

Safety agency calls for A380 wing checks

The European Aviation Safety Agency is calling on airlines to inspect their A380 jets after Airbus found hairline cracks in the metal brackets inside the wings of two superjumbos owned by Emirates Airlines

Airbus A380

68 currently in service

Passenger capacity up to 850

Aluminium skin

Wing ribs: Cracks found in limited number of “non-critical” brackets which connect structural ribs to wing’s aluminium skin

Front spar

Main spar

Rear spar

Detail of typical wing rib

Rib feet

Each wing has around 2,000 L-shaped brackets (30-40 per rib, with 60 ribs per wing)

Cracks: Less than 1cm long, extending from bolt hole in bracket

Bracket height 23cm

First cracks: Found late last year on wing of **Qantas Airways** A380 that was being refurbished following mid-air engine explosion in 2010. Similar flaws found in early January in five A380s, flown by Qantas and **Singapore Airlines**