

beam assembly of the engine, in accordance with Part 1 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Pratt & Whitney Alert Service Bulletin PW7R4 A71-129, Revision 1, dated August 30, 1995, or Pratt & Whitney Service Bulletin PW4NAC A71-149, Revision 1, dated August 30, 1995; as applicable.

(1) If no crack is detected, no further action is required by this paragraph.

(2) If any crack is detected, prior to further flight, replace the cracked beam with a new beam or beam assembly, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(b) Within 4,000 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD, perform a fluorescent penetrant inspection to detect cracks in the aft mount beam assembly of the engine, in accordance with Part 2 of the Accomplishment Instructions of Pratt & Whitney Alert Service Bulletin PW7R4 A71-129, Revision 1, dated August 30, 1995, or Pratt & Whitney Service Bulletin PW4NAC A71-149, Revision 1, dated August 30, 1995; as applicable.

(1) If no crack is detected, prior to further flight, perform an eddy current inspection to detect cracks in the aft mount beam assembly of the engine, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(i) If no crack is detected, prior to further flight, reidentify the beam in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(ii) If any crack is detected, prior to further flight, replace the cracked beam with a new beam or beam assembly, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(2) If any crack is detected, prior to further flight, replace the cracked beam with a new beam or beam assembly, in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(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 March 26, 1997.

S.R. Miller,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 97-8251 Filed 3-31-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-215-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300, A300-600, and 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 all Airbus Model A300, A300-600, and A310 series airplanes. This proposal would require inspecting the bearings located in the mechanical control linkage of the nose landing gear (NLG) free-fall mechanism for discrepancies, replacing any discrepant bearings with stainless steel bearings, and conducting a test to ensure that the NLG free-fall mechanism extends properly. This proposal is prompted by a report indicating that, during an operational test of the NLG, the landing gear failed to extend. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent the bearings from seizing, which could lead to the loss of NLG free-fall extension capability.

DATES: Comments must be received by May 12, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96-NM-215-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-215-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-215-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, A300-600, and A310 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that one Model A300 operator reported that, during an operational test of free-fall extension of the nose landing gear (NLG), the free-fall handle could not be rotated and the NLG failed to extend.

Investigations revealed that after 17,000 flight cycles and 27,000 flight hours, four bearings of the NLG free-fall mechanism were severely corroded and had seized. The bearings are located in the mechanical control linkage of the NLG free-fall mechanism. Analysis disclosed that the corroded bearings were made of carbon steel instead of stainless steel, as specified in the type design.

Corrosion of the bearings could cause them to seize, which, if not corrected,

could lead to the loss of NLG free-fall extension capability.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued the following service bulletins, all dated April 29, 1996, which describe procedures for inspecting the four bearings located in the mechanical control linkage of the NLG free-fall mechanism for discrepancies, replacing carbon steel bearings with stainless steel bearings, and conducting a test to ensure that the NLG free-fall mechanism extends properly:

- Service Bulletin A300-32-0418, Revision 1.
- Service Bulletin A300-32-6061, Revision 1.
- Service Bulletin A310-32-2098, Revision 1.

Accomplishment of these procedures will preclude potential corrosion and seizure of the bearings, which could lead to the loss of NLG free-fall extension capability.

The DGAC classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive (C/N) 96-052-197(B), dated March 13, 1996, 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 require inspecting the four bearings located in the mechanical control linkage of the NLG free-fall mechanism for discrepancies, replacing discrepant bearings with stainless steel bearings, and conducting a test to ensure that the NLG free-fall mechanism extends properly. The actions would be required

to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletins described previously.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 127 Model A300, A300-600, and A310 series airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 14 work hours per airplane to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$552 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$176,784, or \$1,392 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 Industrie: Docket 96-NM-215-AD.

Applicability: All Model A300, A300-600, and A310 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 (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 the bearings in the mechanical control linkage of the nose landing gear (NLG) free-fall mechanism from seizing, which could lead to the loss of NLG free-fall extension capability, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, conduct an inspection to determine whether carbon steel or stainless steel bearings are installed in the mechanical control linkage of the NLG free-fall mechanism, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-32-0418 (for Model A300 series airplanes), A300-32-6061 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes), or A310-32-2098 (for Model A310 series airplanes), all Revision 1, all dated April 29, 1996.

