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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-500; Project Identifier 2017-SW-069-AD; Amendment 39-21720; AD 2021-19-02]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters. This AD was prompted by a report of a jammed pilot collective pitch lever (collective). This AD requires inspecting the collective for proper engagement of the locking pin. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective November 1, 2021.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain document listed in this AD as of November 1, 2021.

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this final rule, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 North Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at https://www.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html. You may view the referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. It is also available at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-500.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-500; 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 final rule, the European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of

Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anthony Kenward, Aviation Safety Engineer, Fort Worth ACO Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5152; email anthony.kenward@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to Airbus Helicopters Model EC130B4 and Model EC130T2 helicopters. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on July 7, 2021 (86 FR 35695). In the NPRM, the FAA proposed to require, within 90 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of the AD, or before the next autorotation training flight, whichever occurs first, removing the protective boot along the collective and measuring the clearance between the collective tab hook (hook) and low pitch locking pin (pin). If the clearance is less than 5 mm (0.196 in), adjusting the clearance between the hook and the pin to prevent interference was proposed. The NPRM then proposed to require re-installing the protective boot in accordance with the manufacturer's service information. The NPRM was prompted by EASA AD 2017-0062, dated April 11, 2017 (EASA AD 2017-0062), 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 EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters. EASA states that during an autorotation test conducted during an acceptance flight, the pilot felt a jamming sensation when pushing the collective to the low pitch position, and he subsequently was able to free the collective by pulling on it. According to EASA, an analysis determined that the hook and the pin were extremely close, and that a fold in the control lever boot may have become caught between the two components. EASA states that this condition, if not detected and corrected, could result in an untimely locking of the collective and subsequent reduced control of the helicopter.

Accordingly, EASA AD 2017-0062 requires inspecting and adjusting, if necessary, the clearance between the hook and the pin while in the low pitch position.

Discussion of Final Airworthiness Directive

Comments

The FAA received no comments on the NPRM or on the determination of the costs.

Conclusion

These helicopters have been approved by EASA and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the European Union, EASA has notified the FAA about the unsafe condition described in its AD. The FAA reviewed the relevant data and determined that air safety requires adopting this AD as proposed. Accordingly, the FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these helicopters.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin ASB No. EC130-67A019, Revision 0, dated February 23, 2016, which specifies inspecting and adjusting the clearance between the hook and pin.

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.

Differences Between This AD and the EASA AD

The EASA AD requires compliance within 165 hours TIS or 3 months, whichever occurs first. Since the unsafe condition occurred at a collective position commanded during an autorotation, this AD requires compliance within 90 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD or before the next autorotation training flight, whichever occurs first. Based on the average fleet usage, 90 hours TIS corresponds with the 3-month compliance requirement of the EASA AD.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 214 helicopters of U.S. Registry. At an average labor rate of $85 per work-hour, the FAA estimates that operators may incur the following costs in order to comply with this AD. Removing the protective boot will require about 2 work-hours for a cost of $170 per helicopter and a cost of $36,380 for the U.S. fleet. Determining the clearance between the hook and pin will require about 0.5 work-hour, for a cost of $43 per helicopter and a cost of $9,202 for the U.S. fleet. If required, adjusting the clearance will take about 2 work-hours for a cost of $170 per helicopter. Re-installing the protective boot will require about 2 work-hours, for a cost of $170 per helicopter and a cost of $36,380 for the U.S. fleet.

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.

The FAA is 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 helicopters identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

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 above, I certify that this AD:

(1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,

(2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, 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.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

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

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:

2021-19-02 Airbus Helicopters: Amendment 39-21720 Docket No. FAA-2021-500; Project Identifier 2017-SW-069-AD.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective November 1, 2021.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model EC130B4 and Model EC130T2 helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 6700, Rotorcraft flight control.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by a report of a jammed pilot collective pitch lever (collective). The FAA is issuing this AD to prevent an untimely locking of the collective and subsequent reduced control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Required Actions

Within 90 hours time-in-service after the effective date of this AD or before the next autorotation training flight, whichever occurs first:

(1) For each collective, remove the protective boot along the collective and measure the clearance between the edge of the collective tab hook (a) and the edge of the low pitch locking pin (b) as shown in Figure 1 of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin ASB No. EC130-67A019, Revision 0, dated February 23, 2016 (ASB EC130-67A019). If the clearance is less than 5 mm (0.196 in), before further flight:

(i) Adjust the clearance by following the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 3.B.3., of ASB EC130-67A019.

(ii) Test the collective for proper engagement of the low pitch locking pin by following the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 3.B.4., of ASB EC130-67A019.

(2) Re-install the protective boot on the collective, ensuring that no boot folds have entered the space between the collective tab hook and the low pitch locking pin, by following the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 3.B.5., of ASB EC130-67A019.

(h) Special Flight Permits

Special flight permits are prohibited.

(i) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j)(1) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(j) Related Information

(1) For more information about this AD, contact Anthony Kenward, Aviation Safety Engineer, Fort Worth ACO Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5152; email anthony.kenward@faa.gov.

(2) The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD 2017-0062, dated April 11, 2017. You may view the EASA AD at https://www.regulations.gov in Docket No. FAA-2021-500.

(k) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin ASB No. EC130-67A019, Revision 0, dated February 23, 2016.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 North Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at https://www.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110.

(5) You may view this service information that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email: fr.inspection@nara.gov, or go to: https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html.

Issued on August 30, 2021.

Lance T. Gant,

Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

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