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–53–0333, dated November 24, 1997 (Model A300 B2 and B4 series airplanes), or Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6076, dated November 24, 1997 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); as applicable. Following accomplishment of the modification, perform the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD one more time at the time specified in paragraph (e)(1), (e)(2), (e)(3), or (e)(4) of this AD, as applicable, and accomplish the actions specified in paragraph (f) or (g) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) For Model A300 B2 series airplanes: Within 59,600 flight cycles or 73,100 flight hours after accomplishment of the modification, whichever occurs first.

(2) For Model A300 B4–100 series airplanes: Within 47,100 flight cycles or 75,900 flight hours after accomplishment of the modification, whichever occurs first.

(3) For Model A300 B4–200 series airplanes: Within 42,700 flight cycles or 88,400 flight hours after accomplishment of the modification, whichever occurs first.

(4) For Model A300–600 series airplanes: Within 31,700 flight cycles or 76,800 flight hours after accomplishment of the modification, whichever occurs first.

Follow-on Action if No Cracking Is Found During Certain Inspections

(f) If no crack is detected during the inspection required by paragraph (c) or (e) of this AD, prior to further flight, contact the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, or the DGAC (or its delegated agent) for the next inspection time(s), and repeat the inspection(s) thereafter at those times.

Repair for Cracking Found During a Certain Inspection

(g) If any crack is detected during the inspection required by paragraph (c) or (e) of this AD, prior to further flight, repair it in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, or the DGAC (or its delegated agent). For a repair method to be approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, as required by this paragraph, the Manager's approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(h) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM–116.

Special Flight Permits

(i) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Incorporation by Reference

(j) Except as required by paragraphs (d), (f), and (g) of this AD, the actions shall be done in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–53–0332, dated November 24, 1997; Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6075, dated November 24, 1997; Airbus Service Bulletin A300–53–0333, dated November 24, 1997; or Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–6076, dated November 24, 1997; as applicable. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 98–028–242 (B), dated January 28, 1998.

(k) This amendment becomes effective on November 15, 2000.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on September 29, 2000.

Donald L. Riggins,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.
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