Airworthiness Directive

AD No.: 2019-0297

Issued: 09 December 2019

Note: This Airworthiness Directive (AD) is issued by EASA, acting in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1139 on behalf of the European Union, its Member States and of the European third countries that participate in the activities of EASA under Article 129 of that Regulation.

This AD is issued in accordance with Regulation (EU) 748/2012, Part 21.A.3B. In accordance with Regulation (EU) 1321/2014 Annex I, Part M.A.301, the continuing airworthiness of an aircraft shall be ensured by accomplishing any applicable ADs. Consequently, no person may operate an aircraft to which an AD applies, except in accordance with the requirements of that AD, unless otherwise specified by the Agency [Regulation (EU) 1321/2014 Annex I, Part M.A.303] or agreed with the Authority of the State of Registry [Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, Article 71 exemption].

Design Approval Holder's Name:
AIRBUS

Type/Model designation(s):
A340 aeroplanes

Effective Date: 23 December 2019

TCDS Number(s): EASA.A.015

Foreign AD: Not applicable

Supersedure: This AD supersedes EASA AD 2019-0114 dated 24 May 2019.

ATA 57 – Wings – Lower Skin Covers at Rib Bays – Inspection

Manufacturer(s):
Airbus, formerly Airbus Industrie

Applicability:
Airbus A340-541, A340-542, A340-642 and A340-643 aeroplanes, all manufacturer serial numbers (MSN) with weight variants and configurations as specified in the AOT, as defined in this AD, except those on which the instructions of Airbus AOT A57L014-19 at original issue were accomplished, including corrective action(s), as applicable and except MSN 604, 672 and 744.

Definitions:
For the purpose of this AD, the following definitions apply:

The AOT: Airbus All Operators Telex (AOT) A57L014-19 Revision 01.

Affected areas: Rib Bays 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 10-11 at stringer (STR) 20 and STR21 on left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) wings.

Airbus date of manufacture: The date of transfer of title (ownership) of the aeroplane upon delivery by Airbus to the first operator.

Reason:

Cracks have been reported on A340-600 aeroplanes on the wing lower cover in rib bay 3-4 at STR20A and STR21A, both LH and RH sides. In some cases, the cracks resulted in fuel leaks. All affected aeroplanes are in post-mod 48487 configuration.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could reduce the residual strength of the structure of the wing.

To initially address this potential unsafe condition, Airbus issued AOT A57L014-19 at original issue to provide inspection instructions. Consequently, EASA published AD 2019-0114 to require a one-time detailed visual inspection (DVI) and High Frequency Eddy Current (HFEC) inspection of the lower wing skin panels around fastener heads located on STR20A and STR21A, between Rib 3 and Rib 4 on LH and RH wing.

Since that AD issued, it was determined that the inspection is needed also for rib bays 5-6, 7-8 and 10-11 for both wings and Airbus developed a new inspection method (ultrasonic (US) inspection instead of HFEC). Consequently, Airbus published the AOT, as defined in this AD, expanding the area to be inspected. However, it was decided that only aeroplanes pre-AOT A57L014-19 at original issue must be inspected by the AOT, as defined in this AD. All other aeroplanes will be subject to the same inspection as part of a Service Bulletin currently being developed by Airbus.

For the reasons described above, this AD supersedes EASA AD 2019-0114, extending the area to be inspected, retaining the requirement for a one-time DVI and requires an ultrasonic (US) inspection of the lower wing skin panels around all fastener heads specified in the AOT, as defined in this AD.

This AD is considered an interim action and further AD action may follow.

Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s):

Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously:

Inspection:

(1) Within the compliance times specified in Table 1 of this AD, accomplish a DVI of the external surface of the wing lower skin covers at all fastener hole locations (see Figures 5 and 6 of the AOT, as defined in this AD) at the affected areas, and a US inspection of specific fastener hole locations (see Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the AOT, as defined in this AD) at the affected areas, in accordance with the instructions of the AOT, as defined in this AD.

Table 1 – Affected Areas DVI and US inspection

Compliance Time (whichever occurs later, **A** or **B**)	
A	Before exceeding 3 200 flight cycles or 19 600 flight hours, whichever occurs first since Airbus date of manufacture
B	Within 12 months after 07 June 2019 [the effective date of EASA AD 2019-0114]

Corrective Action:

(2) If, during any inspection as required by paragraph (1) of this AD, any crack is detected, before next flight, depending on findings, accomplish the applicable corrective action(s), or contact Airbus for approved instructions and accomplish those instructions accordingly, in accordance with the instructions of the AOT, as defined in this AD.

Reporting:

(3) Within 30 days after the inspection as required by paragraph (1) of this AD, report the inspection results to Airbus when the results are no findings, or when a repair as specified in the AOT, as defined in this AD, is accomplished.

Ref. Publications:

Airbus AOT A57L014-19 original issue dated 07 May 2019 and Revision 01 dated 29 November 2019.

The use of later approved revisions of the above-mentioned document is acceptable for compliance with the requirements of this AD.

Remarks:

1. If requested and appropriately substantiated, EASA can approve Alternative Methods of Compliance for this AD.

2. Based on the required actions and the compliance time, EASA have decided to issue a Final AD with Request for Comments, postponing the public consultation process until after publication.

3. Enquiries regarding this AD should be referred to the EASA Programming and Continued Airworthiness Information Section, Certification Directorate. E-mail: ADs@easa.europa.eu.

4. Information about any failures, malfunctions, defects or other occurrences, which may be similar to the unsafe condition addressed by this AD, and which may occur, or have occurred on a product, part or appliance not affected by this AD, can be reported to the EU aviation safety reporting system.

5. For any question concerning the technical content of the requirements in this AD, please contact: AIRBUS – EIAL (Airworthiness Office), E-mail: airworthiness.A330-A340@airbus.com.