(b) Visually inspect the upperside and lowerside of each blade tip cap for swelling or deformation.

(c) Using an 8-power or higher magnifying glass, visually inspect the welded bead along the leading edge of each blade tip cap for cracks in the area shown in Figure 1.

(d) If any swelling, deformation, crack, or debonding that exceeds the prescribed limits in the applicable maintenance manual is found, replace the blade with an airworthy blade.

Note 2: Agusta Bolletino Tecnico No. 109–106, dated July 21, 1998, Agusta Bolletino Tecnico No. 109EP–1, Revision A, dated September 9, 1998, and Agusta Bolletino Tecnico No. 109K–22, dated July 13, 1998, which are applicable to Agusta S.p.A. Model A109C, A109E, and A109K2 helicopters, respectively, pertain to the subject of this AD.

(e) Replacement blades affected by this AD must comply with the repetitive inspection requirements of this AD. Replacement of an affected blade with a blade having an airworthy blade tip cap, P/N 709–0103–29–109, is a terminating action for the requirements of this AD for that blade.

(f) 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, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Rotorcraft Standards Staff.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Rotorcraft Standards Staff.

(g) 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.

(h) This amendment becomes effective on March 3, 1999, to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by Priority Letter AD 98–19–04, issued August 31, 1998, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

Note 4: The subject of this AD is addressed in Ente Nazionale di Aviazione Civile (Italy) AD 98–271, applicable to Model A109K2 helicopters, dated July 29, 1998; AD 98–275, applicable to Model A109C helicopters and AD 98–276, applicable to Model A109E helicopters, both dated August 4, 1998, and AD 98–319 (which superseded AD 98–276), applicable to Model A109E helicopters, dated September 15, 1998.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 5, 1999.

Eric Bries,

Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99–3589 Filed 2–12–99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97–SW–61–AD; Amendment 39–11036; AD 99–04–12]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems Model 369D, 369E, 369FF, 369H, MD500N, and MD600N Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems (MDHS) Model 369D, 369E, 369FF, 369H, MD500N, and MD600N helicopters, that requires a one-time visual inspection of certain input shaft coupling assemblies for pitting. This amendment is prompted by three operators' reports of discovering pitting on the internal spline teeth. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent failure of the spline teeth in the input shaft coupling assembly, loss of drive to the main rotor system, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 23, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bruce Conze, Aerospace Engineer, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, 3960 Paramount Blvd., Lakewood, California, 90712, telephone (562) 627–5261, fax (562) 627–5210.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to MDHS Model 369D, 369E, 369FF, 369H, MD500N, and MD600N helicopters was published in the **Federal Register** on May 15, 1998 (63 FR 27011). That action proposed to require a one-time visual inspection of certain input shaft coupling assemblies for pitting.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the comments received.

One commenter states that the addition of a calendar period to supplement the time-in-service compliance time is necessary to account for the effects of corrosion which caused the internal spline pitting. The FAA does not concur for the following reasons:

- The original corrosion occurred during the manufacturing process due to exposure of unprotected machined parts and porosity in the material. The corrosion was subsequently removed in normal processing and parts coated with dry lube. The corrosion is not a result of time-in-service.
- After examining parts returned from the field, there is no evidence suggesting that the original corrosion damage increases with time.

The same commenter also states that there are no guidelines or references to Boeing instructions, service bulletins, or manuals given to strip the input shaft coupling assembly and perform the visual inspection. The FAA does not concur; Note 2 states that Boeing Service Bulletin SB369H–240, SB369E–085, SB500N–013, SB369D–192, SB369F–072, SB600N–003, dated September 26, 1997, pertains to the subject of the AD. No additional guidelines for stripping shaft coupling assembly and performing the visual inspection are deemed necessary because the corrosion on the input shaft coupling assemblies is obvious and easily discernible with the naked eye without stripping the shaft coupling assembly.

After careful review of the available data, including the comments noted above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed.

