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## **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **Federal Aviation Administration**

#### **14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2015-8134; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-256-AD; Amendment 39-18572; AD 2016-13-08]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

#### **Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes**

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

**ACTION:** Final rule.

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**SUMMARY:** We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Model A300 series airplanes; and Model A300 B4-600, B4-600R, and F4-600R series airplanes, and Model A300 C4-605R Variant F airplanes (collectively called Model A300-600 series airplanes). This AD was prompted by a report of cracking of the lower tension bolt area at the rib one junction (both sides) of the lower wing. This AD requires repetitive inspections for cracking of the fasteners and of the fitting around the fastener holes at the frame (FR) 40 lower wing location, and corrective actions if necessary. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct crack initiation of the fittings of the FR40 lower wing locations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

**DATES:** This AD becomes effective August 9, 2016.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in this AD as of August 9, 2016.

**ADDRESSES:** For Airbus service information identified in this final rule, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office–EAW, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email [account.airworth-eas@airbus.com](mailto:account.airworth-eas@airbus.com); Internet <http://www.airbus.com>. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221. It is also available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-8134.

#### **Examining the AD Docket**

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-8134; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9

a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations office (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-2125; fax 425-227-1149.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **Discussion**

We issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all Airbus Model A300 series airplanes; and Model A300 B4-600, B4-600R, and F4-600R series airplanes, and Model A300 C4-605R Variant F airplanes (collectively called Model A300-600 series airplanes). The NPRM published in the Federal Register on December 31, 2015 (80 FR 81786) ("the NPRM").

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA Airworthiness Directive 2014-0272, dated December 12, 2014 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or "the MCAI"), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus Model A300 series airplanes; and Model A300 B4-600, B4-600R, and F4-600R series airplanes, and Model A300 C4-605R Variant F airplanes (collectively called Model A300-600 series airplanes). The MCAI states:

Following the A300-600 Extended Service Goal (ESG2) exercise, specific inspections for cracks were performed in fittings of frame (FR) 40, in areas not covered by any existing task.

Findings were identified on an A300-600 aeroplane withdrawn from service in the lower tension bolt area at rib one junction (both sides).

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to crack initiation, affecting the structural integrity of the aeroplane.

To address this potential unsafe condition, an inspection programme was developed for the fitting around the fastener holes located at FR40 lower wing junction, left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) sides.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires repetitive High Frequency Eddy Current (HFEC) inspections and rototest inspections of the fitting around the fastener holes located at FR40 lower wing junction and, depending on findings, accomplishment of a repair.

The corrective actions include a repair using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the EASA; or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA).

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-8134.

## **Comments**

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD. The following presents the comments received on the NPRM and the FAA's response to each comment.

### **Request To Clarify Corrective Actions**

FedEx asked that the corrective actions identified in paragraph (i) of the proposed AD be clarified. FedEx stated that paragraph (h)(1) of the proposed AD specifies "If one or more of the hole diameters is outside the tolerance of the nominal diameter, and outside the tolerance of the first and second oversize: Do the applicable corrective actions required by paragraph (i) of this AD." FedEx added that paragraph (i) of the proposed AD specifies "If, during any inspection required by this AD, any crack is found, or one or more of the hole diameters are outside the tolerance of the nominal diameter: Repair before further flight using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA)." FedEx noted that paragraph (i) should specify "one or more of the hole diameters are outside the tolerance of the nominal diameter and outside the tolerance of the first and second oversize" to match the language in paragraph (h)(1) of the proposed.

We agree. We have confirmed that the language in paragraph (i) of this AD should match the language in paragraph (h)(1) of this AD. We have changed paragraph (i) of this AD accordingly.

### **Request To Revise Compliance Time**

United Parcel Service (UPS) asked that we revise the compliance time for the rototest inspections specified by paragraph (h) of the proposed AD to a threshold based on total service time, rather than calendar time alone. UPS stated that, based on reported findings to date, the crack growth rate is so slow it will not affect the immediate airworthiness of the airplane. UPS suggested that we add a threshold of 11,900 total flight cycles.

We do not agree with the commenter's request. The commenter provided no data to substantiate the proposed compliance time based on flight cycles. In developing an appropriate compliance time for this AD, we considered not only the urgency associated with the subject unsafe condition, but also the manufacturer's recommendations, EASA's recommendations, and the practical aspect of accomplishing the required inspections within a period of time that corresponds to the normal scheduled maintenance for most affected operators. After considering all the available information, we have determined that the compliance time, as proposed, represents an appropriate interval of time in which the required actions can be performed in a timely manner within the affected fleet, while still maintaining an adequate level of safety. However, affected operators may request an alternative method of compliance (AMOC) to request a change to the compliance time under the provisions of paragraph (j) of this AD by submitting data and analysis substantiating that the change would provide an acceptable level of safety. We have not changed this AD regarding this issue.

