

Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in French airworthiness directive 1999-147-279(B) R1, dated July 12, 2000.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on July 14, 2000.

Donald L. Riggan,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 00-18403 Filed 7-19-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000-SW-24-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Model 407 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Bell Helicopter Textron Canada (BHTC) Model 407 helicopters. This proposal would require inspecting the brackets that attach each horizontal stabilizer slat (slat) to the stabilizer for a crack and replacing the slat assembly if a crack is found. Installing airworthy segmented slat assemblies would be required prior to flight after December 31, 2000 and would constitute terminating action for the requirements of this AD. This proposal is prompted by an incident in which a slat separated from a helicopter. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent a slat from separating, impact with a main or tail rotor blade, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before September 18, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-SW-24-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 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sharon Miles, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Regulations Group, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0111, telephone (817) 222-5122, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule 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 rule. 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 rule. 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. 2000-SW-24-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-SW-24-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

Discussion

Transport Canada, which is the airworthiness authority for Canada, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on BHTC Model 407 helicopters. Transport Canada advises that a slat could depart, contact one of the rotors, and lead to loss of control of the helicopter. To ensure that there is no pre-load condition on the brackets that secure the slats to the stabilizer, BHTC has introduced

segmented slat assemblies, P/N 407-023-001-101.

BHTC has issued Bell Helicopter Textron Alert Service Bulletin No. 407-99-32, dated December 7, 1999, which specifies replacing the slat assemblies. Transport Canada classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued AD No. CF-2000-09, dated March 21, 2000, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in Canada.

This helicopter model is manufactured in Canada and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, Transport Canada has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of Transport Canada, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

The FAA has identified an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on other BHTC Model 407 helicopters of the same type design registered in the United States. The proposed AD would require visually inspecting the brackets, part number (P/N) 206-023-119-109 or -110, or P/N 407-023-801-127 or -128, for a crack. The inspections must occur within the next 50 hours time-in-service (TIS) and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 100 hours TIS until the installation of airworthy segmented slat assemblies, P/N 407-023-001-101, is accomplished. Installing airworthy segmented slat assemblies would be required prior to flight after December 31, 2000 and would constitute terminating action for the requirements of this AD. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

The FAA estimates that 348 helicopters of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 0.5 work hour per helicopter to perform the visual inspections, 1 work hour to replace a slat assembly, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$2,364 per segmented slat assembly. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$1,697,544, assuming 1 inspection per helicopter and replacement of the 2 slat assemblies on each helicopter.

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:

Bell Helicopter Textron Canada: Docket No. 2000-SW-24-AD.

Applicability: Model 407 helicopters, serial numbers 53000 through 53347, 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 a horizontal stabilizer slat (slat) from separating, impact with a main or tail rotor blade, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 50 hours time-in-service (TIS) and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 100 hours TIS, visually inspect the brackets, part number (P/N) 206-023-119-109 or -110 or P/N 407-023-801-127 or -128, that attach the slats, P/N 407-023-002-117, to the horizontal stabilizer for a crack.

(1) If any crack is found, replace the slat assembly, P/N 407-023-002-117, with an airworthy segmented slat assembly, P/N 407-023-001-101, before further flight. Replace the slat assembly in accordance with Part II of the Accomplishment Instructions in Bell Helicopter Textron Alert Service Bulletin No. ASB 407-99-32, dated December 7, 1999.

(2) If no crack is found, replace each slat assembly, P/N 407-023-002-117, with an airworthy segmented slat assembly, P/N 407-023-001-101, prior to flight after December 31, 2000.

(b) Installing airworthy segmented slat assemblies, P/N 407-023-001-101, constitutes terminating action for the requirements of this AD.

(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 an 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 Transport Canada (Canada) AD CF-2000-09, dated March 21, 2000.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on July 12, 2000.

Henry A. Armstrong,

Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 00-18404 Filed 7-19-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000-SW-25-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model AS-350B, BA, B1, B2, B3, C, D, and D1, and AS-355E, F, F1, F2 and N Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the superseding of an existing airworthiness directive (AD) that applies to Eurocopter France Model AS-350B, BA, B1, B2, C, D, and D1, and AS-355E, F, F1, and F2 helicopters. That AD currently requires inspections of the main rotor head components, the main gearbox (MGB) suspension bars, and the ground resonance prevention system components. This action would require those same inspections, but would also apply to Model AS-350B3 and AS-355N helicopters. This proposal is prompted by the inadvertent omission of those model helicopters from the previous AD. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent ground resonance due to reduced structural stiffness, which could lead to failure of a main rotor head or MGB suspension component and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before September 18, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000-SW-25-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 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Jim Grigg, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222-5490, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the