

provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Seattle ACO, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate. Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Seattle ACO.

Note 4: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Seattle ACO.

Special Flight Permits

(f) 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 airplane to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

Incorporation by Reference

(g) Except as provided by paragraphs (c) and (d) of this AD, the actions shall be done in accordance with Boeing Alert Service Bulletin 747-53A2414, dated August 7, 1997. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Boeing Commercial Airplane Group, P.O. Box 3707, Seattle, Washington 98124-2207. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 1601 Lind Avenue, SW., Renton, Washington; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(h) This amendment becomes effective on April 27, 1999.

Issued in Renton, Washington, on March 15, 1999.

Darrell M. Pederson,

Acting Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-6828 Filed 3-22-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-SW-46-AD; Amendment 39-11084; AD 99-07-02]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model AS 332C, L, L1, and L2 Helicopters and Model SA 330F, G, and J Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to Eurocopter France Model AS 332C, L, L1, and L2 helicopters and Model SA 330F, G, and J helicopters.

This action requires inspecting the position and bonding of the main rotor blade (blade) leading edge stainless steel protective strips (strips) that were replaced by C.T.I. Dallas. This amendment is prompted by the discovery of a strip that was both mislocated and improperly bonded. The strip had been replaced by C.T.I. Dallas. This condition, if not corrected, could result in failure of the blade and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective April 7, 1999.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before May 24, 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-46-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mike Mathias, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222-5123, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, has notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on Eurocopter France Model AS 332C, L, L1, and L2 helicopters and Model SA 330F, G, and J helicopters. The DGAC advises that, upon examination of a blade that had been repaired by C.T.I. Dallas, anomalies were found in both the installation and the bonding of the strip that could affect aircraft safety.

Eurocopter France has issued Eurocopter France SA 330 Service Bulletin No. 05.85 and Eurocopter France AS 332 Service Bulletin No. 05.00.43, both dated August 27, 1997, which specify checking the position and bonding of the blade strips. The DGAC classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued AD 97-293-078(AB) and AD 97-292-064(AB), both dated October 8, 1997, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in France.

These helicopter models are manufactured in France and are 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, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC,

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 estimates that 5 helicopters will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 0.4 work hours to accomplish the initial inspection, 2 work hours to accomplish each of 100 repetitive inspections of each helicopter, and 4 work hours to replace each blade, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts will cost approximately \$25,000 per rotor blade. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$85,360, assuming one blade on one helicopter is replaced and that there will be a total of 100 repetitive inspections required on each helicopter by this AD.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other Eurocopter France Model AS 332C, L, L1, and L2 helicopters and Model SA 330F, G, and J helicopters of the same type designs registered in the United States, this AD is being issued to prevent failure of the blade and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. This AD requires, within 10 hours time-in-service (TIS), inspecting strips that were replaced by C.T.I. Dallas for correct position. If the inspection indicates an incorrectly-positioned strip, the blade must be removed and replaced with an airworthy blade. This AD also requires, within 100 hours TIS, and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 100 hours TIS, inspecting the strips for proper bonding. The actions are required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletins described previously. The short compliance time involved is required because the previously described critical unsafe condition can adversely affect the controllability of the helicopter. Therefore, inspecting the position and bonding of the strips is required prior to further flight, and this AD must be issued immediately.

Since a situation exists that requires the immediate adoption of this regulation, it is found that notice and opportunity for prior public comment hereon are impracticable, and that good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this 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 under the caption **ADDRESSES**. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 98-SW-46-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

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.

The FAA has determined that this regulation is an emergency regulation that must be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft, and that it is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866. It has been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it, if filed, may be obtained from 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.

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 99-07-02 Eurocopter France:

Amendment 39-11084. Docket No. 98-SW-46-AD.

Applicability: Model SA 330F, G, and J helicopters, with main rotor blades, part number (P/N) 330A11-0020 (all dash numbers), P/N 330A11-0022 (all dash

numbers), or P/N 330A11-0027 (all dash numbers), installed, and Model AS 332C, L, L1, and L2 helicopters, 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 detect a mislocated or improperly bonded main rotor blade (blade) leading edge stainless steel protective strip (strip), which could result in failure of the blade and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 10 hours time-in-service (TIS):

(1) Determine from helicopter records or log cards if the blade strips were replaced by C.T.I. Dallas. The helicopter records or log cards will have "CTID" stamped on them if C.T.I. Dallas replaced the strips. Blades with strips that were not replaced by C.T.I. Dallas need not comply with the remaining paragraphs of this AD.

(2) Inspect the blade strips for correct positioning on each main rotor blade by measuring the distance from the tip cap-blade junction as shown in Figure 1. This distance must be 2228 mm plus or minus 15 mm (87.7 inches plus or minus 0.6 inch). If the strip is incorrectly positioned, remove the blade and replace it with an airworthy blade within 100 hours TIS (see Figure 1).

