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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2020-0238; Product Identifier 2018-SW-072-AD; Amendment 39-21144; AD 2020-12-09]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters. This AD was prompted by a report that a changed manufacturing process for the tail rotor blades (TRB) was implemented, affecting the structural characteristics of the blades and generating a new part number for these blades. This AD requires re-identifying each affected TRB having a certain part number and serial number and establishing a life limit for the new part numbers. This AD also prohibits installation of any affected TRB identified with the old part number on any helicopter. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective July 28, 2020.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of July 28, 2020.

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.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html. You may view this 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. It is also available on the internet at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0238.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the internet at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0238; 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, any comments received, and other information. The 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: Kristi Bradley, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone 817-222-5485; email Kristin.Bradley@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all Airbus Helicopters Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters. The NPRM published in the Federal Register on March 11, 2020 (85 FR 14180). The NPRM was prompted by a report that a changed manufacturing process for the TRB was implemented, affecting the structural characteristics of the blades and generating a new part number for these blades. The NPRM proposed to require re-identifying each affected TRB having a certain part number and serial number and establishing a life limit for the new part numbers. The NPRM also proposed to prohibit installation of any affected TRB identified with the old part number on any helicopter. The FAA is issuing this AD to ensure the new part number (P/N) TRBs do not exceed their life limit, which could lead to loss of the TRB and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2018-0182, dated August 28, 2018 (referred to after this as "the MCAI"), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus Helicopters Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters. You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the internet at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0238.

Comments

The FAA gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this final rule. The FAA received no comments on the NPRM or on the determination of the cost to the public.

Conclusion

The FAA reviewed the relevant data and determined that air safety and the public interest require adopting this final rule as proposed, except for minor editorial changes. The FAA has determined that these minor changes:

- Are consistent with the intent that was proposed in the NPRM for addressing the unsafe condition; and
- Do not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed in the NPRM.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR Part 51

Airbus Helicopters has issued Alert Service Bulletin EC130-04A007, Revision 0, dated July 18, 2018 ("ASB EC130-04A007"). This service information describes procedures for re-identifying a TRB with P/N 350A333002.02 for certain serial numbers, as specified in ASB EC130-04A007. 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.

Difference Between This Proposed AD and the MCAI or Service Information

EASA AD 2018-0182 specifies to replace TRBs having P/N 350A333002.05. However, this part number is not installed on in-service helicopters and is not addressed in Airbus Helicopters ASB EC130-04A007. Therefore, this AD does not require replacing TRBs having P/N 350A333002.05.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 253 helicopters of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated Costs for Required Actions*

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
1 work-hour × $85 per hour = $85	$0 **	$85	$21,505 *

* The FAA has received no definitive data that would enable the agency to provide cost estimates for the additional applicable maintenance instructions specified in this AD.
** The FAA has received no definitive data on the parts costs for required actions.

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 products 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.

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):

2020-12-09 Airbus Helicopters: Amendment 39-21144; Docket No. FAA-2020-0238; Product Identifier 2018-SW-072-AD.

(a) Effective Date

This AD is July 28, 2020.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus Helicopters Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code 6410, Tail rotor blade.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report that a new manufacturing process for the tail rotor blades (TRBs) has been implemented, affecting the structural characteristics of the TRB and generating a new part number (P/N) for these blades. It was determined that a new life limit is needed for the new P/N TRBs. The FAA is issuing this AD to ensure the new P/N TRBs do not exceed their life limit, which could lead to loss of the TRB and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Definition of an Affected Part for the Re-identification and Validation of Rework/Repair/Modification

An “affected part” is a TRB having P/N 350A333002.02 and a serial number specified in Appendix 4.A. of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin EC130-04A007, Revision 0, dated July 18, 2018 (“ASB EC130-04A007”).

(h) Part Replacement (Life Limit Implementation)

Before exceeding 10,000 hours time-in-service (TIS) since first installation on a helicopter: Remove from service each TRB having P/N 350A333002.04.

(i) Part Re-Identification and Validation of Rework/Repair/Modification

(1) Within 1,200 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD: Re-identify each affected part, in accordance with 3.B. of the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Helicopters ASB EC130-04A007.

(2) For each affected part which has been subject to rework, repair, or modification before the re-identification, as required by paragraph (i)(1) of this AD, within 6 months after the effective date of this AD, contact the Manager, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, for additional applicable maintenance instructions and, within the compliance time identified in those instructions, accomplish those instructions accordingly.

(j) Parts Installation Prohibition and Rework/Repair/Modification Limitation

(1) As of the effective date of this AD, no person may install a TRB having P/N 350A333002.02 and a serial number specified in Appendix 4.A. of ASB EC130-04A007 on any helicopter.

(2) As of the effective date of this AD, no person may accomplish any rework, repair, or modification of an affected part, unless it has been determined that the rework, repair, or modification is FAA-approved for P/N 350A333002.04.

(k) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: Kristi Bradley, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone 817-222-5485; 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, 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.

(l) Related Information

(1) The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD 2018-0182, dated August 28, 2018. This EASA AD may be found in the AD docket on the internet at https://www.regulations.gov by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0238.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Kristi Bradley, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone 817-222-5485; email Kristin.Bradley@faa.gov.

(m) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference (IBR) 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 this AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin EC130-04A007, Revision 0, dated July 18, 2018.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For 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.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html.

(4) You may view this 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.

(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, email fedreg.legal@nara.gov, or go to: https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html.

Issued on June 4, 2020.

Lance T. Gant,

Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

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