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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-316-AD; Amendment 39-11041; AD 99-04-16]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Model A330 and A340 Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Airbus Model A330 and A340 series airplanes. This action requires a one-time operational test to detect discrepancies of the delay valves and check valves of the main landing gear (MLG); and corrective actions, if necessary. This amendment also requires replacement of the retraction bracket assemblies of the MLG with new or reworked retraction bracket assemblies. This amendment is prompted by issuance of mandatory continuing airworthiness information by a foreign civil airworthiness authority. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent failure of the retraction bracket assemblies of the MLG, which could result in an undampened extension of the MLG, damage to the sidestay and attachment structure, and possible collapse of the MLG.

DATES: Effective March 8, 1999.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 8, 1999.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before March 22, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Transport Airplane Directorate, ANM-114, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-NM-316-AD, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington 98055-4056.

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 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.

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: 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 A330 and A340 series airplanes. The DGAC advises that, during the finishing process of the retraction brackets of the MLG, small particles of hot material may have been embedded into the surface of the retraction brackets, which may affect the fatigue life of a retraction bracket assembly. Subsequently, fretting was discovered on the surface of the bushing holes of the retraction brackets of the MLG, which also may affect the fatigue life of the retraction bracket assemblies. Failure of a retraction bracket assembly, if not corrected, could result in an undampened extension of the MLG, damage to the sidestay and attachment structure, and possible collapse of the MLG.

Explanation of Relevant Service Information

Airbus has issued Service Bulletins A330-32-3058, Revision 1 (for Model A330 series airplanes), and A340-32-4082, Revision 01 (for Model A340 series airplanes), both dated February 25, 1997. These service bulletins describe procedures for a one-time operational test to detect discrepancies of the delay valves and check valves of the main landing gear (MLG); and corrective actions, if necessary. The

corrective actions involve replacing any discrepant delay valve or check valve with a new delay valve or check valve. A discrepant delay valve or check valve could indicate that the retraction bracket assembly has operated at a higher stress level, thereby lowering the fatigue life of the retraction bracket.

Airbus also has issued Service Bulletins A330-32-3066 (for Model A330 series airplanes), and A340-32-4092 (for Model A340 series airplanes), both dated November 18, 1996. These service bulletins describe procedures for replacing the left and right retraction bracket assemblies of the MLG with new or reworked retraction bracket assemblies.

Accomplishment of the actions specified in the service bulletins described previously is intended to adequately address the identified unsafe condition. The DGAC classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued French airworthiness directives 97-007-042(B)R2 (for Model A330 series airplanes), and 97-008-058(B)R1 (for Model A340 series airplanes), both dated April 9, 1997, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in France.

Airbus Service Bulletins A330-32-3066 and A340-32-4092 reference Messier-Dowty Service Bulletins A33/34-32-62, Revision 1, dated October 16, 1996, and A33/34-32-80, Revision 1, dated October 17, 1996 (for both Model A330 and A340 series airplanes), as additional sources of service information for replacing the left and right retraction bracket assemblies of the MLG with new or reworked retraction bracket assemblies.

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 21.19) 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 the 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, this AD is being issued to prevent failure of the retraction bracket assemblies of the MLG, which could result in an undampened extension of the MLG; damage to the sidestay and attachment structure, and possible collapse of the MLG. This AD requires accomplishment of the actions specified in the Airbus service bulletins described previously.

Cost Impact

None of the airplanes affected by this action are on the U.S. Register. All airplanes included in the applicability of this rule currently are operated by non-U.S. operators under foreign registry; therefore, they are not directly affected by this AD action. However, the FAA considers that this rule is necessary to ensure that the unsafe condition is addressed in the event that any of these subject airplanes are imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future.

Should an affected airplane be imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future, it would require approximately 6 work hours to accomplish the required operational test, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the operational test required by this AD would be \$360 per airplane.

It would require approximately 4 to 8 work hours to accomplish the required replacement, at an average labor rate of \$60 per work hour. Required parts would be provided by the manufacturer at no cost to the operators. Based on these figures, the cost impact of the replacement required by this AD would range from \$240 to \$480 per airplane.

Determination of Rule's Effective Date

Since this AD action does not affect any airplane that is currently on the U.S. register, it has no adverse economic impact and imposes no additional burden on any person. Therefore, prior notice and public procedures hereon are unnecessary and the amendment may be made effective in less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule and was not preceded by notice and opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this 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 under the caption **ADDRESSES**. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket Number 97-NM-316-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations adopted herein will 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 final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

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:

99-04-16 Airbus Industrie: Amendment 39-11041. Docket 97-NM-316-AD.

