Issued in Washington, DC, on February 26, 1998.

Dan W. Reicher,

Assistant Secretary, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96–NM–103–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A320 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 Airbus Model A320 series airplanes. This proposal would require installation of a rubber strip, and replacement of connection sheets and the seal retainer on the avionics compartment access door with new parts; and installation of drip pans and additional drain gutters on the avionics racks. 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 the trickling of water into the avionics compartment, which could result in avionics computer and equipment malfunctions.

DATES: Comments must be received by April 3, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM–114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 96–NM–103–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 96–NM–103–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. 96–NM–103–AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055–4056.

Discussion

The Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Airbus Model A320 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that it has received several reports of reduced operation of the avionics compartment computers due to water spillage in the galley and the trickling of water into the electrical connectors located below the floor panels of the galley. This condition, if not corrected, could result in avionics computer and equipment malfunctions.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320–53–1070, Revision 6, dated July 18, 1995, which describes procedures for installation of a rubber strip, and replacement of connection sheets and the seal retainer on the avionics compartment access door with new parts.

In addition, Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A320–24–1054, Revision 2, dated September 22, 1993, which describes procedures for installation of drip pans and additional drain gutters on the avionics racks.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directives 96–011–075(B), dated January 3, 1996, and 96–040–076(B), dated February 14, 1996, 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 accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins described previously.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 118 airplanes of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD.

It would take approximately 3 work hours per airplane to accomplish the actions specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–53–1070, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately $1,273 per airplane.

Based on these figures, the cost impact of this action on U.S. operators is estimated to be $171,454, or $1,453 per airplane.

It would take approximately 41 work hours to accomplish the actions specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–24–1054, at an average labor rate of $60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately $4,340 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of this action on U.S. operators is estimated to be $802,400, or $6,800 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 Industrie: Docket 96–NM–103–AD.

Applicability: Model A320 series airplanes on which Airbus Modification 22119 or 21999 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 (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 the trickling of water into the avionics compartment, which could result in avionics computer and equipment malfunctions, accomplish the following:

(a) Except for airplanes on which the access door has been removed, sealed, or blocked in accordance with Airbus Service Information Letter 53–052, dated August 30, 1991; or in accordance with a method approved by the FAA: Within 18 months after the effective date of this AD, install a rubber strip, and replace the connection sheets and the seal retainer on the avionics compartment access door with new parts, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–53–1070, Revision 6, dated July 18, 1995.

(b) Within 3 years after the effective date of this AD, install drip pans and additional drain gutters on the avionics racks in accordance with Service Bulletin A320–24–1054, Revision 2, dated September 22, 1993.

(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, International Branch, ANM–116, 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 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 French airworthiness directives 96–011–075(B), dated January 3, 1996, and 96–040–076(B), dated February 14, 1996.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 25, 1998.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98–5480 Filed 3–3–98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97–CE–92–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Raytheon Aircraft Company 90, 100, 200, and 300 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) that would apply to Raytheon Aircraft Company (Raytheon) 90, 100, 200, and 300 series airplanes (formerly known as Beech Aircraft Corporation 90, 100, 200, and 300 series airplanes). The proposed action would require: checking the airplane maintenance records from January 1, 1994, up to and including the effective date of the proposed AD, for any MIL–H–6000B fuel hose replacements on the affected airplanes; inspecting any replaced rubber fuel hose for a spiral or diagonal external wrap with a red stripe the length of the hose with 94519 printed along the stripe; and, replacing any MIL–H–6000B rubber fuel hose matching this description with an FAA-approved hose having a criss-cross or braided external wrap. This proposed AD is the result of a report of a product defect by the manufacturer that could cause fuel system blockage and engine stoppage. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent fuel flow interruption, which if not corrected, could lead to uncommanded loss of engine power and loss of control of the airplane.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation