

(a) Perform an initial inspection of the areas behind the scuff plates below the passenger/crew doors and bulk cargo door to detect cracks and corrosion, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6011, Revision 3, dated February 4, 1991; at the time specified in paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2), or (a)(3) of this AD. If any crack or corrosion is found during this inspection, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with the service bulletin. Accomplishment of this inspection is not required for the mid and aft passenger/crew doors if a steel doubler that covers the entire inspection area is installed.

(1) For airplanes on which Modification 5382S6526 (for forward doors) and Modification 5382D4741 (for all other doors) have been accomplished prior to delivery of the airplane: Perform the initial inspection within 9 years since manufacture, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For airplanes on which Modification 5382S6526 (for forward doors) and Modification 5382D4741 (for all other doors) have not been accomplished; and on which the procedures described in Airbus Service Information Letter (SIL) A300-53-033, Revision 2 (for all doors), dated November 23, 1984, have been accomplished: Perform the initial inspection within 5 years after accomplishment of the procedures described in the SIL, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(3) For airplanes on which Modification 5382S6526 (for forward doors), Modification 5382D4741 (for all other doors), and the procedures described in Airbus SIL A300-53-033, Revision 2, dated November 23, 1984, have not been accomplished: Perform the initial inspection within 4 years since manufacture, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(b) Perform repetitive inspections of the areas behind the scuff plates below the passenger/crew doors and bulk cargo door to detect cracks and corrosion, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6022, dated February 4, 1991; at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this AD. Accomplishment of these inspections is not required for the mid and aft passenger/crew doors if a steel doubler that covers the entire inspection area is installed.

(1) For the forward and mid passenger/crew doors, the bulk cargo door, and the aft passenger/crew doors, except the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler: Perform the first inspection within 5 years after accomplishing the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD; and repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5 years.

(2) For the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler of the aft passenger/crew doors: Perform the first inspection within 5 years or 6,000 landings after accomplishing the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, whichever occurs first; and repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5 years or 6,000 landings, whichever occurs first.

(c) If cracks are found as a result of any inspection required by paragraph (b) of this

AD, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6022, dated February 4, 1991. Thereafter, perform the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (b) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this AD.

(d) If corrosion is found as a result of any inspection required by paragraph (b) of this AD, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6022, dated February 4, 1991. Thereafter, perform the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (b) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this AD.

(1) For the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler of the aft passenger/crew doors, and for the mid passenger/crew door: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 5 years or 5,000 landings, whichever occurs first.

(2) For the forward passenger/crew doors and bulk cargo doors: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 5 years.

(e) Perform an inspection to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames of the left- and right-hand forward, mid, and aft passenger/crew door structures, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6018, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992, and at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (e)(1), (e)(2), (e)(3), or (e)(4) of this AD.

(1) For the upper corners of the forward doors: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings, or within 2,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For the lower corners of the forward doors: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings, or within 4,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(3) For the upper and lower corners of the mid doors: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(4) For the upper and lower corners of the aft doors, and for the parts underneath the corners of the upper door frames: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings, or within 4,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(f) Repeat the inspections required by paragraph (e) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (f)(1), (f)(2), (f)(3), (f)(4), and (f)(5).

(1) For the upper corners of the forward doors: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 6,000 landings.

(2) For the lower corners of the forward doors: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 10,000 landings.

(3) For the upper and lower corners of the mid and aft doors on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using a Roto test technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 8,000 landings.

(4) For the upper and lower corners of the mid and aft doors on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using an X-ray technique:

Inspect at intervals not to exceed 3,500 landings.

(5) For the areas around the fasteners in the vicinity of stringer 12 on the upper door frames of the aft doors on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using a visual technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 6,900 landings.

(g) If any crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (e) or (f) of this AD: Prior to further flight, accomplish the requirement of paragraph (g)(1) or (g)(2) of this AD, as applicable.

