Explanation of the Provisions of the Proposed AD

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop in other Pilatus Models PC–12 and PC–12/45 airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the FAA is proposing AD action. The proposed AD would require modifying the lavatory wall and passenger seat configuration. Accomplishment of the proposed installation would be in accordance with the service information previously referenced.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 40 airplanes in the U.S. registry would be affected by the proposed AD, that it would take approximately 15 workhours to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is approximately $60 an hour. Parts will be provided by the manufacturer at no cost to the owners/operators of the affected airplanes. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $36,000, or $900 per airplane. These figures are based on the presumption that no affected airplane has the proposed modifications incorporated.

Pilatus has informed the FAA that all 40 airplanes in the U.S. registry have the proposed modifications incorporated. With this in mind, the proposed AD imposes no cost impact upon the public.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects 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, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

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) if promulgated, 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 copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action has been placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend 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 a new airworthiness directive (AD) to read as follows:

Pilatus Aircraft Ltd.: Docket No. 97–CE–38–AD.

Applicability: Models PC–12 and PC–12/45 airplanes, serial numbers MSN 101 through 180, certificated in any category, that incorporate an executive cabin layout.

Note 1: Models PC–12 and PC–12/45 airplanes that incorporate a corporate-utility cabin layout are not affected by this AD.

Note 2: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been 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 (c) 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 within the next 100 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD, unless already accomplished.

To prevent head injuries during an airplane crash because the lavatory wall and passenger seat configuration do not meet current head injury criteria regulations, accomplish the following:

(a) Modify the lavatory wall and passenger seat configuration in accordance with Pilatus Service Bulletin No. 25–003, dated May 7, 1997.

(b) 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.

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an equivalent level of safety may be approved by the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, 1201 Walnut, suite 900, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. The request shall be forwarded through an appropriate FAA Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

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

(d) Questions or technical information related to Pilatus Service Bulletin No. 25–003, dated May 7, 1997, should be directed to Pilatus Aircraft Ltd., Marketing Support Department, CH–6370 Stans, Switzerland; telephone: +41 41–6196 233; facsimile: +41 41–6103 351. This service information may be examined at the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in Swiss AD HB 97–249, dated May 31, 1997.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on March 17, 1998.

Michael Gallagher,

Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–7520 Filed 3–23–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97–NM–341–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300, A310, and A300–600 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to all Airbus Model A300, A310, and A300–600 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive inspections to detect corrosion and cracks on the bottom area of the wing skin, and corrective action, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct corrosion and cracks on the bottom area of the wing skin, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by April 23, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97–NM–341–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington.

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:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications shall identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: ''Comments to Docket Number 97–NM–341–AD.'' The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97–NM–341–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on all Airbus Model A300, A310, and A300–600 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that it has received reports of corrosion on the lower wing root joint, on the bottom wing skin, inboard and outboard of the external lower surface splice. Most of the corrosion was found in the area aft of frame 43, and around fasteners, starting from the edges of the countersinks. Such corrosion could lead to cracking in this area. This condition, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A300–57–0204, dated December 4, 1995 (for Model A300 series airplanes); A310–57–2061, dated December 4, 1995 (for Model A310 series airplanes); and A300–57–6047, Revision 01, dated October 16, 1996, as revised by Change Notice 1.A., dated February 24, 1997 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes). These service bulletins describe procedures for repetitive detailed visual inspections to detect corrosion and cracks of the bottom wing skin area, inboard and outboard of the rib 1 external lower surface splice, between frame 40 and frame 47. The service bulletins also describe procedures for removal of any corrosion found, application of protective treatment, and non-destructive inspection for cracks, if necessary.

The DGAC classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 97–006–210(B), dated January 2, 1997, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

FAA's Conclusions

These airplane models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of § 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Explanation of Requirements of Proposed Rule

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other airplanes of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins described previously, except as discussed below.

