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[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2016-8032; Directorate Identifier 2016-SW-037-AD;

Amendment 39-18578; AD 2016-12-51]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are publishing a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Airbus Helicopters Model AS332L2 and Model EC225LP helicopters, which was sent previously to all known U.S. owners and operators of these helicopters. This AD immediately prohibits flight of all Model AS332L2 and EC225LP helicopters. This AD is prompted by an accident involving an EC225LP helicopter in which the main rotor hub (MRH) detached from the main gearbox (MGB). These actions are intended to prevent failure of the main rotor system and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: This AD becomes effective [INSERT DATE 15 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by Emergency AD 2016-12-51, issued on June 3, 2016, which contains the requirements of this AD.

We must receive comments on this AD by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Docket: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for sending your comments electronically.

- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: Send comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to the “Mail” address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-8032; or in person at the Docket Operations Office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, the economic evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations Office (telephone 800- 647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Gary Roach, Aviation Safety Engineer, Regulations and Policy Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110, email gary.b.roach@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

This AD is a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety, and we did not provide you with notice and an opportunity to provide your comments prior to it becoming effective. However, we invite you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written comments, data, or views. We also invite comments relating to the economic, environmental, energy, or federalism impacts that resulted from adopting this AD. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the AD, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. To ensure the docket does not contain duplicate comments, commenters should send only one copy of written comments, or if comments are filed electronically, commenters should submit them only one time. We will file in the docket all comments that we receive, as well as a report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerning this rulemaking during the comment period. We will consider all the comments we receive and may conduct additional rulemaking based on those comments.

Discussion

On June 3, 2016, we issued Emergency AD 2016-12-51 to correct an unsafe condition for Model AS332L2 and EC225LP helicopters. Emergency AD 2016-12-51 immediately prohibits further flight of Model AS332L2 and EC225LP helicopters. The emergency AD was sent previously to all known U.S. owners and operators of these helicopters.

Emergency AD 2016-12-51 was prompted by Emergency AD No. 2016-0104-E, dated June 2, 2016, issued by EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States

of the European Union, to correct an unsafe condition for Airbus Helicopters Model EC 225 LP helicopters. Following a fatal accident in Norway in which the MRH detached from the MGB in-flight, EASA issued Emergency AD No. 2016-0089-E, dated May 3, 2016, to require a one-time inspection of the MGB and to report findings to EASA and Airbus Helicopters. Review of the findings from the inspections prompted Airbus Helicopters to provide further inspections and replacement instructions for correctly installing the MGB suspension bars and attachment fittings. EASA subsequently issued Emergency AD No. 2016-0103-E, dated June 1, 2016, which superseded Emergency AD No. 2016-0089-E, and required inspecting the MGB suspension bar fittings and related base plate assemblies and replacing the attachment hardware. Soon after Emergency AD No. 2016-0103-E was issued, a preliminary report from the Accident Investigation Board Norway indicated metallurgical findings of fatigue and surface degradation in the outer race of a second stage planet gear of the MGB epi-cyclic module. EASA advises that it could not be determined if the fatigue and surface degradation is a contributing factor or if it resulted from another initiating factor. Therefore, pending further investigation to determine the root cause of the reported damage and pending development of mitigating measures by Airbus Helicopters, EASA decided to temporarily ground the fleet as a precautionary measure and issued Emergency AD No. 2016-0104-E on June 2, 2016. EASA included Model AS 332 L2 helicopters to the applicability due to similarities in design that make it subject to the same unsafe condition.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by the aviation authority of France and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with

France, EASA, its technical representative, has notified us of the unsafe condition described in the EASA AD. We are issuing this AD because we evaluated all information provided by EASA and determined the unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of these same type designs.

AD Requirements

This AD immediately prohibits flight of all Airbus Helicopters Model AS332L2 and EC225LP helicopters.

Interim Action

We consider this AD to be an interim action. Once the design approval holder develops a modification that addresses the unsafe condition identified in this AD, we might consider additional rulemaking.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects five helicopters of U.S. Registry. There are no costs of compliance with this AD because there are no required maintenance actions.

FAA's Justification and Determination of the Effective Date

Providing an opportunity for public comments prior to adopting these AD requirements would delay implementing the safety actions needed to address this known unsafe condition. Therefore, we find the risk to the flying public justifies waiving notice and comment prior to the adoption of this rule because the previously described unsafe condition can adversely affect the airworthiness of the helicopter and the prohibition of all flights must begin immediately.

Since it was found that immediate action was required, notice and opportunity for prior public comment before issuing this AD were impracticable and contrary to the

public interest and good cause existed for making Emergency AD 2016-12-51 effective immediately on June 3, 2016, to all known U.S. operators of the specified Airbus helicopters. These conditions still exist and the Emergency AD is hereby published in the Federal Register as an amendment to § 39.13 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 39.13) to make it effective to all persons.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA’s authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. “Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs,” describes in more detail the scope of the Agency’s authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in “Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements.” Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD will 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.

For the reasons discussed, I certify that this AD:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska to the extent that it justifies making a regulatory distinction; and
4. 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.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 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. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):

2016-12-51 **Airbus Helicopters:** Amendment 39-18578; Docket No. FAA-2016-8032; Directorate Identifier 2016-SW-037-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model AS332L2 and Model EC225LP helicopters, certificated in any category.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as failure of the main rotor system, which will result in loss of control of the helicopter.

(c) Effective Date

This AD becomes effective [INSERT DATE 15 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by Emergency AD 2016-12-51 issued on June 3, 2016, which contains the requirements of this AD.

(d) Compliance

You are responsible for performing each action required by this AD within the specified compliance time unless it has already been accomplished prior to that time.

(e) Required Action

Further flight is prohibited.

(f) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Group, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: Gary Roach, Aviation Safety Engineer, Regulations and Policy Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email 9-ASW-FTW-AMOC-Requests@faa.gov.

(2) For operations conducted under a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate or under 14 CFR part 91, subpart K, we suggest that you notify your principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office or certificate holding district office, before operating any aircraft complying with this AD through an AMOC.

(g) Additional Information

The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Emergency AD 2016-0104-E, dated June 2, 2016. You may view the EASA AD on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating it in Docket No. FAA-2016-8032.

(h) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: Main Rotor Gearbox: 6320.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on June 23, 2016.

James A. Grigg,

Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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