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 (c)(1) 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 prevent fuel leakage on the outboard wing, which could result in a fuel explosion and fire, accomplish the following:

Restatement of Requirements of AD 98–04–06

(a) Within 30 days after February 25, 1998 (the effective date of AD 98–04–06, amendment 39–10319), perform a visual inspection of the left- and right-hand outer wings, beginning with Rib 21 and continuing outward, for signs of fuel leakage, in accordance with Dornier Alert Service Bulletin ASB–328–57–020, dated October 28, 1997. If any sign of fuel leakage is detected, prior to further flight, re-seal the respective fuel tank in accordance with the alert service bulletin. Repeat the inspection at intervals not to exceed 1,500 flight hours or 6 months, whichever occurs first, until the actions required by paragraph (b) of this AD are accomplished.

New Requirements of this AD

(b) Within 6 months after the effective date of this AD, drill a drainhole in the lower panels of the left- and right-hand outer wings, in accordance with Dornier Service Bulletin SB–328–57–255, dated January 21, 1998. Accomplishment of the requirements of this paragraph constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD.

(c)(1) 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, 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, International Branch, ANM–116.

(c)(2) Alternative methods of compliance, approved previously in accordance with AD 98–04–06, amendment 39–10319, are approved as alternative methods of compliance with this AD.

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.

(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.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in German airworthiness directive 1998–218, dated May 7, 1998.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on August 7, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–21716 Filed 8–12–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–NM–187–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 supersedure of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to all Airbus Model A300, A310, and A300–600 series airplanes, that currently requires performing a ram air turbine (RAT) extension test; removing and disassembling the RAT uplock mechanism; performing an inspection to detect corrosion of the RAT uplock mechanism, and replacement with a new assembly, if necessary; and cleaning all the parts of the RAT control shaft and its bearing component parts. This action would require modification of the RAT unlocking control unit, which would constitute terminating action for the repetitive tests and inspections. This action also would limit the applicability of the existing AD. 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 prevent corrosion of the RAT uplock pin/shaft and needle, which could result in failure of the RAT to deploy and consequent loss of emergency hydraulic power to the flight controls in the event that power is lost in both engines.

DATES: Comments must be received by September 14, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98–NM–187–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 98-NM–187-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.

98–NM–187–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

On October 20, 1997, the FAA issued AD 97–22–06, amendment 39–10177 (62 FR 55726, October 28, 1997), applicable to all Airbus Model A300, A310, and A300–600 airplanes, to require performing a ram air turbine (RAT) extension test; removing and disassembling the RAT uplock mechanism; performing an inspection to detect corrosion of the RAT uplock mechanism, and replacement with a new assembly, if necessary; and cleaning all the parts of the RAT control shaft and its bearing component parts. That action was prompted by reports indicating that the RAT did not extend during ground testing, due to corrosion in the uplock pin/shaft and the needle bearing of the RAT. The requirements of that AD are intended to detect and correct such corrosion of the RAT, which could result in failure of the RAT to deploy and consequent loss of emergency hydraulic power to the flight controls in the event that power is lost in both engines.

Issuance of New Service Information

The manufacturer has issued Airbus Service Bulletins A300–29–0109 (for Model A300 series airplanes); A310–29–2077 (for Model A310 series airplanes); and A300–29–6038 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); all dated January 27, 1997; which describe procedures for modification of the RAT unlocking control unit, which would eliminate the need for the repetitive tests and inspections. In addition, the service bulletins limit the effectivity to those airplanes on which the modification was not accomplished during production. Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC) approved these service bulletins as optional terminating action, and issued French airworthiness directive 95–163–182(B)R3, dated May 7, 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 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 supersede AD 97–22–06 to continue to require performing a RAT extension test; removing and disassembling the RAT uplock mechanism; performing an inspection to detect corrosion of the RAT uplock mechanism, and replacement with a new assembly, if necessary; and cleaning all the parts of the RAT control shaft and its bearing component parts. The proposed AD would add a requirement to modify the RAT unlocking control unit, which would constitute terminating action for the repetitive test and inspection requirements. The proposed AD also would limit the applicability of the existing AD to those airplanes on which the modification was not accomplished during production. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletins described previously.

Differences Between Proposed Rule and Foreign AD

The proposed AD would differ from the parallel French airworthiness directive in that it would mandate the accomplishment of the terminating action for the repetitive tests and inspections. The French airworthiness directive provides for that action as optional.