### **Request To Remove High Frequency Eddy Current (HFEC) Inspections**

UPS asked that the HFEC inspections specified by paragraph (g) of the proposed AD be removed. UPS stated that the HFEC inspection requirement does not enhance airplane safety because only substantial damage can be detected by this method, due to a restricted inspection area. UPS also stated that the smallest crack detectable by an HFEC inspection method is calculated to be 7.5 mm in length, not taking into account the inspection surface radius and the limited access to the inspection area. UPS added that fastener location and potential obstacles affect consistent probe movement, which increases the chance for inconsistent inspection readings.

We do not agree with the commenter's request. The HFEC inspection required by paragraph (g) of this AD is a necessary interim measure intended to find cracking before the required compliance time for the rototest inspection in paragraph (h) of this AD. As the commenter acknowledged, a 7.5-mm crack may be detected during an HFEC inspection within 1,000 flight hours. That same 7.5-mm crack, undetected for 3 years until the rototest inspection is done, could grow and result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane; therefore, the repetitive HFEC inspections must be retained in this AD. If no cracking is found, the HFEC inspection can be repeated, or terminated when the rototest inspection is accomplished. However, affected operators may request approval of an AMOC to do the rototest inspections only, under the provisions of paragraph (j) of this AD by submitting data and analysis, and a compliance schedule, substantiating that the change would provide an acceptable level of safety. We have not changed this AD regarding this issue. Request To Correct Typographical Errors in Service Information

FedEx asked that the typographical errors for the structural repair manual (SRM) references in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-6115, dated April 4, 2014, be corrected so FedEx can use them to comply with the NPRM requirements. FedEx stated that Airbus was informed of and acknowledged these typographical errors, but currently no changes have been made to the service information. FedEx noted that the service information listed SRM 51-40-13 for the application of special coatings, but the correct reference is SRM 51-23-20. FedEx also noted that the service information listed SRM 51-40-12 for the application of paint coatings, but the correct reference is SRM 51-23-10.

We agree with the commenter's concerns. We have changed paragraph (g) of this AD to clarify the correct SRM references to be used.

## **Conclusion**

We reviewed the available data and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this AD with the changes described previously and minor editorial changes. We have determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for correcting the unsafe condition; and
- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM.

## **Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51**

We reviewed the following service information.

- Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-0257, excluding Appendix 01 and including Appendix 02, dated April 4, 2014.
- Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-6115, dated April 4, 2014.

The service information describes procedures for repetitive inspections for cracking of the fasteners and of the fitting around the fastener holes at the FR40 lower wing location. This service information 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**

We estimate that this AD affects 166 airplanes of U.S. registry.

We also estimate that it takes about 12 work-hours per product to comply with the basic requirements of this AD. The average labor rate is \$85 per work-hour. Based on these figures, we estimate the cost of this AD on U.S. operators to be \$169,320, or \$1,020 per product.

We have received no definitive data that would enable us to provide a cost estimate for the on-condition actions 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.

We are 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**

We determined that 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. Is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska; and
4. 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.

### **Adoption of 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 (AD):



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**2016-13-08 Airbus:** Amendment 39-18572. Docket No. FAA-2015-8134; Directorate Identifier 2014-NM-256-AD.

**(a) Effective Date**

This AD becomes effective August 9, 2016.

**(b) Affected ADs**

None.

**(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to all Airbus airplanes identified in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this AD, certificated in any category.

(1) Airbus Model A300 B2-1A, B2-1C, B2K-3C, B2-203, B4-2C, B4-103, and B4-203 airplanes.

(2) Airbus Model A300 B4-601, B4-603, B4-620, B4-622, B4-605R, B4-622R, F4-605R, F4-622R, and C4-605R Variant F airplanes.

**(d) Subject**

Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 57, Wings.