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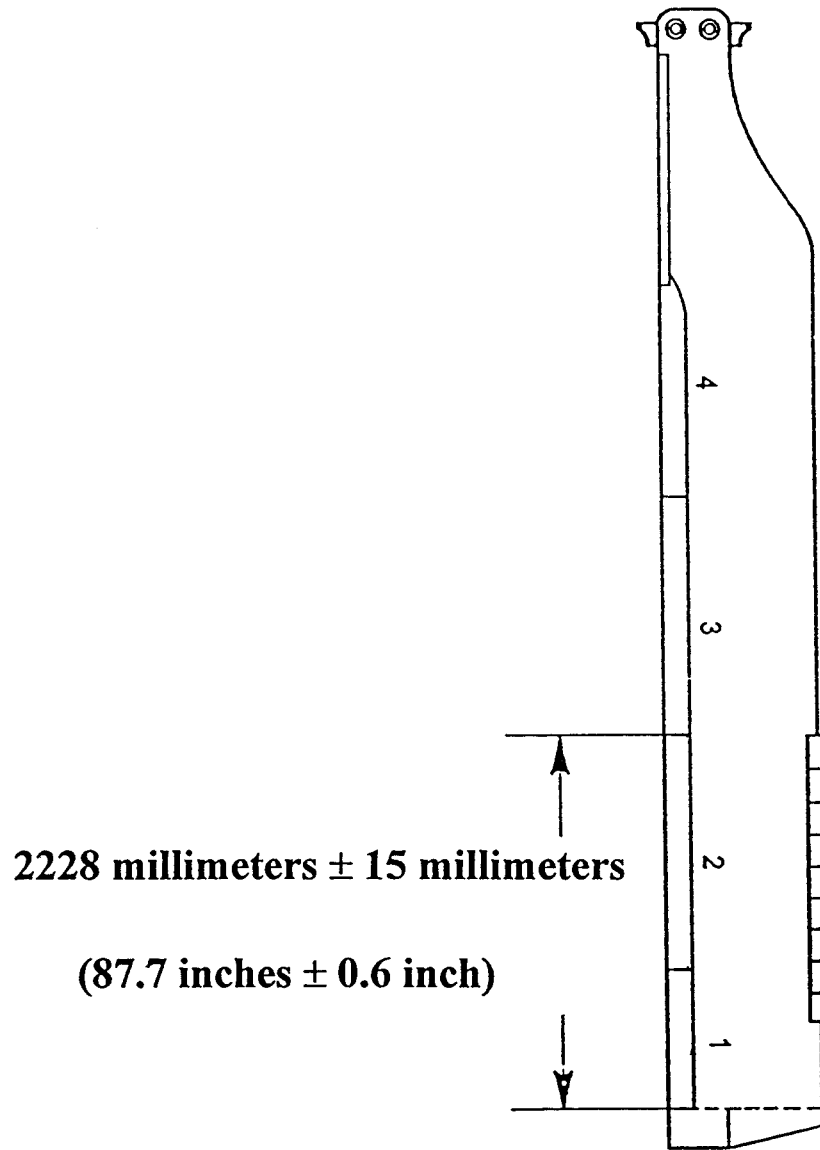


Figure 1

(b) Within 100 hours TIS, and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 100 hours TIS, inspect the strips for correct bonding using a bonding check by sound (tapping test). If a defect is found that is outside the tolerance limits, remove the blade and replace it with an airworthy blade.

(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, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, 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 Standards Staff.

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

(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.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on April 7, 1999.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD 97-293-078(AB) and AD 97-292-064(AB), both dated October 8, 1997.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 12, 1999.

Eric Bries,

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

[FR Doc. 99-6976 Filed 3-22-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-SW-22-AD; Amendment 39-11083; AD 99-07-01]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation (Sikorsky) Model S-76C Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment supersedes an existing priority letter airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to Sikorsky Model S-76C helicopters, that currently requires, before further flight, inserting new operating limitations and performance data into the Rotorcraft Flight Manual (RFM) which require lower allowable gross weights for certain operational conditions. This amendment requires the same actions as the priority letter AD, but updates the

previously referenced RFM's. This amendment is prompted by the discovery that the RFM's referenced in the priority letter AD have been revised. The actions specified by this AD are intended to provide the correct RFM references and to prevent an inability to achieve the published One-Engine-Inoperative (OEI) performance and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective April 7, 1999. Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before May 24, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-SW-22-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Wayne Gaulzetti, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Boston Aircraft Certification Office, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803, telephone (781) 238-7156, fax (781) 238-7199.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On February 18, 1999, the FAA issued AD 99-05-01, Docket No. 99-SW-18-AD, to require, before further flight, inserting new operating limitations and performance data into the RFM which require lower allowable gross weights for certain operational conditions. That action was prompted by an incident in which the design of the engine Hydromechanical Unit (HMU) prevented the fuel metering valve from delivering the fuel flow required to obtain 30-second OEI performance. That condition, if not corrected, could result in an inability to achieve the published OEI performance and subsequent loss of the helicopter.

Since the issuance of that AD, the FAA has discovered that the RFM's referenced in the priority letter AD have been revised. The FAA is superseding the priority letter AD to eliminate any confusion that may arise from referencing RFM's that have been revised.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other Sikorsky Model S-76C helicopters of the same type design, this AD supersedes AD 99-05-01 to require, before further flight, inserting new operating limitations and performance data into the RFM which require lower allowable gross weights for certain operational conditions. The short compliance time involved is required because the previously described critical unsafe condition can adversely affect the controllability of the

helicopter. Therefore, inserting new operating limitations and performance data into the RFM is required prior to further flight and this AD must be issued immediately.

Since a situation exists that requires the immediate adoption of this regulation, it is found that notice and opportunity for prior public comment hereon are impracticable, and that good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

The FAA estimates that 17 helicopters will be affected by this proposed AD, that it will take approximately 0.5 work hour to insert the pages into the RFM, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$510.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this 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 under the caption **ADDRESSES**. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 99-SW-22-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

The regulations adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects on the