

§ 301.89-13(d), before it may be planted within a regulated area.

§ 301.89-6 [Amended]

5. Section 301.89-6 would be amended as follows: a. In paragraph (b), the word "surveillance" would be removed and the word "regulated" would be added in its place.

b. Paragraph (d) would be removed and paragraph (e) would be redesignated as paragraph (d).

§ 301.89-12 [Amended]

6. In § 301.89-12, paragraph (b) would be removed and reserved.

§ 301.89-13 [Amended]

7. In § 301.89-13, paragraph (f) would be removed.

Done in Washington, DC, this 3rd day of March 1999.

Joan M. Arnoldi,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 99-5779 Filed 3-8-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-SW-62-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada (BHTC) Model 206L-4 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to BHTC Model 206L-4 helicopters. This proposal would require replacing certain hydraulic relief valves (valves) with airworthy valves. This proposal is prompted by a pilot's report of intermittent hydraulic pressure in the flight controls that was caused by a defective hydraulic relief valve. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent intermittent hydraulic pressure to the flight controls and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 10, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 98-SW-62-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663,

Fort Worth, Texas. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from Bell Helicopter Textron Canada, 12,800 Rue de l'Avenir, Mirabel, Quebec JON1LO, telephone (800) 463-3036, fax (514) 433-0272. This information may be examined at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mark Flora, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Certification Office, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0170, telephone (817) 222-5172, fax (817) 222-5783.

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 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. 98-SW-62-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. 98-SW-62-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

Discussion

Transport Canada, which is the airworthiness authority for Canada, recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on BHTC Model 206L-4 helicopters. Transport Canada advises that a manufacturing defect found on a valve could lead to intermittent loss of hydraulic pressure to the flight controls.

BHTC has issued Bell Helicopter Textron Alert Service Bulletin No. 206L-98-111, dated July 24, 1998, which specifies replacing the valve, part number (P/N) 206-076-036-101, with a better valve, P/N 206-076-036-105. Transport Canada classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued AD No. CF-98-34, dated September 10, 1998, in order to assure 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 the 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.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other BHTC Model 206L-4 of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require replacing the valve, P/N 206-076-036-101, with an improved valve, P/N 206-076-036-105. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 78 helicopters of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately 1 work hour per helicopter to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts would cost approximately \$1,380. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$112,320 to replace the valve in the entire fleet.

Regulatory Impact

The regulations proposed herein would 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 proposal would not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

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. 98-SW-62-AD.

Applicability: Model 206L-4 helicopters, serial numbers 52001 through 52208, 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 (b) 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 within 300 hours time-in-service, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent intermittent hydraulic pressure to the flight controls and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Remove hydraulic relief valve, part number (P/N) 206-076-036-101, and replace it with an improved hydraulic relief valve, P/N 206-076-036-105, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions in Bell Helicopter Textron Alert Service Bulletin No. 206L-98-111, dated July 24, 1998.

(b) 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 Certification Office, 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, Rotorcraft Certification Office.

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

(c) 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 No. CF-98-34, dated September 10, 1998.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 1, 1999.

Eric Bries,

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

[FR Doc. 99-5723 Filed 3-8-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-U

POSTAL SERVICE

39 CFR Part 111

Packaging Material Standards for Flat-Size Periodicals and Standard Mail

AGENCY: Postal Service.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: To ensure that packages maintain their integrity during transportation and processing, the Postal Service plans to prohibit use of string and rubber bands to secure packages of flat-size Periodicals and Standard Mail when prepared on pallets. Mailers are also hereby notified that, in the future, the Postal Service plans to prohibit use of string and rubber bands to secure packages of flat-size Periodicals and Standard Mail prepared in sacks.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before April 8, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Mail or deliver written comments to the Manager, Mail Preparation and Standards, USPS Headquarters, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 6800, Washington, DC 20260-2405. Copies of all written comments will be available for inspection and photocopying at USPS Headquarters Library, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, 11th Floor N, Washington, DC between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lynn M. Martin, (202) 268-6351.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Many packages of Periodicals and Standard Mail, tendered to the Postal Service either on pallets or in sacks, do not maintain their integrity during transportation to postal plants and during postal processing. The Postal Service must redirect the resulting loose packages or broken packages (individual pieces) to manual operations for additional processing. If packages lose their integrity while being processed on small parcel and bundle sorters (SPBSs), this can cause machine slowdowns and stoppages, and can also result in these packages being manually processed by postal employees.

Experience shows that packages that are secured together using string or rubber bands are the most likely to lose their integrity. A study performed on behalf of the Postal Service Engineering and Development Center confirmed that packages prepared with string or rubber bands are the most likely to break, and that the tendency for these packages to break increases as the thickness of the package increases. This study also showed that for packages prepared with plastic strapping, the greater the thickness of the package, the more likely it is for the package to remain intact.

The Mailers Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) working group on Pallet, Container and Package Integrity independently confirmed that packages prepared with string and rubber bands are the most likely to break, resulting in increased costs for the Postal Service, and increased time to process the pieces in those packages. Accordingly, this MTAC work group supports the Postal Service's proposal to prohibit the use of string and rubber bands to secure packages for flat-size Standard and Periodicals Mail that is presented to the Postal Service on pallets. The Postal Service also believes that mailers should not use string or rubber bands to prepare packages of flat-size mail that are placed in sacks. In order to ease the burden imposed on mailers who currently use rubber bands and string to secure flat-