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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2016-6436; Directorate Identifier 2015-SW-037-AD; Amendment 39-18869; AD 2017-09-07]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (Airbus Helicopters) Model MBB-BK117 C-2 helicopters. This AD requires inspecting the pilot collective wiring harness and was prompted by a report that the heat-shrinkable sleeve prevented the twist grip on the collective from being fully engaged during a flight test. The actions of this AD are intended to prevent an unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective June 14, 2017.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain document listed in this AD as of June 14, 2017.

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this final rule, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 N. Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at https://www.airbushelicopters.com/techpub/FO/scripts/myFO_login.php. 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. It is also available on the Internet at http://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2016-6436.

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-2016-6436; or in person at the Docket Operations Office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, any incorporated-by-reference service information, the economic evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations Office (phone: 800-647-5527) is U.S. Department of

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: George Schwab, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email george.schwab@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

On December 7, 2016, at 81 FR 88143, 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 Airbus Helicopters MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters, serial numbers 9004 through 9708. The NPRM proposed to require visually inspecting the pilot collective wiring harness for proper installation of the heat-shrinkable and transparent sleeves. The proposed requirements were intended to detect an incorrectly installed heat-shrinkable sleeve on the collective lever wiring harness, which if not corrected, could result in chafing of the wiring and subsequent failure of the hoist cable cutter or emergency landing gear flotation systems.

The NPRM was prompted by AD No. 2015-0144, dated July 21, 2015, 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 MBB-BK117 C-2 helicopters, up to serial number 9708. EASA advises that, during a flight test, the pilot could not fully engage a twist grip on a Model MBB-BK117 C-2 helicopter. According to EASA, further investigation found a transparent sleeve on the collective lever wiring harness damaged because of incorrect installation of the heat-shrinkable sleeve. This condition, if not detected and corrected, could result in chafing of the harness, leading to the malfunction of the affected systems, EASA advises. EASA consequently requires a one-time inspection of the heat-shrinkable and transparent sleeves installed on the collective lever wiring harness.

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 Germany and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with Germany, EASA, its technical representative, has notified us of the unsafe condition described in the EASA AD. We are issuing this AD because we evaluated all information provided by EASA 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 EASA AD

The compliance time in the EASA AD is based on whether the helicopter has an externally mounted hoist or emergency flotation system. This AD requires compliance within 100 hours time-in-service for all applicable helicopters.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

We reviewed Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin ASB MBB-BK117 C-2-88A-010, Revision 1, dated April 16, 2015 (ASB), which specifies a visual inspection of the heat-shrinkable sleeve for correct position. If the sleeve's position is incorrect, the ASB specifies shortening the sleeve. If there is any damage, the ASB calls for replacing the damaged parts.

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.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects 113 helicopters of U.S. Registry and that labor costs average $85 a work hour.

- Inspecting the pilot collective wiring harness for the correct position of the heat-shrinkable sleeve requires 1.5 work hours. No parts are required for a total cost of $128 per helicopter and $14,464 for the U.S. fleet.
- Replacing or repairing the sleeves requires 5.5 work hours, and parts cost $10, for a total cost of $478 per helicopter.

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):

2017-09-07 Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH: Amendment 39-18869; Docket No. FAA-2016-6436; Directorate Identifier 2015-SW-037-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (Airbus Helicopters) Model MBB-BK 117 C-2 helicopters, serial numbers 9004 through 9708, certificated in any category.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as an incorrectly installed heat-shrinkable sleeve on the collective lever wiring harness. This condition could result in chafing of the wiring and subsequent failure of the hoist cable cutter or emergency landing gear flotation systems.

(c) Effective Date

This AD becomes effective June 14, 2017.

(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

Within 100 hours time-in-service, remove the pilot collective lever and visually inspect the pilot collective lever wiring harness for proper installation of the heat-shrinkable sleeve and transparent sleeve and for damage in accordance with paragraph 3.B.2.1 and as depicted in Figure 2 of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin MBB-BK117 C-2-88A-010, Revision 1, dated April 16, 2015 (ASB).

(1) If the heat-shrinkable sleeve and transparent sleeve are installed as depicted in Figure 2 of the ASB and there is no damage, install the collective lever in accordance with paragraphs 3.B.2.3.a through 3.B.2.3.f of the ASB.

(2) If the heat-shrinkable sleeve or transparent sleeve is installed as depicted in Figure 3, Detail B of the ASB, alter the heat-shrinkable sleeve as depicted in Figure 3, Detail C.

(3) If the transparent sleeve is damaged as depicted in Figure 4, Detail D of the ASB, replace the heat-shrinkable sleeve, transparent sleeve, and identification sleeve. Replace any wire that has a nick, scratch, cut, or is frayed.

(f) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Group, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: George Schwab, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, 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

The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD No. 2015-0144, dated July 21, 2015. You may view the EASA AD on the Internet at http://www.regulations.gov in Docket No. FAA-2016-6436.

(h) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: Wheel/Ski/Float/Emergency Equipment, 3246/2560.

(i) 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 MBB-BK117 C-2-88A-010, Revision 1, dated April 16, 2015.

(ii) Reserved.

(3) For Airbus Helicopters service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 N. Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at https://www.airbushelicopters.com/techpub/FO/scripts/myFO_login.php.

(4) You may view this service information at 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, call (202) 741-6030, or go to: http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 27, 2017.
Scott A. Horn,
Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.