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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2010-0042; Directorate Identifier 2009-NM-010-AD; Amendment 39-16664; AD 2011-09-02]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Saab AB, Saab Aerosystems Model 340A (SAAB/SF340A) and SAAB 340B Airplanes Modified in Accordance With Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) ST00224WI-D, ST00146WI-D, or SA984GL-D

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for the products listed above. This AD requires inspecting the fuselage surface for corrosion and cracking behind the external adapter plate of the antennae installation, and repair if necessary. This AD was prompted by a report of a crack found behind the external adapter plate of the antennae during inspection. Similar cracking was found on two additional airplanes, and extensive corrosion was found on one airplane. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct corrosion and cracking behind the external adapter plate of the antennae of certain damage-tolerant structure, which could result in reduced structural integrity and consequent rapid depressurization of the airplane.

DATES: This AD is effective May 25, 2011.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov>; or in person at the Docket Management Facility between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The address for the Docket Office (phone: 800-647-5527) is Document Management Facility, U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: William Griffith, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ACE-118W, FAA, Wichita Aircraft Certification Office, 1801 Airport Road, Room 100, Mid-Continent Airport, Wichita, Kansas 67209; telephone (316) 946-4116; fax (316) 946-4107.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

We issued a supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking (SNPRM) (the "second supplemental NPRM") to amend 14 CFR part 39 to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that would apply to the specified products. That second SNPRM was published in the Federal Register on January 20, 2011 (76 FR 3564). That second SNPRM proposed to require inspecting the fuselage surface for corrosion and cracking behind the external adapter plate of the antennae installation, and repair if necessary.

Comments

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD. We received no comments on the NPRM or on the determination of the cost to the public.

Explanation of Change to Applicability

We have revised the applicability of the supplemental NPRM to identify model designations as published in the most recent type certificate data sheet for the affected models.

Conclusion

We reviewed the relevant data and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting the AD with the change described previously. We also determined that this change will not increase the economic burden on any operator or increase the scope of the AD.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects 201 airplanes of U.S. registry. The inspection will take about 4 work-hours per airplane, at an average labor rate of \$85 per work hour. Based on these figures, the estimated cost of the AD for U.S. operators is \$68,340, or \$340 per airplane.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in subtitle VII, part A, subpart III, section 44701: "General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

This AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD 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.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this AD:

(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),

(3) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and

(4) 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.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 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. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):



2011-09-02 Saab AB, Saab Aerosystems: Amendment 39-16664; Docket No. FAA-2010-0042; Directorate Identifier 2009-NM-010-AD.

Effective Date

(a) This AD is effective May 25, 2011.

Affected ADs

(b) None.

Applicability

(c) This AD applies to Saab AB, Saab Aerosystems airplanes, certificated in any category, identified in paragraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this AD, that have been modified in accordance with Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) ST00224WI-D, ST00146WI-D, or SA984GL-D.

- (1) Model 340A (SAAB/SF340A) airplanes, serial numbers 004 through 159 inclusive.
- (2) Model SAAB 340B airplanes, serial numbers 160 through 459 inclusive.

Subject

(d) Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC)/Air Transport Association (ATA) of America Code 53: Fuselage.

Unsafe Condition

(e) This AD was prompted by a report of a crack found behind the external adapter plate of the antennae during inspection. Similar cracking was found on two additional airplanes, and extensive corrosion was found on one airplane. We are issuing this AD to detect and correct corrosion and cracking behind the external adapter plate of the antennae of certain damage-tolerant structure, which could result in reduced structural integrity and consequent rapid depressurization of the airplane.

Compliance

(f) You are responsible for having the actions required by this AD performed within the compliance times specified.

Inspection/Corrective Actions

(g) Within 600 flight cycles after the effective date of this AD: Remove the external adapter plate of the antennae installation and do a general visual inspection of the fuselage surface for corrosion and cracking behind the external adapter plate of the antennae installation. If any corrosion or cracking is found, repair before further flight. If no corrosion or cracking is found, before further flight, ensure that proper corrosion protection has been applied before reinstalling the adapter plate.

Do all the actions required by this paragraph in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, Wichita Aircraft Certification Office (ACO), FAA.

Note 1: For the purposes of this AD, a general visual inspection is: "A visual examination of an interior or exterior area, installation, or assembly to detect obvious damage, failure, or irregularity. This level of inspection is made from within touching distance unless otherwise specified. A mirror may be necessary to ensure visual access to all surfaces in the inspection area. This level of inspection is made under normally available lighting conditions such as daylight, hangar lighting, flashlight, or droplight and may require removal or opening of access panels or doors. Stands, ladders, or platforms may be required to gain proximity to the area being checked."

Reporting Requirement

(h) At the applicable time specified in paragraph (h)(1) or (h)(2) of this AD: Submit a report of the positive findings of the inspections required by paragraph (g) of this AD. Send the report to the Manager, Wichita ACO. The report must contain, at a minimum, the inspection results, a description of any discrepancies found, the airplane serial number, and the number of flight cycles and flight hours on the airplane since installation of the STC.

(1) If the inspection was done on or after the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 30 days after the inspection.

(2) If the inspection was done before the effective date of this AD: Submit the report within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

(3) A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a current valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2120-0056. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to be approximately 5 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory. Comments concerning the accuracy of this burden and suggestions for reducing the burden should be directed to the FAA at: 800 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20591, Attn: Information Collection Clearance Officer, AES-200.

Special Flight Permit

(i) Special flight permits, as described in Section 21.197 and Section 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199), may be issued to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished, but concurrence by the Manager, Wichita ACO, FAA, is required prior to issuance of the special flight permit.

Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(j)(1) The Manager, Wichita ACO, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the ACO, send it to the attention of the person identified in the Related Information section of this AD.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

Related Information

(k) For more information about this AD, contact William Griffith, Aerospace Engineer, Airframe Branch, ACE-118W, FAA, Wichita ACO, 1801 Airport Road, Room 100, Mid-Continent Airport, Wichita, Kansas 67209; telephone (316) 946-4116; fax (316) 946-4107.

Material Incorporated by Reference

(l) None.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on April 8, 2011.
Ali Bahrami,
Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.