(b) If stainless steel bearings are installed, prior to further flight, conduct a test to ensure that the NLG free-fall mechanism extends properly, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-32-0418 (for Model A300 series airplanes), A300-32-6061 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes), or A310-32-2098 (for Model A310 series airplanes), all Revision 1, all dated April 29, 1996.

(c) If carbon steel bearings are installed, prior to further flight, replace them with stainless steel bearings, and conduct a test to ensure that the NLG free-fall mechanism extends properly, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A300-32-0418 (for Model A300 series airplanes), A300-32-6061 (for Model A300-600 series airplanes), or A310-32-2098 (for Model A310 series airplanes), all Revision 1, all dated April 29, 1996.

(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, 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.

(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.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on March 26, 1997.

S. R. Miller,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 97-8253 Filed 3-31-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 91-CE-87-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; De Havilland DHC-6 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM); Reopening of the comment period.

SUMMARY: This document proposes to revise an earlier proposed airworthiness directive (AD), which would have superseded AD 80-13-11 R2. That AD currently requires repetitively inspecting the elevator, flap, aileron, and rudder control rods for cracks on certain de Havilland DHC-6 series airplanes, replacing any cracked rod, and installing rod sleeves. The previous document would have required replacing the elevator trim and elevator/flap interconnect rods, the aileron control rods, the elevator control rods, and the rudder control rods with parts of improved design, and repetitively inspecting these rods thereafter at certain intervals. These replacements would reduce the need for the number of repetitions of the inspections currently required by AD 80-13-11 R2. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has determined that the flap control rods should also be replaced with parts of improved design as terminating action for repetitive inspections currently required by AD 80-03-08. The proposed action would

supersede both AD 80-13-11 R2 and AD 80-03-08 and would require the replacements as terminating action to the repetitive inspections currently required. The proposed action is part of the FAA's policy on commuter class aircraft, which briefly states that, when a modification exists that could eliminate or reduce the number of required critical inspections, the modification should be incorporated. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent cracking of these control rods, which, if not detected and corrected, could result in loss of control of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before June 13, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 91-CE-87-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. Comments may be inspected at this location between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, holidays excepted.

Service information that applies to the proposed AD may be obtained from de Havilland, Inc., 123 Garratt Boulevard, Downsview, Ontario, Canada, M3K 1Y5. This information also may be examined at the Rules Docket at the address above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jon Hjelm, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, New York Aircraft Certification Office, 10 Fifth Street, 3rd Floor, Valley Stream, New York 11581; telephone (516) 256-7523; facsimile (516) 568-2716.

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 that summarizes 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. 91-CE-87-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of Supplemental NPRM

Any person may obtain a copy of this supplemental NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Central Region, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 91-CE-87-AD, Room 1558, 601 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Discussion

A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an AD that would apply to certain de Havilland DHC-6 series airplanes was published in the **Federal Register** as a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on October 12, 1993 (58 FR 52714). The NPRM proposed to supersede AD 80-13-11 R2 with a new AD that would (1) require replacing elevator trim and elevator/flap interconnect rods, and the flap, aileron, elevator, and rudder control rods with parts of improved design; and (2) retain the aileron control rod inspections currently required by AD 80-13-11 R2, but reduce the number of repetitions of these inspections. Accomplishment of the proposed replacement as specified in the NPRM would be in accordance with de Havilland Service Bulletin (SB) No. 6/502, dated March 24, 1989. Accomplishment of the proposed inspections as specified in the NPRM would be in accordance with de Havilland SB No. 6/390, Revision E, dated December 20, 1991.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this AD. No comments were received on the NPRM or on the FAA's determination of the cost on the public.

The FAA's Aging Commuter-Class Aircraft Policy

The actions specified in the NPRM are part of the FAA's aging commuter class aircraft policy, which briefly states that, when a modification exists that could eliminate or reduce the number of required critical inspections, the modification should be incorporated. This policy is based on the FAA's determination that reliance on critical repetitive inspections on aging commuter-class airplanes carries an unnecessary safety risk when a design