Airworthiness Directive

AD No.: 2022-0011

Issued: 21 January 2022

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):

A350 aeroplanes

Effective Date: 04 February 2022

TCDS Number(s): EASA.A.151

Foreign AD: Not applicable

Supersedure: This AD supersedes EASA AD 2020-0220 dated 13 October 2020.

ATA 57 – Wings – Upper / Lower Wing Skin Cover Edge Glow Sealant – Inspection / Modification

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Manufacturer(s):

Airbus

Applicability:

Airbus A350-941 and A350-1041 aeroplanes, manufacturer serial numbers (MSN) as listed in the inspection SB and/or the modification SB, both as defined in this AD.

Definitions:

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

Affected areas: Stringer edges on left-hand (LH) and right-hand (RH) wings.

The inspection SB: Airbus Service Bulletin (SB) A350-57-P067.

The modification SB: Airbus SB A350-57-P070.

Groups: Group 1 aeroplanes are those with MSN listed in the inspection SB. Group 2 aeroplanes are those with MSN listed in the modification SB, except aeroplanes on which Airbus modification 116294 was embodied in production.

Note 1: Depending on aeroplane configuration, an aeroplane may be both Group 1 and Group 2.

Airbus date of manufacture: The date of transfer of title (ownership) of the aeroplane upon delivery by Airbus to the first operator, which is referenced in Airbus documentation.

Reason:

Occurrences have been reported on the A350 production line of missing or incorrect application of the lightning strike edge glow sealant protection at specific locations in the wing tanks. This sealant provides the second layer of protection to prevent stringer edge glow in case of lightning strike.

This condition, if not detected and corrected, combined with a pre-existing undetected incorrect installation of an adjacent fastener, could create an ignition source for the fuel vapour inside the tanks, which, in case of a lightning strike of high intensity in the immediate area, could possibly result in ignition of the fuel-air mixture in the affected fuel tank and consequent loss of the aeroplane.

To address this potential unsafe condition, Airbus issued the inspection SB to provide inspection instructions.

Consequently, EASA issued AD 2020-0220 to require a one-time detailed inspection (DET) of the affected areas and, depending on findings, accomplishment of applicable corrective action(s).

Since that AD was issued, Airbus published the modification SB, for certain A350-941 aeroplanes, to restore two independent layers of lightning strike protection on the wing upper cover.

For the reason described above, this AD retains the requirements of EASA AD 2020-0220, which is superseded, and requires accomplishment of the modification SB to correct the missing sealant to restore two independent layers of lightning strike protection.

Additionally, the compliance time to accomplish the inspection SB was extended by 6 months.

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

Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously:

Inspection:

(1) For Group 1 aeroplanes: At the next scheduled maintenance tank entry, or before exceeding 78 months since Airbus date of manufacture, whichever occurs first after 27 October 2020 [the effective date of EASA AD 2020-0220], accomplish a DET of each affected area in accordance with the instructions of the inspection SB.

Corrective Action(s):

(2) If, during the inspection as required by paragraph (1) of this AD, discrepancies are detected, as defined in the inspection SB, before next flight, accomplish the applicable corrective action(s) in accordance with the instructions of the inspection SB.

Modification:

(3) For Group 2 aeroplanes: At the next scheduled maintenance tank entry, or before exceeding 78 months since Airbus date of manufacture, whichever occurs first after the effective date of this AD, apply sealant to the upper rib feet in the LH and RH wings in accordance with the instructions of the modification SB.

Ref. Publications:

Airbus SB A350-57-P067 original issue dated 17 September 2020.

Airbus SB A350-57-P070 original issue dated 28 July 2021.

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 28 October 2021 as PAD 21-160 for consultation until 11 November 2021. 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 Safety 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. 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 A350 XWB, E-mail: continued-airworthiness.a350@airbus.com.