



## Airworthiness Directive

**AD No.:** 2020-0280

**Issued:** 14 December 2020

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):

A318, A319 and A320 aeroplanes

**Effective Date:** 28 December 2020

**TCDS Number(s):** EASA.A.064

**Foreign AD:** Not applicable

**Supersedure:** This AD supersedes EASA AD 2014-0278 dated 19 December 2014.

## ATA 53 – Fuselage – Skin Above Lap Joint – Inspection

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### Manufacturer(s):

Airbus, formerly Airbus Industrie

### Applicability:

Airbus A318-111, A318-112, A318-122, A319-111, A319-112, A319-113, A319-114, A319-115, A319-131, A319-132, A319-133, A320-211, A320-212, A320-214, A320-231, A320-232, and A320-233 aeroplanes, manufacturer serial numbers (MSN) 0029 to 1011 inclusive, 1016 to 1709 inclusive, 1714, 2035, 2059, 2071, 2081, 2089, 2100, 2109, 2124, 2262, 2694, 2723 to 2725 inclusive, 2727 to 2729 inclusive, 2731 to 2735 inclusive, 2737 to 2740 inclusive, and 2742 to 2750 inclusive.

### Definitions:

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

**The AOT:** Airbus Alert Operators Transmission (AOT) A53N009-14.

**The SB:** Airbus Service Bulletin (SB) A320-53-1472.

**Inspection area:** Pocket radii located between fuselage frame (FR) 35 and FR47, above lap joint stringer (STGR) 6 on both left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) sides.



**AOT-SDI:** Special Detailed Inspection (SDI) accomplished in accordance with the instructions of the AOT at original issue or Revision (Rev.) 01, as applicable.

**SB-SDI:** SDI accomplished in accordance with the instructions of the SB at original issue or Rev. 01.

**SB- GVI:** General Visual Inspection (GVI) accomplished in accordance with the instructions of the SB at original issue or Rev. 01.

**MRB-GVI:** GVI accomplished in accordance with the instructions of maintenance review board (MRB) task reference 533133-01-5, 533133-01-7 or 533133-01-8, as applicable, accomplished before the effective date of this AD.

#### Groups:

- Group 1 aeroplanes are MSN 0977, 1007, 1009, 1011, 1026 and 1030.
- Group 2 aeroplanes are those which are not Group 1 and on which MRB-GVI was accomplished during the 12 months before the effective date of this AD.
- Group 3 aeroplanes are those which are not Group 1 and on which MRB-GVI was **not** accomplished during the 12 months before the effective date of this AD.

Note: Under the conditions and limitations as defined in the “Alternative Inspection(s)” paragraphs (6), (7) and (8) of this AD, there is the possibility that SB-SDI required by this AD are replaced by SB-GVI, and SB-GVI are replaced by SB-SDI.

#### Reason:

In 2014, a 170 mm crack was found on an A320 aeroplane, located between FR36 and FR37, just above the STGR 6 lap joint, LH side. The crack had propagated along the pocket radius. Prior to this finding, the operator had reported noise in the affected area during several weeks.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to in-flight depressurization of the aeroplane, possibly resulting in injury to occupants.

To address this unsafe condition, Airbus published the AOT (original issue) to provide inspection and repair instructions, to detect and prevent crack propagation. Consequently, EASA issued AD 2014-0278, which applied to a selected range of aeroplanes for sampling purposes.

Since that AD was issued, it was determined that cracks can initiate and develop between FR35 and FR47, and Revision 01 (Rev. 01) of the AOT was published to extend the inspection area accordingly. Further investigation also identified that more aeroplanes are affected than initially determined. Consequently, Airbus issued the SB (later revised) to include all affected aeroplanes and to update inspection instructions.

For the reasons described above, this AD retains the requirements of EASA AD 2014-0278, which is superseded, expands the Applicability and the area to be inspected, and requires new inspection intervals and amended instructions for GVI and/or SDI.



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

Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously:

From the effective date of this AD, SB-SDI and SB-GVI as required by paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4) or (5) of this AD, or any alternative inspection as specified in paragraph (6), (7) or (8) of this AD, must be accomplished in accordance with the instructions of the SB at Rev. 01.

**Group 1 - SDI:**

- (1) For Group 1 aeroplanes: Within the compliance time as defined in Table 1 of this AD, and, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 2 500 flight cycles (FC), accomplish an SB-SDI of the inspection area, unless alternative SB-GVI are accomplished as specified in paragraph (6) of this AD.

Table 1 – SDI Threshold

Compliance Time (whichever occurs later, A or B)	
<b>A</b>	Within 2 500 FC after the last AOT-SDI
<b>B</b>	Within 1 300 FC after the last SB-GVI, but without exceeding 5 200 FC since the last AOT-SDI

**Group 2 - GVI and SDI:**

- (2) For Group 2 aeroplanes: Within the compliance time as defined in Table 2 of this AD, accomplish an SB-GVI of the inspection area, unless an alternative SB-SDI is accomplished as specified in paragraph (8) of this AD.