(1) If any crack is found, and the crack can be eliminated using the method specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6018, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992: Prior to further flight, repair the crack in accordance with that service bulletin.

(2) If any crack is found, and the crack cannot be eliminated using the method specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6018, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992: Prior to further flight, repair the crack in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

(h) Modification of the passenger/crew door frames in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-6002, Revision 3, dated February 22, 1992, constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (f) of this AD.

(i) 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, Standardization Branch, ANM-113. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM-113.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Standardization Branch, ANM-113.

(j) 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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 23, 1997.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 97-2221 Filed 1-28-97; 8:45 am]

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14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-43-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 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 series airplanes. This proposal would require inspections of the lower door surrounding structure to detect cracks and corrosion, and repair, if necessary. This proposal also would require inspections to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames of the door structures; and repair, if necessary. This proposal would require modification of the passenger/crew door frames, which, when accomplished, terminates certain inspections. This proposal is prompted by reports indicating that corrosion was found behind the scuff plates at exit and cargo doors, and fatigue cracks originated from certain fastener holes located in adjacent structure. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect and correct such corrosion and fatigue cracking, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the door surroundings.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 10, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-NM-43-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: Charles Huber, Aerospace Engineer, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (206) 227-2589; fax (206) 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 96-NM-43-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-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-NM-43-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, has notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on all Airbus Model A300 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that it received reports indicating that corrosion was found behind the scuff plates at passenger/crew doors, emergency exits, and the bulk cargo door. The DGAC also advises that results of structural fatigue testing have revealed that cracks were found on the corner doublers of the forward, mid, and aft passenger/crew door frames; and, after various simulated flights, on the fail-safe ring and frames 14 and 16A of the forward passenger/crew door. After 50,000 simulated flights, cracks measuring between 8.0 mm and 109.0 mm were found on the forward door frames and fail-safe ring. On the mid door frame, a 53.0 mm crack was found after 60,493 simulated flights. A crack which measured 32.0 mm was found on the aft door frame after 106,000 simulated flights. In all cases, the cracks originated at the fastener holes. In addition, cracks originating from corner doubler edges were found at the aft passenger/crew doors.

Such corrosion and fatigue cracking, if not detected and corrected, could result in reduced structural integrity of the door surroundings.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A300-53-204, Revision 6, dated October 11, 1993, which describes procedures for a one-time inspection to detect cracks and corrosion in the areas behind the scuff plates at passenger/crew doors, emergency exits, and the bulk cargo door, and repair, if necessary. Airbus also has issued Service Bulletin A300-53-233, Revision 1, dated April 18, 1991, which describes procedures for corresponding repetitive inspections in these areas, and repair, if necessary.

In addition, Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A300-53-227, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992. This service bulletin describes procedures for repetitive inspections to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames at the left- and right-hand forward, mid, and aft passenger/crew door structures; and repair, if necessary.

Airbus also has issued Service Bulletin A300-53-192, Revision 7, dated July 13, 1992, which describes procedures for modification of the passenger/crew door frames. This modification consists of performing cold expansion procedures on the fastener holes in door frames, corner doublers, and fail-safe rings; and installing oversized Hi-Lok fasteners and additional steel doublers at door frame corners, where necessary, to improve the fatigue life of the corner doublers, fail-safe rings, and door frames. Accomplishment of the modification eliminates the need for the repetitive inspections specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-227.

The DGAC classified the inspection service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive (CN) 91-132-124(B), dated June 26, 1991, as amended by a Correction, dated August 21, 1991, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France. (The DGAC did not classify the modification service bulletin as mandatory.)

FAA's Conclusions

This airplane model is manufactured in France and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 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 inspections of the lower door surrounding structure to detect cracks and corrosion, and repair, if necessary. The proposed AD also would require inspections to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames of the door structures; and repair, if necessary. In addition, the proposed AD would require modification of the passenger/crew door frames, which, when accomplished, constitutes terminating action for certain inspections. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletins described previously.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Parallel French CN

Operators should note that the French CN does not mandate modification of the passenger/crew door frames. However, the FAA finds that, since the design of Model A300 series airplanes is not damage tolerant, accomplishment of the modification described in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-192 must be required.

