

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-0539; Project Identifier 2018-SW-048-AD; Amendment 39-21719; AD 2021-19-01]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Textron Canada Limited Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Bell Textron Canada Limited Model 206, 206A, 206A-1 (OH-58A), 206B, 206B-1, 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, 206L-4, 222, 222B, 222U, 230, 407, 427, 429, and 430 helicopters. This AD was prompted by a report of a shoulder harness seat belt comfort clip (comfort clip) interfering with the seat belt inertia reel. This AD requires removing each comfort clip from service, inspecting the shoulder harness seat belt for any rip and abrasion, and removing any shoulder harness seat belt from service that has a rip or abrasion. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective October 13, 2021.

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this final rule, contact Bell Textron Canada Limited, 12,800 Rue de l'Avenir, Mirabel, Quebec J7J1R4; telephone 1-450-437-2862 or 1-800-363-8023; fax 1-450-433-0272; email productsupport@bellflight.com; or at <https://www.bellflight.com/support/contact-support>. 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.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0539; 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 Transport Canada 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: Steven Warwick, Aerospace Engineer, Certification Section, Fort Worth ACO Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5225; email Steven.R.Warwick@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 Bell Textron Canada Limited Model 206, 206A, 206A-1 (OH-58A), 206B, 206B-1, 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, 206L-4, 222, 222B, 222U, 230, 407, 427, 429, and 430 helicopters with a comfort clip installed; or that have been modified per Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) SH2073SO (installation of shoulder harness restraint system) or STC SH2751SO (installation of a passenger shoulder harness restraint system).

The NPRM published in the Federal Register on July 6, 2021 (86 FR 35410). In the NPRM, the FAA proposed to require, within 25 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of the proposed AD, removing from service each comfort clip and inspecting each shoulder harness seat belt for a rip and abrasion. If there is a rip or abrasion, the NPRM proposed to require removing the shoulder harness seat belt from service before further flight. The NPRM also proposed to prohibit installing a comfort clip on any helicopter as of the effective date of the proposed AD.

The NPRM was prompted by Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16, dated June 14, 2018 (Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16), issued by Transport Canada, which is the aviation authority for Canada, to correct an unsafe condition for all serial-numbered Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited (now Bell Textron Canada Limited) Model 206, 206A, 206A-1, 206B, 206B-1, 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, 206L-4, 222, 222B, 222U, 230, 407, 427, 429 and 430 helicopters. Transport Canada advises that Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Limited delivered comfort clips with some helicopters, and that these comfort clips, which were also sold as spare parts or accessories, were intended to improve occupant comfort by reducing shoulder harness tension. However, Transport Canada advises the comfort clip may interfere with the shoulder harness inertia reel, preventing the harness from locking and resulting in injury to the occupant during an emergency landing. To prevent this unsafe condition, Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16 requires, within 25 hours air time or 10 days, whichever occurs first, determining if the comfort clips are installed. If the comfort clips are installed, Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16 requires removing them from service within 100 hours air time or 30 days, whichever occurs first, and inspecting each shoulder harness seat belt for damage and replacing any shoulder harness seat belt that has damage that exceeds allowable limits before further flight. Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16 also prohibits the installation of any comfort clip on any helicopter.

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 the aviation authority of Canada and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with Canada, Transport Canada, its technical representative, has notified the FAA of 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

The FAA reviewed the following Bell Helicopter Alert Service Bulletins (ASBs), each dated January 11, 2016:

- ASB 222-15-112 for Model 222, 222B, and 222U helicopters with serial numbers (S/N) 47006 through 47089, 47131 through 47156, and 47501 through 47574 (ASB 222-15-112);
- ASB 230-15-46 for Model 230 helicopters with S/N 23001 through 23038;
- ASB 407-15-111 for Model 407 helicopters with S/N 53000 through 53900, 53911 through 54166, and 54300 through 54599;
- ASB 427-15-39 for Model 427 helicopters with S/N 56001 through 56084, 58001 and 58002 (ASB 427-15-39);
- ASB 429-15-27 for Model 429 helicopters with S/N 57001 through 57259 (ASB 429-15-27); and
- ASB 430-15-56 for Model 430 helicopters with S/N 49001 through 49129.

The FAA also reviewed the following Bell Helicopter ASBs, both Revision A and both dated February 5, 2016:

- ASB 206-15-133 for Model 206A/B and TH-67 helicopters with S/N 4 through 4690 and 5101 through 5313 (ASB 206-15-133); and
- ASB 206L-15-175 for Model 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, and 206L-4 helicopters with S/N 45001 through 45153, 46601 through 46617, 45154 through 45790, 51001 through 51612, and 52001 through 52455 (ASB 206L-15-175).