The FAA estimates that 82 helicopters of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 3 work hours per helicopter to accomplish the required actions, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Required parts will cost approximately $638 per coupling assembly. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $67,076 if the coupling assembly is replaced in all 82 helicopters.

The regulations adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects 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, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (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); and (3) 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 final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97–SW–61–AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends 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:

AD 99–04–12 McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems: Amendment 39–11036. Docket No. 97–SW–61–AD.

Applicability: Model 369D, 369E, 369FF, 369H, MD500N, and MD600N helicopters, with input shaft coupling assemblies, part number (P/N) 369F5133–1, serial number (S/N) 030829–0126 through 030829–0207, installed on main transmission, P/N 369F5100–503, and on overrunning clutch, P/N 369F5450, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each helicopter identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been 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 use the authority provided in paragraph (c) to request approval from the FAA. This approval may address either no action, if the current configuration eliminates the unsafe condition, or different actions necessary to address the unsafe condition described in this AD. Such a request should include an assessment of the effect of the changed configuration on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD. In no case does the presence of any modification, alteration, or repair remove any helicopter from the applicability of this AD.

Compliance: Required within 100 hours time-in-service after the effective date of this AD, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent failure of the spline teeth in each input shaft coupling assembly (coupling assembly), loss of drive to the main rotor system, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Visually inspect the coupling assemblies, P/N 369F5133–1, installed on main transmission, P/N 369F5100–503, and on overrunning clutch, P/N 369F5450, for pitting under the solid film lubricant in the spline area of the coupling.

(b) If there is pitting in the splines, replace the coupling assembly with an airworthy coupling assembly, P/N 369F5133–1, that has been inspected as required by paragraph (a) of this AD.

Note 2: Boeing Service Bulletin SB369H–240, SB369E–085, SB500N–013, SB369D–192, SB369F–072, SB600N–003, dated September 26, 1997, pertains to 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, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office.

Note 3: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office.

(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.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 5, 1999.

Eric Bries,

Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99–3591 Filed 2–12–99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 71

[Airspace Docket No. 98–ANM–16]

Removal of Class E Airspace; Anaconda, MT

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This action removes Class E airspace at Anaconda, MT, which is no longer necessary because of amendments to adjacent airspace areas.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 0901 UTC, May 20, 1999.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dennis Ripley, ANM–520.6, Federal Aviation Administration, Docket No. 98–ANM–16, 1601 Lind Avenue SW, Renton, Washington, 98055–4056; telephone number: (425) 227–2527.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

History

On November 18, 1998, the FAA proposed to amend Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, part 71 (14 CFR part 71) by removing the Anaconda, MT, Class E airspace area (63 FR 64021). The Anaconda, MT, Class E airspace is no longer required because of airspace changes to adjacent areas. The adjacent areas completely cover the Anaconda, MT, airspace are, thereby making Anaconda, MT, airspace obsolete. Interested parties were invited to participate in the rulemaking proceeding by submitting written comments on the proposal. No comments were received.

The coordinates for this airspace docket are based on North American Datum 83. Class E airspace areas extending upward from 700 feet or more above the surface of the earth, are published in Paragraph 6005 of FAA Order 7400.9F, dated September 10, 1998, and effective September 16, 1998, which is incorporated by reference in 14 CFR 71.1. The Class E airspace designation listed in this document will be published subsequently in the Order.

The Rule

This amendment to 14 CFR part 71 removes Class E airspace at Anaconda, MT. The intended effect of this rule is designed to provide efficient use of the navigable airspace.

The FAA has determined that this regulation only involves an established body of technical regulations for which frequent and routine amendments are necessary to keep them operationally current. It, therefore, (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); and (3) does not warrant preparation of a Regulatory Evaluation as the anticipated impact is so minimal. Since this is a routine matter that will only affect air traffic procedures and air navigation, it is certified that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 71

Airspace, Incorporation by reference, Navigation (air).