Differences Between the Proposal and the Related Service Bulletins

The proposed rule would differ from the Airbus service bulletins described previously in that, unlike the compliance time threshold and intervals provided in the service bulletins, this proposed AD would reference tables that provide compliance time thresholds and intervals in flight cycles and corresponding flight hours for each airplane model. The thresholds and intervals defined in the service bulletins are based on an Average Flight Time (AFT) for each airplane model. For those airplanes that are operated with a flight duration different from the AFT, an adjustment must be made to the thresholds and intervals. To provide clarification of the appropriate thresholds and intervals, Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 have been included in the proposed AD to provide specific thresholds and intervals, and to eliminate the need for operators to calculate differing adjustments for various AFT's.

Operators also should note that the service bulletins specify that the manufacturer may be contacted for disposition of certain repair conditions. However, this proposal would require the repair of those conditions to be accomplished in accordance with a method approved by the FAA.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 49 Model A300 and A310 series airplanes, and 51 Model A300–600 series airplanes, of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 8 work hours per inspection cycle to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $48,000, or $480 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

The cost impact figure discussed above is based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the proposed requirements of this AD action, and that no operator would accomplish those actions in the future if this AD were not adopted.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects 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, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (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); and (3) if promulgated, 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 copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend 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:

Airbus: Docket 97–NM–341–AD.

Applicability: All Model A300, A310, and A300–600 series airplanes, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been 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 (d) 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 corrosion and cracks on the bottom wing skin area, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane, accomplish the following:

(a) At the time specified in paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3), or (a)(4) of this AD, as applicable: Except as required by paragraphs (b) and (c) of this AD, perform an inspection for corrosion and cracks on the bottom wing skin area, and accomplish follow-on corrective actions, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–57–0204, dated December 4, 1995 (for Model A300 series airplanes); A310–57–2061, dated December 4, 1995 (for Model A310 series airplanes); or A300–57–6047, Revision 01, dated October 16, 1996, as revised by Change Notice 1.A., dated February 24, 1997 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); as applicable; subsequently referred to in this AD as the ''applicable'' service bulletins. Thereafter, repeat the inspection at intervals not to exceed 5 years.

(1) For airplanes with 5 years or less since date of manufacture: Prior to the accumulation of 5 years since date of manufacture or within 18 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For airplanes with more than 5 years, but less than 15 years since date of manufacture: Within 18 months after the effective date of this AD.

(3) For airplanes with more than 15 years, but less than 20 years since date of manufacture: Within 12 months after the effective date of this AD.

(4) For airplanes with more than 20 years since date of manufacture: Within 6 months after the effective date of this AD.

(b) If any corrosion or crack is found during an inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, and the applicable service bulletin specifies to contact Airbus for an appropriate action: Prior to further flight, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Branch, ANM–116, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

(c) If any crack is found during an inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, and the applicable service bulletin specifies to refer to Table B, Figure 4, of the service bulletin to determine the fatigue inspection threshold and interval: Use Table 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5, of this AD, as applicable, to determine the fatigue inspection threshold and interval in flight cycles (FC) or flight hours (FH).

TABLE 1.—AIRBUS SERVICE BULLETIN A300–57–204 (MODEL A300 B2) FATIGUE INSPECTION

Area	Threshold (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	Detailed visual interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	NDT (HFEC) interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)
1, 2, 3a [1]	10,400 FC or 15,800 FH	10,400 FC or 15,800 FH	10,400 FC or 15,800 FH.
3b, 4a [2]	7,200 FC or 11,000 FH	2,500 FC or 3,800 FH	6,300 FC or 9,600 FH.
4b	10,400 FC or 15,800 FH	10,400 FC or 15,800 FH	10,400 FC or 15,800 FH.
5, 6	9,900 FC or 15,100 FH	8,700 FC or 13,200 FH	9,900 FC or 15,100 FH.
7, 8	6,600 FC or 10,000 FH	5,000 FC or 7,700 FH	6,400 FC or 9,700 FH.

[1] Area 3, as defined by Table B, Table 4, of SB A300–57–0204, has been split into areas 3a and 3b with a borderline between stiffener 43.2 and lattice flange 44 for Tables 1, 2, and 3 of this AD.

[2] Area 4, as defined by Table B, Table 4, of SB A300–57–0204, has been split into areas 4a and 4b with a borderline between lattice flange 44 and stiffener 44.1 for Tables 1, 2, and 3 of this AD.