All of the ASBs specify removing all variants of comfort clips from all seat belt assemblies. ASB 222-15-112, ASB 427-15-39, and ASB 429-15-27 also specify that although the helicopter models to which these ASBs apply were not affected by the original design at the time of certification and delivery of the helicopter, the affected parts may have been installed post-delivery to end owners/operators of those helicopters.

ASB 206-15-133 and ASB 206L-15-175 also specify that helicopters that have been modified per STC SH2073SO (installation of shoulder harness restraint system) are affected and therefore included in the ASB applicability.

ASB 206L-15-175 also specifies that helicopters that have been modified per STC SH2751SO (installation of a passenger shoulder harness restraint system) are affected and therefore included in the ASB applicability.

Differences Between This AD and the Transport Canada AD

This AD requires removing the comfort clip and inspecting the shoulder harness seat belt within 25 hours TIS; Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16 requires inspecting for the presence of a comfort clip at 25 hours air time, or 10 days, whichever occurs first, and then requires removing the comfort clip, if installed. Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16 requires inspecting the shoulder harness seat belt for any damage that exceeds allowable limits within 100 hours air time or 30 days, whichever occurs first, whereas this AD requires the inspection within 25 hours TIS and removing any shoulder harness seat belt from service before further flight if there is any rip or abrasion.

Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16 applies to all serial-numbered Model 206, 206A, 206A-1, 206B, 206B-1, 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, 206L-4, 222, 222B, 222U, 230, 407, 427, 429 and 430 helicopters, whereas this AD applies to Model 206, 206A, 206A-1, 206B, 206B-1, 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, 206L-4, 222, 222B, 222U, 230, 407, 427, 429, and 430 helicopters with a comfort clip installed or helicopters that have been modified per STC SH2073SO (installation of shoulder harness restraint system) or STC SH2751SO (installation of a passenger shoulder harness restraint system).

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 2,347 helicopters of U.S. Registry. Labor rates are estimated at \$85 per work-hour. Based on these numbers, the FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD.

Removing each comfort clip will take about 0.5 work-hour for an estimated cost of \$43 per clip and up to \$807,368 for the U.S. fleet.

Replacing a shoulder harness seat belt, if required, will take about 1 work-hour and parts will cost about \$250 per shoulder harness seat belt, for an estimated cost of \$335 per replacement.

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:



AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE

www.faa.gov/aircraft/safety/alerts/
www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/advanced.html

2021-19-01 Bell Textron Canada Limited: Amendment 39-21719; Docket No. FAA-2021-0539; Project Identifier 2018-SW-048-AD.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective October 13, 2021.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Bell Textron Canada Limited Model 206, 206A, 206A-1 (OH-58A), 206B, 206B-1, 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, 206L-4, 222, 222B, 222U, 230, 407, 427, 429, and 430 helicopters, certificated in any category:

- (1) With a shoulder harness seat belt comfort clip (comfort clip) installed; or
- (2) That have been modified per Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) SH2073SO (installation of shoulder harness restraint system) or STC SH2751SO (installation of a passenger shoulder harness restraint system).

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 2500 Cabin Equipment/Furnishings.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as a comfort clip interfering with the seat belt inertia reel, which could prevent the seatbelt from locking and result in injury to the occupant during an emergency landing.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Required Actions

- (1) Within 25 hours time-in-service after the effective date of this AD:
 - (i) Remove each comfort clip from service.
 - (ii) Inspect each shoulder harness seat belt for a rip and abrasion. If there is a rip or any abrasion, before further flight, remove the shoulder harness seat belt from service.
- (2) As of the effective date of this AD, do not install any comfort clip on any helicopter.

(h) 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 (i)(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.

(i) Related Information

(1) For more information about this AD, contact Steven Warwick, Aerospace Engineer, Certification Section, Fort Worth ACO Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5225; email Steven.R.Warwick@faa.gov.

(2) The subject of this AD is addressed in Transport Canada AD CF-2018-16, dated June 14, 2018. You may view the Transport Canada AD on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> in the AD Docket in Docket No. FAA-2021-0539.

(j) Material Incorporated by Reference

None.

Issued on August 31, 2021.

Gaetano A. Sciortino,
Deputy Director for Strategic Initiatives, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft
Certification Service.

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