Mandating the terminating action is based on the FAA's determination that long-term continued operational safety will be better assured by modifications or design changes to remove the source of the problem, rather than by repetitive inspections. Long-term tests and inspections may not be providing the degree of safety assurance necessary for the transport airplane fleet. This, coupled with a better understanding of the human factors associated with numerous continual inspections, has led the FAA to consider placing less emphasis on inspections and more emphasis on design improvements. The proposed modification requirement is in consonance with these conditions.

Cost Impact

There are approximately 126 Model A300, A310, and A300–600 series airplanes of U.S. registry that would be affected by this proposed AD.

The actions that are currently required by AD 97–22–06 take approximately 10 work hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Required parts would be provided by the manufacturer at no cost to the operators. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the currently required actions on U.S. operators is estimated to be $75,600, or $600 per airplane.

The modification that is proposed in this AD action would take approximately 9 work hours per airplane to accomplish, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately $1,972 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the modification proposed by this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $316,512, or $2,512 per airplane.

The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the current or 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 removing amendment 39–10177 (62 FR 55726, October 28, 1997), and by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD), to read as follows:

Airbus Industrie: Docket 98–NM–187–AD. Supersedes AD 97–22–06, Amendment 39–10177.

Applicability: Model A300, A310, and A300–600 series airplanes on which Airbus Modification 11527 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 (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 prevent corrosion of the ram air turbine (RAT) uplock pin/shaft and needle, which could result in failure of the RAT to deploy and consequent loss of emergency hydraulic power to the flight controls in the event that power is lost in both engines, accomplish the following:

Restatement of the Requirements of AD 97–22–06

(a) Within 30 months since the date of manufacture, or within 3 months after December 2, 1997 (the effective date of AD 97–22–06, amendment 39–10177), whichever occurs later: Accomplish the requirements of paragraphs (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this AD in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–29–0108, dated April 1, 1996 (for Model A300 series airplanes); A310–29–2076, dated April 1, 1996 (for Model A310 series airplanes); or A300–29–6037, dated April 1, 1996 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); as applicable. Thereafter, repeat these actions at intervals not to exceed 30 months.

(1) Perform a RAT extension test on the ground, in accordance with the procedures specified in the Maintenance Manual.

(2) Disassemble and remove the uplock mechanism of the RAT and perform a visual inspection of the uplock mechanism to detect corrosion, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

Note 2: For the purposes of this AD, the RAT uplock mechanism includes both the lever assembly and uplock unit.

(i) If no corrosion is detected: Prior to further flight, clean and lubricate the uplock mechanism and its associated parts, reinstall the assembly, and perform a retraction/extension/retraction of the RAT, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(ii) If any corrosion is detected in any part of the uplock mechanism, prior to further flight, accomplish either paragraph (a)(2)(ii)(A) or (a)(2)(ii)(B) of this AD in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(A) Replace the uplock mechanism with a new part and perform a retraction/extension/retraction of the RAT, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin. Or

(B) Clean and lubricate the uplock mechanism and its associated parts. Within 30 days following accomplishment of this cleaning and lubrication, replace the uplock mechanism with a new part and perform a retraction/extension/retraction of the RAT.

(b) Initial accomplishment of the actions required by paragraph (a) of this AD that have been performed in accordance with Airbus All Operator Telex 29–16, Revision 01, dated January 10, 1996, is considered acceptable for compliance with the initial RAT extension test and an initial visual inspection as required by paragraph (a) of this AD. However, the first repetitive inspection, as required by paragraph (a) of this AD, must be performed within 30 months after that RAT extension test and visual inspection were conducted, and repeated thereafter at intervals not to exceed 30 months.

New Requirements of this AD

(c) Within 30 months after the effective date of this AD, modify the RAT unlocking control unit in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300–29–0109 (for Model A300 series airplanes); A310–29–2077 (for Model A310 series airplanes); or A300–29–6038 (for Model A300–600 series airplanes); all dated January 27, 1997; as applicable. Accomplishment of this modification constitutes terminating action for the repetitive test and inspection requirements of this AD.

(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, 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, International Branch, ANM–116.

Note 3: 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 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 95–163–182(B)R3, dated May 7, 1997.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on August 7, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–21715 Filed 8–12–98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–NM–235–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; British Aerospace Model Avro 146–RJ85A and RJ100A 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 certain British Aerospace Model Avro 146–RJ85A and RJ100A series airplanes. This proposal would require a one-time inspection for evidence of machining (undercutting) into the web of the integral stringers of the bottom skin of the wings, and corrective actions, 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 prevent reduced wing strength and stiffness, and the onset of premature fatigue cracking, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by September 14, 1998.