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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2018-0647; Product Identifier 2017-SW-083-AD; Amendment 39-19557; AD 2019-03-05]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited (Bell) Model 429 helicopters. This AD revises the life limit for the nose landing gear (NLG) assembly. This AD was prompted by revised airworthiness limitations determined by Bell. The actions of this AD are intended to prevent an unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective March 26, 2019.

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this final 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 the referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177.

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-2018-0647; 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 AD, the Transport Canada AD, the economic evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations (phone: 800-647-5527) 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: 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:

Discussion

On July 19, 2018, at 83 FR 34074, the Federal Register published our notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), which proposed to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to Bell Model 429 helicopters with a NLG assembly part number (P/N) 429-336-100-101 installed. The NPRM proposed to revise the life limit for the NLG assembly. The proposed requirements were intended to prevent fatigue failure of an NLG assembly, which could result in subsequent damage to and loss of control of the helicopter.

The NPRM was prompted by Canadian AD No. CF-2016-07, dated March 4, 2016, to correct an unsafe condition for Bell Model 429 helicopters with wheeled landing gear. Transport Canada, which is the aviation authority for Canada, issued its AD after Bell replaced the airworthiness limitations for the NLG main fitting to bell crank bolt P/N M084-20H125-101 and NLG main fitting P/N M084-20H011-107 with an airworthiness limitation for the next higher assembly, NLG assembly P/N 429-336-100-101. According to Transport Canada, the NLG assembly's life limit is reduced to 50,000 retirement index number (RIN) or 4,500 hours time-in-service. Transport Canada advises that failure to replace components prior to established airworthiness limitations could result in an unsafe condition.

Comments

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD, but we received no comments on the NPRM.

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 the Transport Canada AD. We are issuing this AD because we evaluated all information provided by Transport Canada and determined the unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of these same type designs and that air safety and the public interest require adopting the AD requirements as proposed.

Differences Between This AD and the Transport Canada AD

The Transport Canada AD applies to certain serial-numbered helicopters, whereas this AD applies to all Bell Model 429 helicopters with the affected NLG assembly installed.

Related Service Information

We reviewed Bell Alert Service Bulletin No. 429-15-24, Revision A, dated September 23, 2015, which specifies updating the Bell 429 maintenance manual with Revision 24 to incorporate the revised airworthiness limitations for the NLG assembly, NLG main fitting to bellcrank bolt, and the NLG main fitting.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects less than 75 helicopters of U.S. Registry (as this AD does not apply to Bell Model 429 helicopters with skid landing gear). At an average labor rate of \$85 per hour,

replacing a NLG assembly requires 10 work-hours, and required parts cost \$104,648, for a cost of \$105,498 per helicopter and up to \$7,912,350 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.

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 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) Is not a “significant rule” under 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 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.

Adoption of 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 (AD):



2019-03-05 Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited: Amendment 39-19557; Docket No. FAA-2018-0647; Product Identifier 2017-SW-083-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited Model 429 helicopters with a nose landing gear (NLG) assembly part number (P/N) 429-336-100-101 installed, certificated in any category.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as fatigue failure of an NLG assembly, which could result in subsequent damage to and loss of control of the helicopter.

(c) Effective Date

This AD becomes effective March 26, 2019.

(d) 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.

(e) Required Actions

Before further flight, remove from service any NLG assembly P/N 429-336-100-101 that has reached or exceeded 4,500 hours time-in-service (TIS) or 50,000 retirement index number (RIN). Thereafter, remove from service each NLG assembly P/N 429-336-100-101 before accumulating 4,500 hours TIS or 50,000 RIN, whichever occurs first. For purposes of this AD, for every normal retraction or extension of the wheeled landing gear system, add one RIN.

(f) 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.

(g) Additional Information

(1) Bell Helicopter Alert Service Bulletin No. 429-15-24, Revision A, dated September 23, 2015, 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-2016-07, dated March 4, 2016. You may view the Transport Canada AD on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> in Docket No. FAA-2018-0647.

(h) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 3200, Landing Gear System.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 8, 2019.

Lance T. Gant,

Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.