

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-SW-35-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model AS332C, L, and L1 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Supplemental notice of proposed rulemaking; reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: This document revises an earlier proposed airworthiness directive (AD) for Eurocopter France Model AS332C, L, and L1 helicopters. That proposed AD would have required inspecting the horizontal stabilizer spar tube (spar tube) for corrosion, hardness, cracks, and scratches, and if necessary, replacing any unairworthy spar tube and bushing with an airworthy spar tube and bushing. That proposal was prompted by the loss of a horizontal stabilizer in flight due to a spar tube failure. This action revises the proposed AD by correcting the model number given in the applicability section. The actions specified by this proposed AD are intended to prevent failure of the spar tube, separation of the horizontal stabilizer and impact with the main or tail rotor, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before September 12, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-SW-35-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. You may also send comments electronically to the Rules Docket at the following address: 9-asw-adcomments@faa.gov. Comments may be inspected at the Office of the Regional Counsel between 9:00 a.m. and

3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed AD may be obtained from American Eurocopter Corporation, 2701 Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, Texas 75053-4005, telephone (972) 641-3460, fax (972) 641-3527. This information may be examined at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jim Grigg, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Regulations Group, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0111, telephone (817) 222-5490, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed AD by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed AD. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed AD. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their mailed comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 99-SW-35-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) by submitting a

request to the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-SW-35-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

Discussion

A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to add an AD for Eurocopter France Model AS332C, L, and L1 helicopters was published as an NPRM in the *Federal Register* on March 28, 2000 (65 FR 16352). That NPRM would have required inspecting any spar tube, part number (P/N) 330A13-2024-01, -02, -03, -04, installed on horizontal stabilizers, P/N's 332A13-1000-00, -01, -02, -03, and 332A13-1040-00, -01, for corrosion, hardness, cracks, or scratches. The NPRM also would have required replacing the spar tube and bushing, as necessary, with an airworthy spar tube and bushing. That NPRM was prompted by the loss of a horizontal stabilizer in flight due to a spar tube failure. That condition, if not corrected, could result in failure of the spar tube, separation of the horizontal stabilizer and impact with the main or tail rotor, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Since the issuance of that NPRM, the FAA discovered an error in the model number given in the applicability section of the proposed AD. The helicopter models that are affected are Model AS332C, L, and L1 helicopters; the NPRM incorrectly listed Model AS322C, L, and L1 helicopters.

Since this change expands the scope of the originally proposed rule, the FAA has determined that it is necessary to reopen the comment period to provide additional opportunity for public comment.

The FAA estimates that 3 helicopters of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 40 work hours per helicopter to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$1,000 per helicopter. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$10,200.

The regulations proposed herein would 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. Therefore, it is determined that this proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, 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. A copy of the draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption ADDRESSES.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (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. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive to read as follows:

Eurocopter France: Docket No. 99–SW–35–AD.

Applicability: Model AS332C, L, and L1 helicopters with horizontal stabilizer spar tube (spar tube), part number (P/N) 330A13–2024–01, –02, –03, –04, installed on horizontal stabilizer, P/N 332A13–1000–00, –01, –02, –03 or 332A13–1040–00, –01, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each helicopter identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For helicopters that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (c) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and if the unsafe condition has not

been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent failure of the spar tube, separation of the horizontal stabilizer and impact with the main or tail rotor, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) For helicopters on which the horizontal spar tube (spar tube) composite bushing (bushing), P/N 330A13–2024–31, has been replaced and since replacement has accumulated:

(1) Less than 1400 hours time-in-service (TIS) or less than 30 calendar months:

(i) Prior to accumulating 1600 hours TIS or 32 calendar months, whichever occurs first, and thereafter at intervals not to exceed (NTE) 3000 hours TIS or 72 calendar months, whichever occurs first, inspect the spar tube in accordance with (IAW) the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of Eurocopter France Service Bulletin No. 01.00.57, Revision 1, dated November 24, 1999 (SB).

(A) If the spar tube passes the hardness inspection of paragraph 2.B.1.1 of the SB and the scratch, corrosion, and crack inspection of paragraph 2.B.2. of the SB, replace the bushing with a new bushing, before further flight.

(B) If the spar tube fails either the hardness inspection of paragraph 2.B.1.1 of the SB or the scratch, corrosion, or crack inspection of paragraph 2.B.2. of the SB, replace the spar tube with an airworthy spar tube before further flight.

(ii) Before installing any replacement spar tube that has previously been installed on any helicopter, inspect it IAW the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of the SB.

(2) 1400 or more hours TIS or 30 or more calendar months:

(i) Within 200 hours TIS or 2 calendar months, whichever occurs first, and thereafter at intervals NTE 3000 hours TIS or 72 calendar months, whichever occurs first, inspect the spar tube IAW the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of the SB.

(A) If the spar tube passes the hardness inspection of paragraph 2.B.1.1 of the SB and the scratch, corrosion, and crack inspection of paragraph 2.B.2. of the SB, replace the bushing with a new bushing before further flight.

(B) If the spar tube fails either the hardness inspection of paragraph 2.B.1.1 of the SB or the scratch, corrosion, or crack inspection of paragraph 2.B.2. of the SB, replace the spar tube with an airworthy spar tube before further flight.

(ii) Before installing any replacement spar tube that has previously been installed on any helicopter, inspect it IAW the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of the SB.

(b) For all spar tubes:

(1) With less than 7500 hours TIS or 144 calendar months since original installation:

(i) Prior to accumulating 7500 hours TIS or 144 calendar months, remove the spar tube and inspect IAW the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of the SB.

(ii) After accomplishing the requirements of paragraph (b)(1)(i) of this AD, install an airworthy spar tube before further flight. Before installing any replacement spar tube that has been previously installed in any helicopter, inspect it IAW the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of the SB.

(2) With 7500 or more hours TIS or 144 or more calendar months since original installation:

(i) Within 500 hours TIS or 12 calendar months, whichever occurs first, remove the spar tube and inspect IAW the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of the SB.

(ii) After accomplishing the requirements of paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this AD, install an airworthy spar tube before further flight. Before installing any replacement spar tube that has been previously installed in any helicopter, inspect it IAW the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of the SB.

(3) After accomplishing the requirements of either paragraph (b)(1) or (b)(2) of this AD, as applicable, thereafter, at intervals NTE 7500 hours TIS or 144 calendar months, whichever occurs first, remove the spar tube and inspect IAW the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.B.1.1 and 2.B.2. of the SB.

(c) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Regulations Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through a FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Regulations Group.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Regulations Group.

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the helicopter to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD 1999–039–073(A)R1, dated December 29, 1999.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on June 30, 2000.

Eric Bries,

*Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 00–17839 Filed 7–13–00; 8:45 am]

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