

Issued in Renton, Washington, on December 17, 1999.

D.L. Riggin,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-33289 Filed 12-27-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-NM-92-AD; Amendment 39-11481; AD 99-26-22]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A319 and A320 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A319 and A320 series airplanes, that requires repetitive inspections to detect cracking and delamination of the containers in which the off-wing emergency evacuation slides are stored, and corrective actions, if necessary. The AD also requires eventual modifications of the slides, which terminates the requirement for repetitive inspections. This amendment is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent the loss of the escape slides during flight, which could make the emergency exits located over each wing unusable and result in damage to the fuselage.

DATES: Effective February 1, 2000.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of February 1, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. This information may be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, Rules Docket, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

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: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to certain Airbus Model A319 and A320 series airplanes was published as a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) in the **Federal Register** on October 14, 1999 (64 FR 55642). That action proposed to require repetitive inspections to detect cracking and delamination of the containers in which the off-wing emergency evacuation slides are stored, and corrective actions, if necessary. That action also proposed to require eventual modifications of the slides, which would terminate the requirement for repetitive inspections.

Comments

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comments received.

Support for Terminating Modification

Two commenters agree with the proposal to mandate eventual modifications of the off-wing escape slides within 5 years in order to terminate the repetitive inspections.

Request To Allow Flight With Certain Discrepancies

Two commenters request that paragraph (b) of the proposed AD be revised to allow continued flight if discrepancies are detected that do not exceed the limits specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320-25-1161, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999. The commenters state that the intent of the Airbus service bulletin and the related Air Cruisers Service Bulletin 004-25-38 is to allow further flight until the next scheduled maintenance of the airplane, provided cracks (or delamination) in the enclosure and door do not exceed the limits specified.

The FAA partially concurs. The FAA acknowledges the manufacturer's conclusion that continued flight with cracking or delamination within the limits specified in the referenced service bulletins is acceptable for a period of time. The FAA has determined that discrepancies within the specified limits would not constitute a hazard to the airplane for a short period of time prior to repair. However, the FAA does not concur with the commenters' suggestion that such repair may be performed at the next scheduled

maintenance interval, since no definitive time is specified by which the repair must be accomplished. The FAA has determined that, following detection of discrepancies within specified limits, repair must be accomplished within 90 days, and has revised paragraph (b) of the final rule accordingly.

Conclusion

After careful review of the available data, including the comments noted above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule with the change described previously. The FAA has determined that this change will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 121 airplanes of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD.

It will take approximately 5 work hours per airplane to accomplish the required inspection, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the required inspection on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$36,300, or \$300 per airplane, per inspection cycle.

It will take approximately 6 work hours per airplane to accomplish the required modification, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts will cost approximately \$170 per airplane. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the required modification on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$64,130, or \$530 per airplane. The cost impact figures discussed above are based on assumptions that no operator has yet accomplished any of the 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 adopted herein will not have a substantial direct effect 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, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) 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 final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends 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:

99–26–22 **Airbus Industrie:** Amendment 39–11481. Docket 96–NM–92–AD.

Applicability: Model A319 and A320 series airplanes, certificated in any category; except airplanes on which Airbus Modifications 24850 and 25844 have been installed in production, or on which Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1156, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999, has been accomplished.

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 (e) 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 loss of the escape slides during flight, which could make the emergency exits located over each wing unusable and result in damage to the fuselage, accomplish the following:

Inspections and Corrective Actions

(a) At the latest of the times specified in paragraphs (a)(1), (a)(2), and (a)(3) of this AD, as applicable: Perform a detailed visual

inspection to detect cracking and delamination of each off-wing escape slide container, including the container door, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1161, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999. Repeat the inspection thereafter at intervals not to exceed 18 months, until accomplishment of the actions required by paragraph (d) of this AD.

(1) Within 500 flight hours after the effective date of this AD.

(2) Within 18 months after the last inspection in accordance with Airbus All Operator Telex 25–09, dated January 2, 1995, or Revision 1, dated February 16, 1995; or Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1161, dated June 21, 1995; if accomplished prior to the effective date of this AD.

(3) Within 18 months after modification of the off-wing escape slides in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1156, dated June 21, 1995; if accomplished prior to the effective date of this AD.

Note 2: For the purposes of this AD, a detailed visual inspection is defined as: “An intensive visual examination of a specific structural area, system, installation, or assembly to detect damage, failure, or irregularity. Available lighting is normally supplemented with a direct source of good lighting at intensity deemed appropriate by the inspector. Inspection aids such as mirror, magnifying lenses, etc., may be used. Surface cleaning and elaborate access procedures may be required.”

(b) If any crack or delamination is found during any inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD that does not exceed the limits specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1161, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999: Within 90 days after detection of the crack or delamination, repair in accordance with the service bulletin, and continue inspecting in accordance with paragraph (a) of this AD.

(c) If any crack or delamination is found during any inspection required by paragraph (a) of this AD that exceeds the limits specified in Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1161, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999: Prior to further flight, replace the discrepant container with a serviceable container in accordance with the service bulletin, and continue inspecting in accordance with paragraph (a) of this AD.

Terminating Modification

(d) Within 5 years after the effective date of this AD, modify the off-wing escape slides (i.e., modifications, inspection, repair, and repacking) in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1156, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999. Modification of the escape slides constitutes terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (a) of this AD.

Note 3: Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1156, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999, references Air Cruisers Service Bulletins 004–25–37, Revision 2, dated May 29, 1996, and 004–25–42, dated September 16, 1996, as additional sources of service information for accomplishment of the modification of the off-wing escape slides.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(e) 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 4: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the International Branch, ANM–116.

Special Flight Permits

(f) 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.

Incorporation by Reference

(g) The actions shall be done in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1161, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999, and Airbus Service Bulletin A320–25–1156, Revision 01, dated February 2, 1999. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Airbus Industrie, 1 Rond Point Maurice Bellonte, 31707 Blagnac Cedex, France. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

Note 5: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 1999–232–132(B), dated June 2, 1999.

(h) This amendment becomes effective on February 1, 2000.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on December 17, 1999.

D. L. Riggins,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99–33290 Filed 12–27–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

14 CFR Part 1203

[Notice 99–166]

RIN 2700–AC26

Information Security Program

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: NASA is amending the regulations on its Information Security