Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96–NM–33–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 a one-time inspection of the autopilot actuators on the pitch and yaw controls to ensure correct rigging, and re-rigging, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by a report of sudden pitch up of an airplane during cruise following disengagement of the autopilot; this condition was the result of incorrect rigging of the autopilot pitch actuator. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent incorrect rigging of the autopilot actuators on the pitch and yaw controls, which could result in reduced controllability of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received by September 10, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96–NM–33–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–33–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–33–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, recently 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 a report indicating that uncommanded pitch up occurred when the autopilot was disengaged during a test flight of an Airbus Model A310 series airplane. Subsequently, the autopilot pitch actuator was replaced and the test flight was repeated. During this second test flight, a similar phenomenon occurred. Investigation revealed that the mechanical zero rigging of the autopilot pitch actuator could not be achieved when using a rigging pin having part number (P/N) OU131388. Use of this particular pin is called out in the Aircraft Maintenance Manual (AMM). Further investigation revealed that this pin is not long enough to go through the torque limiter lever and to internally rig the autopilot pitch actuator.

Furthermore, since the rigging pin used to rig the autopilot pitch actuator is similar to the rigging pin used to rig the yaw autopilot actuator, the same incorrect rigging could exist on the yaw autopilot actuator. Such incorrect rigging of the yaw autopilot actuator could cause yaw upset when the autopilot is disengaged.

Incorrect rigging of the autopilot actuators on the pitch and yaw controls could cause uncommanded pitch up or pitch down, or yaw upset of the airplane during disengagement of the autopilot. These conditions, if not corrected, could result in reduced controllability of the airplane.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued All Operators Telex (AOT) 27–20, dated December 19, 1994, which describes procedures for a one-time inspection of the rigging of the autopilot actuators on the pitch and yaw controls to ensure correct rigging, and re-rigging, if necessary, using a new, longer rigging pin. This new rigging pin is longer than the existing rigging pin and, consequently, will go through the torque limited lever and internally rig the autopilot actuators. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive (CN) 95–164–183(B), dated August 30, 1995, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

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 a one-time inspection of the rigging of the autopilot actuators on the pitch and yaw controls to ensure correct rigging, and, if necessary, re-rigging using a new, longer rigging pin. These actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the AOT described previously.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 86 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 work hour per airplane 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 $5,160, or $60 per airplane.

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 96–NM–33–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 (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 as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent uncommanded pitch up or down, or yaw upset of the airplane due to incorrect rigging of the autopilot actuators on the yaw and pitch controls, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 500 flight hours after the effective date of this AD, inspect the rigging of the autopilot actuators on both the pitch and the yaw controls to ensure that the rigging is correct, in accordance with Airbus All Operators Telex (AOT) 27–20, dated December 19, 1994. If the rigging is not correct, prior to further flight, re-rig in accordance with the AOT.

(b) As of the effective date of this AD, no person shall rig the autopilot actuator on the pitch or yaw control on any airplane using a rigging pin having part number (P/N) OU131388.

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, 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.

(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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 24, 1996.

S.R. Miller,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 96–19315 Filed 7–29–96; 8:45 am]

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14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96–NM–46–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300–600 and Model A310 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 Airbus Model A300–600 and Model A310 series airplanes. This proposal would require testing to verify if the smoke detection system can detect smoke within 60 seconds, and cleaning the installation and duct, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by a report that, during testing of the smoke detection system on in-service airplanes, the system failed to detect smoke within 60 seconds due to dust accumulation in the extraction ducts. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to ensure that dust accumulation does not reduce the