TABLE 2.—AIRBUS SERVICE BULLETIN A300–57–204 (MODEL A300 B4–100) FATIGUE INSPECTION

Area	Threshold (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	Detailed visual interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	NDT (HFEC) interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)
1, 2, 3a	9,500 FC or 15,600 FH	8,600 FC or 14,200 FH	9,500 FC or 15,600 FH.

TABLE 2.—AIRBUS SERVICE BULLETIN A300–57–204 (MODEL A300 B4–100) FATIGUE INSPECTION—Continued

Area	Threshold (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	Detailed visual interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	NDT (HFEC) interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)
3b, 4a	6,700 FC or 12,000 FH	2,000 FC or 3,300 FH	5,000 FC or 8,200 FH.
4b	9,500 FC or 15,600 FH	8,600 FC or 14,200 FH	9,500 FC or 15,600 FH.
5, 6	8,200 FC or 13,400 FH	7,200 FC or 11,900 FH	8,200 FC or 13,400 FH.
7, 8	4,600 FC or 7,600 FH	3,600 FC or 5,900 FH	4,500 FC or 7,400 FH

TABLE 3.—AIRBUS SERVICE BULLETIN A300–57–204 (MODEL A300B4–200) FATIGUE INSPECTION

Area	Threshold (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	Detailed visual interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	NDT (HFEC) interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)
1, 2, 3a	9,900 FC or 21,100 FH	9,000 FC or 19,200 FH	9,900 FC or 12,100 FH.
3b, 4a	7,000 FC or 14,900 FH	2,100 FC or 4,500 FH	5,200 FC or 11,100 FH.
4b	9,900 FC or 21,100 FH	9,000 FC or 19,200 FH	9,900 FC or 21,100 FH.
5, 6	8,500 FC or 18,100 FH	7,500 FC or 16,000 FH	8,500 FC or 18,100 FH.
7, 8	4,800 FC or 10,200 FH	3,700 FC or 7,900 FH	4,700 FC or 10,000 FH.

TABLE 4.—AIRBUS SERVICE BULLETIN A310–57–2061 (MODEL A310–200 AND A310–300) FATIGUE INSPECTION

Area	Threshold (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	Detailed visual interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	NDT (HFEC) interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)
1	12,800 FC or 36,600 FH	10,500 FC or 29,900 FH	12,800 FC or 36,600 FH.
2	5,700 FC or 16,300 FH	4,600 FC or 13,100 FH	5,700 FC or 16,300 FH.
3, 5	5,100 FC or 14,700 FH	4,100 FC or 11,800 FH	5,100 FC or 14,700 FH.
4	4,500 FC or 12,800 FH	1,800 FC or 5,100 FH	4,500 FC or 12,800 FH.
6	19,400 FC or 55,300 FH	16,500 FC or 47,000 FH	19,400 FC or 55,300 FH.
7	16,300 FC or 46,500 FH	13,800 FC or 39,500 FH	16,300 FC or 46,500 FH.

TABLE 5.—AIRBUS SERVICE BULLETIN A300–57–6047 (MODEL A300–600) FATIGUE INSPECTION

Area	Threshold (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	Detailed visual interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)	NDT (HFEC) interval (FC or FH, whichever occurs first)
1, 2	13,600 FC or 42,900 FH	11,800 FC or 37,000 FH	15,500 FC or 48,800 FH.
3	6,500 FC or 20,400 FH	5,800 FC or 18,400 FH	6,900 FC or 21,600 FH.
4, 6	4,800 FC or 15,100 FH	4,500 FC or 14,200 FH	5,000 FC or 15,700 FH.
5	2,100 FC or 6,500 FH	900 FC or 3,000 FH	2,100 FC or 6,500 FH.
7	5,700 FC or 18,100 FH	5,500 FC or 17,200 FH	6,300 FC or 19,800 FH.
8	2,400 FC or 7,400 FH	2,100 FC or 6,500 FH	2,400 FC or 7,400 FH.

(d) 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.

(e) 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.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 97–006–210(B), dated January 2, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on March 17, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–7525 Filed 3–23–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97–NM–21–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Model DC–9 and DC–9–80 Series Airplanes, Model MD–88 Airplanes, and C–9 (Military) Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness