

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-SW-25-AD; Amendment 39-13217; AD 2003-13-15]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Schweizer Aircraft Corporation Model 269A, 269A-1, 269B, 269C, and TH-55A Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment supersedes an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to Schweizer Aircraft Corporation (Schweizer) Model 269A, 269A-1, 269B, 269C, and TH-55A helicopters, that currently requires inspecting the lugs on certain aft cluster fittings and each aluminum end fitting on certain tailboom struts. Modifying or replacing each strut assembly within a specified time period and serializing certain strut assemblies are also required by the existing AD. This amendment requires the same actions as the existing AD, and also requires a one-time inspection and repair, if necessary, of certain additional cluster fittings, and replacement and modification of certain cluster fittings within 150 hours time-in-service (TIS) or 6 months, whichever occurs first. This amendment is prompted by the need to expand the applicability to include certain Hughes-manufactured cluster fittings and to provide a terminating action for the repetitive dye-penetrant inspections of the cluster fittings. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent failure of a tailboom support strut or a cluster fitting, which could cause rotation of a tailboom into the main rotor blades, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective August 12, 2003.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of August 12, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, P.O. Box 147, Elmira, New York 14902. This information may be examined at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: George Duckett, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, New York Aircraft Certification Office, Airframe and Propulsion Branch, 10 Fifth Street, 3rd Floor, Valley Stream, New York, telephone (516) 256-7525, fax (516) 568-2716.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend 14 CFR part 39 by superseding AD 2001-25-52, Amendment 39-12726 (67 FR 19646, April 23, 2002), for Schweizer Model 269A, 269A-1, 269B, 269C, and TH-55A helicopters, was published in the Federal Register on February 26, 2003 (68 FR 8865). That action proposed to require:

- Within 10 hours TIS and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 50 hours TIS, dye-penetrant inspect the lugs and replace any cracked cluster fitting;
- Within 150 hours TIS or 6 months, whichever occurs first, replace or modify, using kit, part number (P/N) SA-269K-106-1, each cluster fitting, P/N 269A2234 and P/N 269A2235;
- For strut assemblies, P/N 269A2015 or P/N 269A2015-5, at intervals not to exceed 50 hours TIS, visually inspect the strut aluminum end fittings for deformation or damage, dye-penetrant inspect the strut aluminum end fittings for a crack, and replace deformed, damaged, or cracked parts. Within 500 hours TIS or one year, whichever occurs first, modify or replace certain part-numbered strut assemblies;
- Within 100 hours TIS, for Model 269C helicopters, serialize each strut assembly, P/N 269A2015-5 and 269A2015-11;
- Within 25 hours TIS or 60 days, whichever occurs first, inspect and repair cluster fittings, P/N 269A2234-3 and P/N 269A2235-3; and
- Before further flight, replace any cluster fitting that is cracked or has a surface defect beyond rework limits.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. No comments were received on the proposal or the FAA's determination of the cost to the public. The FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed.

On July 10, 2002, the FAA issued a new version of 14 CFR part 39 (67 FR 47997, July 22, 2002), which governs the FAA's AD system. The regulation now includes material that relates to altered products, special flight permits, and alternative methods of compliance. However, for clarity and consistency in this final rule, we have retained the language of the NPRM regarding that material.

The FAA estimates that 1,000 helicopters of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD. It will take approximately 2.5 work hours for each dye-penetrant inspection, 12 work hours to replace one cluster fitting, 4 work hours to modify or replace the strut assembly, 0.25 work hours to serialize the strut assembly, and 16 work hours to modify a cluster fitting. The average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts will cost approximately \$5 for each fitting inspection, \$1,635 to replace a cluster fitting, \$1,500 to modify or replace the strut assembly, and \$1,688 for each cluster fitting modification kit (2 fittings). Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$2,260,320 (assuming 2,000 cluster fittings are inspected, 50 cluster fittings are replaced, 6 strut assemblies are modified or replaced, 6 strut assemblies are serialized, and 1,010 cluster fittings are modified).

The regulations adopted herein 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. Therefore, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (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); 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. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it 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, Incorporation by reference, 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 removing Amendment 39-12726 (67 FR 19646, April 23, 2002), and by adding a new airworthiness directive (AD), Amendment 39-13217, to read as follows:

AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE



Aircraft Certification Service
Washington, DC

U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

We post ADs on the internet at "www.faa.gov"

The following Airworthiness Directive issued by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with the provisions of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 39, applies to an aircraft model of which our records indicate you may be the registered owner. Airworthiness Directives affect aviation safety and are regulations which require immediate attention. You are cautioned that no person may operate an aircraft to which an Airworthiness Directive applies, except in accordance with the requirements of the Airworthiness Directive (reference 14 CFR part 39, subpart 39.3).

2003-13-15 Schweizer Aircraft Corporation: Amendment 39-13217. Docket No. 2002-SW-25-AD. Supersedes AD 2001-25-52, Amendment 39-12726, Docket No. 2001-SW-58-AD.

Applicability: Model 269A, 269A-1, 269B, 269C, and TH-55A helicopters, certificated in any category, with a tailboom support strut (strut) assembly, part number (P/N) 269A2015 or 269A2015-5; or with a center frame aft cluster fitting, P/N 269A2234 or 269A2235, and an aft cluster fitting listed in the following table:

Helicopter model number	Helicopter serial number	With aft cluster fitting, P/N
Model 269C	0570 through 1165	269A2234-3
Model 269C	0500 through 1165	269A2235-3
Model 269A, A-1, B, or C, or TH-55A	All	269A2234-3 or 269A2235-3

Exception: For the Model 269A, A-1, B, or C or TH-55A helicopters with Hughes-manufactured cluster fittings, P/N 269A2234-3 or P/N 269A2235-3, installed, if there is written documentation in the aircraft or manufacturer's records that shows the cluster fitting was originally sold by Hughes after June 1, 1988, the requirements of this AD are not applicable.

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 (h) 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 prevent failure of a tailboom support strut or lug on a cluster fitting, which could cause rotation of a tailboom into the main rotor blades, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

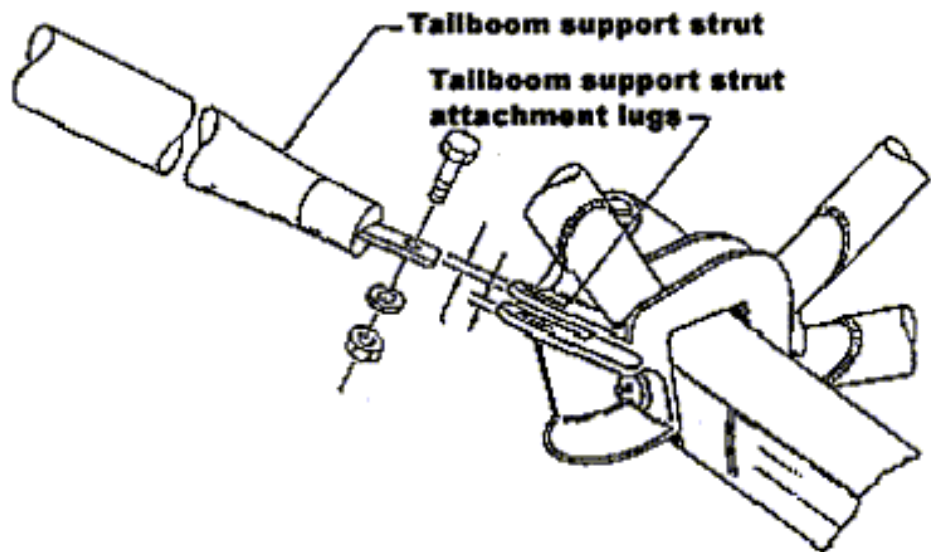
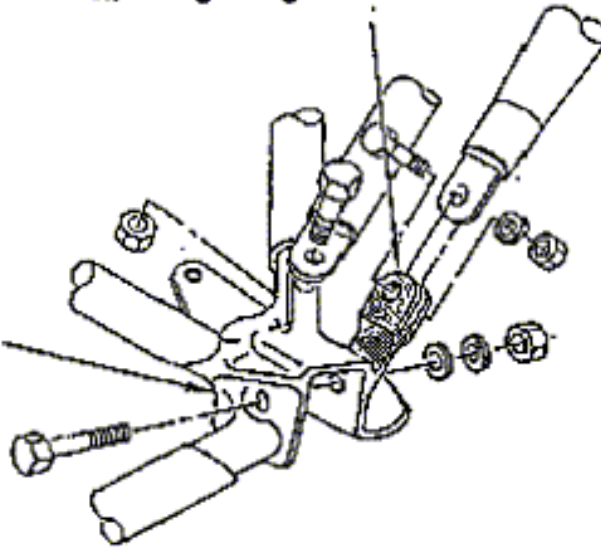
(a) Within 10 hours time-in-service (TIS), and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 50 hours TIS, for helicopters with cluster fittings, P/N 269A2234 or P/N 269A2235:

(1) Using paint remover, remove paint from the lugs on each cluster fitting. Wash with water and dry. The tailboom support strut must be removed prior to the paint stripping.

(2) Dye-penetrant inspect the lugs on each cluster fitting. See the following Figure 1:

**Inspect both attachment
lugs (top and bottom sides).
Also, entire cluster fitting
including flange area.**

**269A2234
Aft cluster fitting
Left side shown
(269A2235 right side)**



Right side cluster fitting shown

(3) If a crack is found, before further flight, replace the cracked cluster fitting with an airworthy cluster fitting.

(b) Cluster fittings, P/N 269A2234 and P/N 269A2235, that have NOT been modified with Kit P/N SA-269K-106-1, are NOT eligible replacement parts.

(c) Within 150 hours TIS or 6 months, whichever occurs first, replace each cluster fitting, P/N 269A2234 and P/N 269A2235, with an airworthy cluster fitting or modify each cluster fitting, P/N 269A2234 and P/N 269A2235, with Kit, P/N SA-269K-106-1. Installing the kit is terminating action for the 50-hour TIS repetitive dye-penetrant inspection for these cluster fittings. Broken or cracked cluster fittings are not eligible for the kit modification.

(d) For helicopters with strut assemblies, P/N 269A2015 or 269A2015-5, accomplish the following:

(1) At intervals not to exceed 50 hours TIS:

(i) Remove the strut assemblies, P/N 269A2015 or P/N 269A2015-5.

(ii) Visually inspect the strut aluminum end fittings for deformation or damage and dye-penetrant inspect the strut aluminum end fittings for a crack in accordance with Step II of Schweizer Service Information Notice No. N-109.2, dated September 1, 1976 (SIN N-109.2).

(iii) If deformation, damage, or a crack is found, before further flight, modify the strut assemblies by replacing the aluminum end fittings with stainless steel end fittings, P/N 269A2017-3 and -5, and attach bolts in accordance with Step III of SIN N-109.2; or replace each strut assembly P/N 269A2015 with P/N 269A2015-9, and replace each strut assembly P/N 269A2015-5 with P/N 269A2015-11.

(2) Within 500 hours TIS or one year, whichever occurs first, modify or replace the strut assemblies in accordance with paragraph (d)(1)(iii) of this AD.

(e) For the Model 269C helicopters, within 100 hours TIS, serialize each strut assembly, P/N 269A2015-5 and P/N 269A2015-11, in accordance with Schweizer Service Information Notice No. N-108, dated May 21, 1973.

(f) Within 25 hours TIS or 60 days, whichever occurs first, for cluster fittings, P/N 269A2234-3 and P/N 269A2235-3, perform a one-time inspection and repair, if required, in accordance with Procedures, Part II of Schweizer Service Bulletin No. B-277, dated January 25, 2002.

(g) Before further flight, replace any cluster fitting that is cracked or has surface defects beyond rework limits with an airworthy cluster fitting.

(h) 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, New York Aircraft Certification Office (NYACO), FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, NYACO.

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

(i) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with 14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199 to operate the helicopter to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(j) The inspections, modifications, replacements and serializations shall be done in accordance with Schweizer Service Information Notice No. N-109.2, dated September 1, 1976; Schweizer Service Information Notice No. N-108, dated May 21, 1973; and Schweizer Service Bulletin No. B-277, dated January 25, 2002. 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 Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, P.O. Box 147, Elmira, New York 14902. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd.,

Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

(k) This amendment becomes effective on August 12, 2003.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on June 24, 2003.

David A. Downey,

Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 03-16685 Filed 7-7-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P