Additionally, the FAA considers that long term continued operational safety will be better assured by actual modification of the airframe to remove the source of the problem, rather than by repetitive inspections. Long term inspections may not be providing the degree of safety assurance necessary for the transport airplane fleet. This has led the FAA to consider placing less emphasis on special procedures and more emphasis on design improvements. The proposed modification requirement is in consonance with this consideration.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 4 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

It would take approximately 700 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed inspections, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed inspections on U.S.

operators is estimated to be \$168,000, or \$42,000 per airplane.

The FAA estimates that it would take approximately 330 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed modification, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$1,055 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed modification on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$83,420, or \$20,855 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are 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 96-NM-43-AD.

Applicability: All Model A300 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 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 corrosion behind the scuff plates at exit and cargo doors, and fatigue cracking in certain fastener holes located in adjacent structure, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the door surroundings, accomplish the following:

(a) Perform an initial inspection of the areas behind the scuff plates below the passenger/crew doors and bulk cargo door to detect cracks and corrosion, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-204, Revision 6, dated October 11, 1993; at the applicable time specified in paragraph (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(3), or (a)(4) of this AD. If any crack or corrosion is found during this inspection, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with the service bulletin. Accomplishment of this inspection is not required for the mid and aft passenger/crew doors if a steel doubler that covers the entire inspection area is installed.

(1) For airplanes on which Modifications 5382S6526 (for forward doors), 3690S4613 (for forward doors), and 5382D4741 (for all other doors) have been accomplished prior to delivery of the airplane: Perform the initial inspection within 9 years since manufacture, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) For airplanes on which the procedures described in Airbus Service Information Letter (SIL) A300-53-033, Revision 2 (for all doors), dated November 23, 1984; or Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-169 (for forward doors), Revision 2, dated May 14, 1985; have been accomplished: Perform the initial inspection within 5 years after accomplishment of the SIL or the service bulletin, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(3) For airplanes on which the procedures described in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-116 (for all doors), Revision 4, dated June 30, 1983, have been accomplished: Perform the initial inspection within 2 years after accomplishment of the procedures in accordance with that service bulletin, or

within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(4) For airplanes on which Modifications 5382S6526 (for forward doors), 3690S4613 (for forward doors), and 5382D4741 (for all other doors); and the procedures described in Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-116, Revision 4, dated June 30, 1983; or Service Information Letter (SIL) A300-53-033, Revision 2, dated November 23, 1984; have not been accomplished: Perform the initial inspection within 1 year after the effective date of this AD.

(b) Perform repetitive inspections of the areas behind the scuff plates below the passenger/crew doors and bulk cargo door to detect cracks and corrosion, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-233, Revision 1, dated April 18, 1991, at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this AD. Accomplishment of these inspections is not required for the mid and aft passenger/crew doors if a steel doubler that covers the entire inspection area is installed.

(1) For the forward and mid passenger/crew doors, the bulk cargo doors, the emergency exits, and the aft passenger/crew doors, except for the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler: Perform the first inspection within 5 years after accomplishing the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD; and repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5 years following the immediately preceding inspection.

(2) For the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler of the aft passenger/crew doors: Perform the first inspection within 5 years or 10,000 landings after accomplishing the inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD, whichever occurs first; and repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 5 years or 10,000 landings, whichever occurs first.

(c) If any crack is found during any inspection required by paragraph (b) of this AD, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-233, Revision 1, dated April 18, 1991. Thereafter, perform the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (b) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this AD.

(d) If any corrosion is found during any inspection required by paragraph (b) of this AD, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-233, Revision 1, dated April 18, 1991. Thereafter, perform the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (b) of this AD at the applicable times specified in paragraphs (d)(1) and (d)(2) of this AD.