Table 2 – GVI Threshold

Compliance Time (whichever occurs later, A or B)	
<b>A</b>	Within 2 months after the effective date of this AD
<b>B</b>	Within 12 months after the last MRB-GVI

- (3) For Group 2 aeroplanes: Within 12 months after the SB-GVI as required by paragraph (2) of this AD, or within 2 500 FC after the SB-SDI as specified in paragraph (8) of this AD, as applicable, and, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 2 500 FC, accomplish an SB-SDI of the inspection area, unless alternative SB-GVI are accomplished as specified in paragraph (7) of this AD.

**Group 3 - GVI and SDI:**

- (4) For Group 3 aeroplanes: Before accumulating 15 000 FC since aeroplane first flight, or within 2 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs later, accomplish an SB-GVI of the inspection area, unless an alternative SB-SDI is accomplished as specified in paragraph (8) of this AD.



- (5) For Group 3 aeroplanes: Within 12 months after the SB-GVI as required by paragraph (4) of this AD, or within 2 500 FC after the SB-SDI as specified in paragraph (8) of this AD, as applicable, and, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 2 500 FC, accomplish an SB-SDI of the inspection area, unless alternative SB-GVI are accomplished as specified in paragraph (7) of this AD.

#### Alternative Inspection(s):

- (6) For Group 1 aeroplanes: In lieu of the SB-SDI as required by paragraph (1) of this AD, SB-GVI may be accomplished of the inspection area of an aeroplane within 1 300 FC after the last SB-GVI, or within 2 500 FC after the last AOT-SDI or SB-SDI, as applicable, and, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 1 300 FC, provided the next SB-SDI is accomplished before exceeding 5 200 FC since the last AOT-SDI or SB-SDI accomplished on the inspection area of that aeroplane.
- (7) For Group 2 and 3 aeroplanes: In lieu of the SB-SDI as required by paragraph (3) or (5) of this AD, as applicable, SB-GVI may be accomplished of the inspection area of an aeroplane within 1 300 FC after the last SB-GVI, or within 2 500 FC after the last SB-SDI, as applicable, and, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 1 300 FC, provided that the maximum compliance time for SB-SDI, as defined in Table 3 of this AD, is not exceeded.

Table 3 – SB-SDI Threshold

Aeroplane Condition	Compliance Time
No SB-SDI previously accomplished of the inspection area	Before exceeding 5 200 FC since the first SB-GVI as required by paragraph (2) or (4) of this AD, as applicable, or within 36 months after the effective date of this AD, whichever occurs first
SB-SDI previously accomplished of the inspection area	Before exceeding 5 200 FC since the last SB-SDI accomplished on the affected area of that aeroplane

- (8) For Group 2 and 3 aeroplanes: In lieu of the SB-GVI as required by paragraph (2) or (4) of this AD respectively, an SB-SDI may be accomplished of the inspection area of an aeroplane within the compliance time as specified in paragraph (2) or (4) of this AD, as applicable.

#### Corrective Action(s):

- (9) If, during any inspection as required by paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4) or (5) of this AD, or any alternative inspection as specified in paragraph (6), (7) or (8) of this AD, any crack is found, before next flight, contact Airbus for approved repair instructions and accomplish those instructions accordingly.

#### Credit:

- (10) For an aeroplane that has been repaired before the effective date of this AD, following inspection as per the AOT or the SB at original issue, in accordance with the instructions of an Airbus Repair Design Approval Sheet (RDAS), accomplish the next inspection of each repaired area in accordance with the instructions of, and within the compliance time as specified in, the applicable RDAS.



**Terminating Action:**

(11) None, unless specified otherwise in the Airbus RDAS instructions for a repaired aeroplane.

**Ref. Publications:**

Airbus AOT A53N009-14 original issue dated 17 December 2014, or Revision 01 dated 04 August 2016.

Airbus SB A320-53-1472 original issue dated 17 December 2019, or Revision 01 dated 17 July 2020.

The use of later approved revisions of the above-mentioned documents 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. This AD was posted on 29 July 2020 as PAD 20-115 for consultation until 26 August 2020. The Comment Response Document can be found in the [EASA Safety Publications Tool](#), in the compressed (zipped) file attached to the record for this AD.
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](mailto: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](#). This may include reporting on the same or similar components, other than those covered by the design to which this AD applies, if the same unsafe condition can exist or may develop on an aircraft with those components installed. Such components may be installed under an FAA Parts Manufacturer Approval (PMA), Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) or other modification.
5. For any question concerning the technical content of the requirements in this AD, please contact: AIRBUS – Airworthiness Office – IIAS; E-mail: [account.airworth-eas@airbus.com](mailto:account.airworth-eas@airbus.com).

