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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-SW-53-AD; Amendment 39-13294; AD 2003-18-03]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model EC 155B, SA-365N and N1, AS-365N2, and AS 365 N3 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) for the specified Eurocopter France (Eurocopter) model helicopters that requires inspecting the hydraulic brake hose (hose) for crazing, pinching, distortion, or leaks at the torque link hinge and replacing the hose, if necessary. This amendment also requires inspecting the hose and the emergency flotation gear pipe to ensure adequate clearance, and adjusting the landing gear leg, if necessary. This amendment is prompted by a report of a hose compression due to interference with a clamp that attaches the emergency flotation gear pipe. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent failure of the hose, resulting in failure of hydraulic pressure to the brakes on the affected landing gear wheel, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter during a run-on landing.

DATES: Effective October 14, 2003.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of October 14, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from American Eurocopter Corporation, 2701 Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, Texas 75053-4005, telephone (972) 641-3460, fax (972) 641-3527. 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: Uday Garadi, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Safety Management Group, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0110, telephone (817) 222-5123, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend 14 CFR part 39 to include an AD for Eurocopter Model EC 155B, SA-365N and N1, AS-365N2, and AS 365 N3 helicopters was published in the Federal Register on April 7, 2003 (68 FR 16735). That action proposed to require, within the next 10 hours time-in-service (TIS), inspecting the hose for crazing, pinching, distortion, or leaks at the torque link hinge and replacing the hose before further flight, if necessary. It also proposed to require, at the next 100-hour TIS inspection, inspecting the hose and the emergency flotation gear pipe to ensure adequate clearance, and adjusting the landing gear leg, if necessary.

The Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (DGAC), the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on Eurocopter Model EC 155B, SA-365N and N1, AS-365N2, and AS 365 N3. The DGAC advises of receiving a report of a hose compression due to interference with a clamp that attaches the emergency flotation gear pipe.

Eurocopter has issued Alert Telex No. 32.00.09, for Model AS 365N, N1, N2, and N3 helicopters, and Alert Telex No. 32A004, for Model EC 155B helicopters, both dated July 31, 2002. These alert telexes specify checks of the condition of the hose, as well as ensuring that there is no interference between the hose and the emergency flotation gear pipe when the landing gear is retracted. The DGAC classified these alert telexes as mandatory and issued AD No. 2002-475-007(A) for Model EC 155 B helicopters, and AD No. 2002-474-058(A), for Model AS 365 N, N1, N2, and N3 helicopters, both dated September 18, 2002, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in France.

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 44 helicopters of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 5 work hours per helicopter to accomplish the inspection and 5 work hours to replace any parts, as necessary, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Required parts will cost approximately $459 for the hose. If replacing the hose on two sides is required, the cost will be approximately $918. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $1,518 per helicopter, or $50,094 for the entire fleet, assuming 75 percent of the fleet (33 helicopters) is equipped with emergency flotation gear and the hoses are replaced on all 33 helicopters.

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 adding a new airworthiness directive 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).

2003-18-03 Eurocopter France: Amendment 39-13294. Docket No. 2002-SW-53-AD.

Applicability: Model EC 155B, SA-365N and N1, AS-365N2, and AS 365 N3 helicopters, with emergency flotation gear installed, 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 (d) 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 the hose, resulting in failure of hydraulic pressure to the brakes on the affected landing gear wheel and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter during a run-on landing, accomplish the following:

(a) Within 10 hours time-in-service (TIS), inspect the hose for crazing, pinching, distortion, or leaks as illustrated in Area A of Figure 1 of Eurocopter Alert Telex No. 32.00.09, for Model SA-365N and N1, AS-365N2, and AS 365 N3 helicopters, and Alert Telex No. 32A004, for Model EC 155B helicopters, both dated July 31, 2002 (Alert Telexes).

(b) If crazing, pinching, distortion, or leaks exist, replace the hose with an airworthy hose before further flight.

(c) At the next 100-hour TIS inspection, inspect the hose and the emergency flotation gear pipe to ensure adequate clearance and adjust the landing gear leg, if necessary, in accordance with the Operational Procedure, paragraph 2.B.2., of the applicable Alert Telexes.

(d) 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, Safety Management Group, 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, Safety Management Group.

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

(e) 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.

(f) The inspections and adjustments, if necessary, shall be done in accordance with Eurocopter Alert Telex No. 32.00.09, for Model SA-365N and N1, AS-365N2, and AS 365 N3 helicopters, and Alert Telex No. 32A004, for Model EC 155B helicopters, both dated July 31, 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 American Eurocopter Corporation, 2701 Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, Texas 75053-4005, telephone (972) 641-3460, fax (972) 641-3527. 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.

(g) This amendment becomes effective on October 14, 2003.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD No. 2002-475-007(A) and AD No. 2002-474-058(A), both dated September 18, 2002.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas on August 26, 2003.
Scott A. Horn,
Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.
[FR Doc. 03-22619 Filed 9-5-03; 8:45 am]
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