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Dated at Rockville, MD, this 26th day of April 1995.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Lawrence C. Shao,

Director, Division of Engineering Technology, Office of Nuclear Regulatory Research.

[FR Doc. 95-10725 Filed 5-3-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 95-NM-04-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A300 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 and A300-600 series airplanes. This proposal would require repetitive eddy current inspections to detect cracks at the aft spar web of the wings, and repair, if necessary. This proposal is prompted by reports indicating that cracks have been found in the rear spar web of the wings between ribs 1 and 2 of an in-service airplane and during testing on the fatigue test wing; the cracking occurred due to fatigue-related high shear stress. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent such fatigue-related cracking, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing.

DATES: Comments must be received by June 13, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-103, Attention: Rules Docket No. 95-NM-04-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: Stephen Slotte, Aerospace Engineer, Standardization Branch, ANM-113, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056; telephone (206) 227-2797; fax (206) 227-1320.

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 95-NM-04-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. 95-NM-04-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 and A300-600 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that cracks have been found in the rear spar web of the wings between ribs 1 and 2 of an in-service airplane and during testing of the fatigue test wing. In both cases, the

cracks spanned across the tip of the build slot and to the nearest adjacent fastener hole. Investigation revealed that such cracking was caused by fatigue-related high shear stress experienced during the landing cycle. Further investigation revealed that the earliest damage to an in-service airplane was found on a Model A300-B2 series airplane that had accumulated 21,500 flight cycles. The crack in the fatigue test wing was discovered at 50,000 simulated flight cycles, and, subsequently, was monitored for an additional 12,000 flight cycles with no evidence of continued crack growth from the hole. Such fatigue-related cracking, if not detected and corrected in a timely manner, could result in reduced structural integrity of the wing.

Airbus has issued Service Bulletin A300-57-0213, dated August 12, 1994, which is applicable to Model A300 series airplanes. This service bulletin describes procedures for repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections to detect cracks at the aft spar web of the wings, and repair, if necessary. The DGAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directive 94-207-168(B), dated September 14, 1994, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

Airbus also has issued Service Bulletin A300-57-6059, dated August 12, 1994, which is applicable to Model A300-600 series airplanes. This service bulletin describes procedures for repetitive high frequency eddy current (HFEC) inspections to detect cracks at the aft spar web of the wings, and repair, if necessary. The DGAC plans to make this service bulletin mandatory when the Model A300-600 series airplane fleet leader approaches the accumulation of 21,600 total flight cycles, which is the recommended time for accomplishment of the initial inspection.

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.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or