



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2018-0254; Product Identifier 2017-SW-116-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2017-13-03 for Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited (Bell) Model 429 helicopters. AD 2017-13-03 requires adding an identification number to life-limited rod ends that do not have a serial number (S/N). Since we issued AD 2017-13-03, an additional life-limited rod end was identified that is affected by the same unsafe condition. This proposed AD would retain the requirements of AD 2017-13-03 and revise the Applicability paragraph by adding that rod end. The actions of this proposed AD are intended to address an unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed 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-2018-0254; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the Transport Canada AD, the economic evaluation, any comments received and other information. The street address for Docket Operations (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

For service information identified in this proposed rule, contact Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited, 12,800 Rue de l’Avenir, Mirabel, Quebec J7J1R4; telephone (450) 437-2862 or (800) 363-8023; fax (450) 433-0272; or at <http://www.bellcustomer.com/files/>. You may review this referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Matt Fuller, Senior Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email matthew.fuller@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

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 might result from adopting the proposals in this document. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, 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 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 proposed rulemaking. Before acting on this proposal, we will consider all comments we receive on or before the closing date for comments. We will consider comments filed after the comment period has closed if it is possible to do so without incurring expense or delay. We may change this proposal in light of the comments we receive.

Discussion

We issued AD 2017-13-03, Amendment 39-18933 (82 FR 28397, June 22, 2017) (AD 2017-13-03) for Bell Model 429 helicopters, S/N 57001 through 57260, with a

pylon restraint spring assembly (spring assembly) forward rod end assembly (rod end) part number (P/N) 427-010-210-105 installed. AD 2017-13-03 requires cleaning and marking each forward rod end with the S/N of the spring assembly. AD 2017-13-03 also prohibits the installation of forward rod end P/N 427-010-210-105 on any helicopter unless it has been marked. The requirements of AD 2017-13-03 are intended to prevent a forward rod end from remaining in service after reaching its life limit which could result in failure of the forward rod end and subsequent loss of control of a helicopter.

Actions Since AD 2017-13-03 Was Issued

Since we issued AD 2017-13-03, an additional life-limited rod end P/N has been identified that is affected by the same unsafe condition. Aft rod end P/N 427-010-210-105 also needs to be marked with the S/N of the spring assembly since it does not have a S/N.

Accordingly, Transport Canada, which is the aviation authority for Canada, issued AD No. CF-2015-15R1, Revision 1, dated July 28, 2017, to correct this unsafe condition for Bell Model 429 helicopters, S/Ns 57001 through 57260. Transport Canada advises that, per its regulations, life-limited parts must be marked with their P/N and S/N. Transport Canada further states that spring assembly rod end P/Ns 427-010-210-105 and -109 have a life limit of 5,000 hours; however, they are not serialized, causing difficulties in tracking accumulated air time. According to Transport Canada, this condition could result in a rod end remaining in service beyond its life limit. Therefore, the Transport Canada AD requires adding identification markings on each spring assembly rod end.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by the aviation authority of Canada and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with Canada, Transport Canada, its technical representative, has notified us of the unsafe condition described in its AD. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all known relevant information and determined that an unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR part 51

We reviewed Bell Helicopter Alert Service Bulletin 429-15-19, dated February 26, 2015, for Model 429 helicopters. This service information specifies procedures for permanently marking each forward and aft rod end with the S/N of the spring assembly. This service information applies to certain serial-numbered helicopters, as subsequent helicopters will have these actions performed during the manufacturing process.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Other Related Service Information

We also reviewed Bell Helicopter Maintenance Manual BHT-429-MM-1, Chapter 4, Airworthiness Limitations Schedule, Revision 26, approved September 9, 2016, which specifies airworthiness life limits and inspection intervals for parts installed on Model 429 helicopters.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would require cleaning and marking each forward and aft rod end with the S/N of the spring assembly. This proposed AD would also prohibit installing forward rod end P/N 427-010-210-105 and aft rod end P/N 427-010-210-109 on any helicopter unless it has been marked in accordance with this proposed AD.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this proposed AD would affect 75 helicopters of U.S. Registry. We estimate that operators may incur the following costs in order to comply with this AD. Labor costs are estimated at \$85 per work-hour.

Marking the rod ends would take about 0.5 work-hour for an estimated cost of \$43 per helicopter and \$3,225 for the U.S. fleet. Replacing a rod end that has exceeded its life limit would take about 3 work-hours and required parts will cost about \$4,100 for an estimated cost of \$4,355 per rod end.

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 proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD 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.

For the reasons discussed, I certify 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);
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.

We prepared an economic evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this proposed AD and placed it in the AD docket.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

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

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 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 removing Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2017-13-03, Amendment 39-18933 (82 FR 28397, June 22, 2017), and adding the following new AD:

Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited: Docket No. FAA-2018-0254; Product Identifier 2017-SW-116-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to Model 429 helicopters, serial number 57001 through 57260, with a pylon restraint spring assembly (spring assembly) forward rod end assembly (rod end) part number (P/N) 427-010-210-105 or aft rod end P/N 427-010-210-109 installed, certificated in any category.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as a rod end remaining in service after reaching its life limit. This condition could result in failure of a rod end and subsequent loss of control of a helicopter.

(c) Affected ADs

This AD replaces AD 2017-13-03, Amendment 39-18933 (82 FR 28397, June 22, 2017).

(d) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE Federal Register].

(e) 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.

(f) Required Actions

(1) Within 140 hours time-in-service, clean and identify each rod end with the spring assembly serial number in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 3. through 8., of Bell Helicopter Alert Service Bulletin 429-15-19, dated February 26, 2015.

(2) Do not install a forward rod end P/N 427-010-210-105 or an aft rod end P/N 427-010-210-109 on any helicopter unless it has been marked with a serial number in accordance with paragraph (f)(1) of this AD.

(g) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: Matt Fuller, Senior Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, 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.

(h) Additional Information

(1) Bell Helicopter Maintenance Manual BHT-429-MM-1, Chapter 4, Airworthiness Limitations Schedule, Revision 26, approved September 9, 2016, which is not incorporated by reference, contains additional information about the subject of this AD. For service information identified in this AD, contact Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited, 12,800 Rue de l'Avenir, Mirabel, Quebec J7J1R4; telephone (450) 437-2862 or (800) 363-8023; fax (450) 433-0272; or at <http://www.bellcustomer.com/files/>. You may review a copy of the service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177.

(2) The subject of this AD is addressed in Transport Canada AD No. CF-2015-15R1, Revision 1, dated July 28, 2017. You may view the Transport Canada AD on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> in the AD Docket.

(i) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 5101, Standard Practices/Structures.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 26, 2018.

Lance T. Gant,

Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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