(1) For the upper and lower edges of the fail-safe ring and the upper edges of the corner doubler of the aft passenger/crew doors, and for the mid passenger/crew doors: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 5 years or 8,000 landings, whichever occurs first.

(2) For the forward passenger/crew doors, bulk cargo door, and emergency exits: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 5 years.

(e) Perform inspections to detect cracking of the holes of the corner doublers, the fail-safe ring, and the door frames of the left- and

right-hand forward, mid, and aft passenger/crew door structures, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-227, Revision 1, dated April 29, 1992. Perform the inspections at the times specified in paragraphs (e)(1), (e)(2), and (e)(3) of this AD, as applicable. If any cracking is found, prior to further flight, repair in accordance with the service bulletin; or, if cracks cannot be eliminated in accordance with the service bulletin, repair in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate.

(1) Except as provided by paragraph (e)(2) of this AD, for the left- and right-hand forward and mid passenger/crew door structures of all airplanes: Inspect at the time specified in paragraph (e)(1)(i), (e)(1)(ii), (e)(1)(iii), or (e)(1)(iv) of this AD, as applicable.

(i) For airplanes that have accumulated less than 20,000 total landings as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings, or within 1,250 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(ii) For airplanes that have accumulated 20,000 total landings or more, but less than 21,000 landings as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 21,000 total landings, or within 1,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(iii) For airplanes that have accumulated 21,000 total landings or more, but less than 22,000 landings as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 22,000 total landings, or within 500 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(iv) For airplanes that have accumulated 22,000 total landings or more as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect within 250 landings after the effective date of this AD.

(2) For the left-hand mid passenger/crew door structures of Model A300 C4 and F4 series airplanes: Inspect at the time specified in paragraph (e)(2)(i), (e)(2)(ii), (e)(2)(iii), or (e)(2)(iv) of this AD, as applicable.

(i) For airplanes that have accumulated less than 12,000 total landings as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 12,000 total landings, or within 1,250 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(ii) For airplanes that have accumulated 12,000 total landings or more, but less than 13,000 landings as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 13,000 total landings, or within 1,000 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(iii) For airplanes that have accumulated 13,000 total landings or more, but less than 14,000 landings as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 14,000 total landings, or within 500 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(iv) For airplanes that have accumulated 14,000 total landings or more as of the effective date of this AD: Inspect within 250 landings after the effective date of this AD.

(3) For the left- and right-hand aft passenger/crew door structures of all

airplanes: Inspect prior to the accumulation of 24,000 total landings, or within 250 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(f) Repeat the inspections required by paragraph (e) of this AD at the times specified in paragraphs (f)(1), (f)(2), (f)(3), (f)(4), (f)(5), (f)(6), (f)(7), (f)(8), (f)(9), and (f)(10), as applicable, until the modification required by paragraph (g) of this AD is accomplished.

(1) For the forward passenger/crew door structure of airplanes on which Airbus Modification No. 1282/S1862 has not been accomplished: Inspect at the intervals specified in paragraphs (f)(1)(i) and (f)(1)(ii), as applicable.

(i) For the upper corners of the door structure: At intervals not to exceed 4,000 landings.

(ii) For the lower corners of the door structure: At intervals not to exceed 7,500 landings.

(2) For the forward passenger/crew door structure of airplanes on which Airbus Modification No. 1282/S1862 has been accomplished: Inspect at the intervals specified in paragraphs (f)(2)(i) and (f)(2)(ii), as applicable.

(i) For the upper corners of the door structure: At intervals not to exceed 6,000 landings.

(ii) For the lower corners of the door structure: At intervals not to exceed 10,000 landings.

(3) For the forward passenger/crew door structure of the airplane having manufacturer's serial number 063, on which Airbus Modification No. 1282/S1862 has been accomplished partially: Inspect at the intervals specified in paragraph (f)(3)(i) or (f)(3)(ii), as applicable.