Applicability: Model A330 and A340 series airplanes having retraction bracket part numbers as listed in paragraph 1.A. ("Effectivity") of Airbus Service Bulletin A330-32-3058, Revision 1 (for Model A330 series airplanes), or A340-32-4082, Revision 01 (for Model A340 series airplanes), both dated February 25, 1997; except those airplanes on which Airbus Service Bulletin A330-32-3066 (for Model A330 series airplanes) or A340-32-4092 (for Model A340 series airplanes), both dated November 18, 1996, has 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 (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 failure of the retraction bracket assemblies of the main landing gear (MLG), which could result in an undampened extension of the MLG, damage to the sidestay and attachment structure, and possible collapse of the MLG, accomplish the following:

(a) Prior to the accumulation of 2,400 total landings, or within 200 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, perform a one-time operational test to detect discrepancies of the left and right delay valves and check valves of the MLG, in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin

A330-32-3058, Revision 1 (for Model A330 series airplanes), or A340-32-4082, Revision 01 (for Model A340 series airplanes), both dated February 25, 1997. If any discrepancy is detected, prior to further flight, replace any discrepant delay valve or check valve with a new delay valve or check valve in accordance with the applicable service bulletin.

(b) Replace the left and right retraction bracket assemblies of the MLG with new or reworked retraction bracket assemblies in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A330-32-3066 (for Model A330 series airplanes), or A340-32-4092 (for Model A340 series airplanes), both dated November 18, 1996, at the time specified in paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2), of this AD, as applicable.

(1) If no discrepancy is detected during the operational test required by paragraph (a) of this AD: Accomplish the replacement prior to the accumulation of 4,300 total landings, or within 200 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

(2) If any discrepancy is detected during the operational test required by paragraph (a) of this AD: Accomplish the replacement prior to the accumulation of 3,250 total landings, or within 200 landings after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later.

Note 2: Airbus Service Bulletins A330-32-3066 and A340-32-4092 reference Messier-Dowty Service Bulletins A33/34-32-62, Revision 1, dated October 16, 1996, and A33/34-32-80, Revision 1, dated October 17, 1996 (for both Model A330 and A340 series airplanes), as additional sources of service information for replacing the left and right retraction bracket assemblies of the MLG with new or reworked retraction bracket assemblies.

(c) As of the effective date of this AD, no person shall install on any airplane a retraction bracket assembly having part number (P/N) 201428224, 201428225, 201428226, 201428227, 201428251, 201428252, 201428253, 201428254, 201478207, 201478208, 201478210, 201478211, 201478217, 201478218, 201478220, or 201478221.

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

(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.

(f) The actions shall be done in accordance with Airbus Service Bulletin A330-32-3066, dated November 18, 1996; Airbus Service Bulletin A340-32-4092, dated November 18,

1996; Airbus Service Bulletin A330-32-3058, Revision 1, dated February 25, 1997; or Airbus Service Bulletin A340-32-4082, Revision 01, dated February 25, 1997, which contains the following list of effective pages:

Page number shown on page	Revision level shown on page	Date shown on page
1-5	01	Feb. 25, 1997.
6-10	Original	Nov. 18, 1996.

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 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directives 97-007-042(B)R2 and 97-008-058(B)R1, both dated April 9, 1997.

(g) This amendment becomes effective on March 8, 1999.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on February 9, 1999.

John J. Hickey,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-3732 Filed 2-18-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-NM-236-AD; Amendment 39-11042; AD 99-04-17]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Saab Model SAAB SF340A and SAAB 340B Series Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to certain Saab Model SAAB SF340A and SAAB 340B series airplanes, that requires inspections to detect discrepancies of the support straps of the flaps and adjacent areas, and corrective action, if necessary. This amendment also requires replacement of the support straps with new straps made of steel. 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 fatigue cracking of the support straps of the flaps, which could result in further damage to the flap structure, and consequently lead to reduced controllability of the airplane.

DATES: Effective March 26, 1999.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 26, 1999.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Saab Aircraft AB, SAAB Aircraft Product Support, S-581.88, Linköping, Sweden. 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, 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 Saab Model SAAB SF340A and SAAB 340B series airplanes was published in the **Federal Register** on November 7, 1997 (62 FR 60191). That action proposed to require inspections to detect discrepancies of the support straps of the flaps and adjacent areas; corrective action, if necessary; and replacement of the support straps with new straps made of steel.

Actions Since Issuance of Proposal

Since the issuance of the proposal, Saab issued Service Bulletin 340-57-033, Revision 02, dated January 29, 1998. The inspection and modification procedures described in Revision 02 are substantially equivalent to those described in Revision 01 (which was cited in the proposal as the appropriate source of service information for accomplishment of the actions). The only change effected by Revision 02 is to clarify certain procedures. The final rule has been revised to require accomplishment of the actions in accordance with either Revision 01 or Revision 02 of the service bulletin.