**(e) Reason**

This AD was prompted by a report of cracking of the lower tension bolt area at rib one junction (both sides) of the lower wing. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct crack initiation of the fittings of the frame (FR) 40 lower wing locations, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

**(f) Compliance**

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

**(g) Repetitive High Frequency Eddy Current (HFEC) Inspections**

Within 1,000 flight hours after the effective date of this AD: Do an HFEC inspection for cracking of fasteners 1 through 3 at the left-hand and right-hand sides of the FR40 lower junction, and of the fitting around the fastener holes, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-0257, excluding Appendix 01 and including Appendix 02, dated April 4, 2014 (for Model A300 B2-1A, B2-1C, B2K-3C, B2-203, B4-2C, B4-103, and B4-203 airplanes); or Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-6115, dated April 4, 2014 (for Model A300 B4-601, B4-603, B4-620, B4-622, B4-605R, B4-622R, F4-605R, F4-622R, and C4-605R Variant F airplanes). If no cracking is found, repeat the HFEC inspection at intervals not to exceed 1,000 flight hours until a rototest inspection required by paragraph (h)(2) of this AD has been done. Where Airbus

Service Bulletin A300-57-6115, dated April 4, 2014, refers to Structural Repair Manual (SRM) 51-40-13 for applying special protection, the correct reference is SRM 51-23-20; and to SRM 51-40-12 for applying paint coatings, the correct reference is SRM 51-23-10.

#### **(h) Repetitive Rototest Inspections**

Within 36 months after the effective date of this AD: Remove the fasteners and measure the diameter of the fastener holes; and, before further flight, do the applicable actions required by paragraph (h)(1) or (h)(2) of this AD, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-0257, excluding Appendix 01 and including Appendix 02, dated April 4, 2014 (for Model A300 B2-1A, B2-1C, B2K-3C, B2-203, B4-2C, B4-103, and B4-203 airplanes); or Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-6115, dated April 4, 2014 (for Model A300 B4-601, B4-603, B4-620, B4-622, B4-605R, B4-622R, F4-605R, F4-622R, and C4-605R Variant F airplanes).

(1) If one or more of the hole diameters is outside the tolerance of the nominal diameter, and outside the tolerance of the first and second oversize: Do the applicable corrective actions required by paragraph (i) of this AD.

(2) If all of the hole diameters are within the tolerance of the nominal diameter or the first or second oversize: Do detailed and rototest inspections for cracking of the fastener holes at the left-hand and right-hand sides of the FR40 lower junction, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-0257, excluding Appendix 01 and including Appendix 02, dated April 4, 2014 (for Model A300 B2-1A, B2-1C, B2K-3C, B2-203, B4-2C, B4-103, and B4-203 airplanes); or Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-6115, dated April 4, 2014 (for Model A300 B4-601, B4-603, B4-620, B4-622, B4-605R, B4-622R, F4-605R, F4-622R, and C4-605R Variant F airplanes). If no cracking is found, before further flight, install new fasteners of the same diameter in special clearance fit for fasteners 1 through 3 of the FR40 lower junction, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Service Bulletins A300-57-0257, excluding Appendix 01 and including Appendix 02, dated April 4, 2014; or Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-6115, dated April 4, 2014. Repeat the rototest inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 7,000 flight cycles. Accomplishment of a rototest inspection required by this paragraph terminates the repetitive HFEC inspections required by paragraph (g) of this AD.

#### **(i) Corrective Actions**

If, during any inspection required by this AD, any crack is found, or one or more of the hole diameters is outside the tolerance of the nominal diameter, and outside the tolerance of the first and second oversize: Repair before further flight in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA); or Airbus's EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA).

#### **(j) Other FAA AD Provisions**

The following provisions also apply to this AD:

(1) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, 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 local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the International Branch, send it to ATTN: Dan Rodina, Aerospace Engineer, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA 98057-3356; telephone 425-227-2125; fax 425-227-1149. Information may be emailed to: 9-ANM-116-AMOC-REQUESTS@faa.gov. Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight

standards district office/certificate holding district office. The AMOC approval letter must specifically reference this AD.

(2) Contacting the Manufacturer: For any requirement in this AD to obtain corrective actions from a manufacturer, the action must be accomplished using a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM-116, Transport Airplane Directorate, FAA; or the EASA; or Airbus'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 paragraph (i) 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.

### **(k) Related Information**

Refer to Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information (MCAI) EASA Airworthiness Directive 2014-0272, dated December 12, 2014, for related information. This MCAI may be found in the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2015-8134.

### **(l) 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) Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-0257, excluding Appendix 01 and including Appendix 02, dated April 4, 2014.

(ii) Airbus Service Bulletin A300-57-6115, dated April 4, 2014.

(3) For Airbus service information identified in this final rule, contact Airbus SAS, Airworthiness Office–EAW, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 5 61 93 36 96; fax +33 5 61 93 44 51; email [account.airworth-eas@airbus.com](mailto:account.airworth-eas@airbus.com); Internet <http://www.airbus.com>.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue SW., Renton, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 425-227-1221.

(5) You may view this service information that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, call 202-741-6030, or go to: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on June 21, 2016.

Dorr M. Anderson,  
Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate,  
Aircraft Certification Service.