(i) For the upper corners of the door structure: At intervals not to exceed 4,000 landings.

(ii) For the lower corners of the door structure: At intervals not to exceed 7,500 landings.

(4) For the left- and right-hand mid passenger/crew door structure on Model A300 B1, B2, and B4 series airplanes; and for the right-hand mid passenger/crew door structure on Model A300 C4 and F4 series airplanes; on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using a Roto test technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 8,000 landings.

(5) For the left- and right-hand mid passenger/crew door structure on Model A300 B1, B2, and B4 series airplanes; and for the right-hand mid passenger/crew door structure on Model A300 C4 and F4 series airplanes; on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using an X-ray technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 3,500 landings.

(6) For the left-hand mid passenger/crew door structure on Model A300 C4 and F4 series airplanes on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using a Roto test technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 5,200 landings.

(7) For the left-hand mid passenger/crew door structure on Model A300 C4 and F4

series airplanes on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using an X-ray technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 2,300 landings.

(8) For the aft passenger/crew door structure on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using a Roto test technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 8,000 landings.

(9) For the aft passenger/crew door structure on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using an X-ray technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 3,500 landings.

(10) For the areas around the fasteners in the vicinity of stringer 12 on the aft passenger/crew door structure on which an inspection required by paragraph (e) of this AD was accomplished using a visual technique: Inspect at intervals not to exceed 6,900 landings.

(g) Prior to the accumulation of 20,000 total landings, or within 1 year after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later: Modify the passenger/crew door structures in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-53-192, Revision 7, dated July 13, 1992. Accomplishment of this modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (f) of this AD.

(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, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Standardization Branch, ANM-113.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Standardization Branch, ANM-113.

(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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on January 23, 1997.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-SW-30-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems Model MD-900 Series Helicopters

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 McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems (MDHS) Model MD-900 series helicopters. This proposal would require removing certain serial-numbered main rotor swashplate bearings (bearings) and replacing them with airworthy bearings. This proposal is prompted by reports that inspections of several helicopters revealed that the outer bearing race had been rotating relative to the swashplate assembly, which was evidenced by wear marks in the rotating swashplate. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent possible heat accumulation and resulting damage to the bearing caused by the bearing races rotating relative to the bearing seat, which could result in degraded helicopter response to pilot control input and possible loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received by March 31, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-SW-30-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Greg DiLibero, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Blvd., Lakewood, California 90712, telephone (310) 627-5231, fax (310) 627-5210.

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 should 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 No. 96-SW-30-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, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-SW-30-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

Discussion

This document proposes the adoption of a new AD that is applicable to MDHS Model MD-900 series helicopters. This proposal would require, before further flight, inspecting the bearing, part number (P/N) 900C3010100-101, to determine if a bearing having a serial number (S/N) of S/N 059150-E0019, S/N 059150-E0020, S/N 059150-E0021, S/N 059150-E0022, S/N 059150-E0023, S/N 059150-E0024, S/N 059150-E0025, S/N 059150-E0026, S/N 059150-E0027, S/N 059150-E0028, S/N 059150-E0029, or S/N 059150-E0030 is installed, and if so, removing and replacing the bearing with an airworthy bearing. This proposal is prompted by reports of inspections of several helicopters that indicated the outer bearing race had been rotating relative to the swashplate assembly, which was evidenced by wear marks in the rotating swashplate. An investigation revealed that 12 non-conforming bearings had been released to production. Some of the 12 bearings have been located. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent possible heat accumulation and resulting damage to the bearing caused by the bearing races rotating relative to the bearing seat, which could result in degraded helicopter response to pilot control input and possible loss of control of the helicopter.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other MDHS Model MD-900 series helicopters of the same type design, the proposed AD would require, before further flight, inspecting the bearing, P/N 900C3010100-101, to determine if a bearing having S/N