

Note 1: This airworthiness directive (AD) applies to each engine identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For engines 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 (c) 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 aft mount whiffletree failure, which if it occurred with other critical aft mount component failures, could possibly result in an engine mount system failure, and separation of the engine from the aircraft, accomplish the following:

New Life Limit

(a) Remove from service aft mount whiffletrees, P/N 1692M12G02, before accumulating 18,000 cycles-since-new, and replace with serviceable parts.

(b) Except for the provisions of paragraph (c) of this AD, no aft mount whiffletrees, P/N 1692M12G02, may remain in service beyond the new life limit stated in paragraph (a) of this AD.

Alternative Methods of Compliance

(c) 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, Engine Certification Office (ECO). Operators shall submit their requests through an appropriate FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, ECO.

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

(d) This amendment becomes effective on April 7, 2000.

Issued in Burlington, Massachusetts, on March 1, 2000.

Diane S. Romanosky,

Acting Manager, Engine and Propeller Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-SW-76-AD; Amendment 39-11620; AD 2000-05-11]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model SA.315B, SA.316B, SA.316C, SA 318B, SA 318C, SA.319B, SE 313B, SE 3130, SE.3160, and SA 3180 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to Eurocopter France Model SA.315B, SA.316B, SA.316C, SA 318B, SA 318C, SA.319B, SE 313B, SE 3130, SE.3160, and SA 3180 helicopters that have certain tail rotor blades (blades) installed. This action requires reducing the service life of those blades to 400 hours time-in-service (TIS). This amendment is prompted by the discovery that 10 blades were manufactured incorrectly. This condition, if not corrected, could result in failure of a blade and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective March 24, 2000.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before May 8, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-SW-76-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Monschke, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, ASW-111, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222-5116, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (DGAC), which is the airworthiness authority for France, notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on Eurocopter France Model SA.315B, SA.316B, SA.316C, SA 318B, SA 318C, SA.319B, SE 313B, SE 3130, SE.3160, and SA 3180 helicopters. The DGAC advises that the service life must be reduced on the blades due to the discovery of a non-compliance of blade cuff-stems (blade to hub attachment) metallurgical structure affecting the service life.

These helicopter models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the DGAC has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the DGAC, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of these type designs that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other Eurocopter France Model SA.315B, SA.316B, SA.316C, SA 318B, SA 318C, SA.319B, SE 313B, SE 3130, SE.3160, and SA 3180 helicopters of the same type designs registered in the United States, this AD is being issued to prevent failure of a blade and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. This AD requires reducing the service life of certain serial-numbered blades, part number 3160S34.11.000.00, to 400 hours TIS. The short compliance time involved is required because the previously described critical unsafe condition can adversely affect the controllability of the helicopter. Therefore, retiring the blades from use upon reaching 400 hours TIS is required prior to further flight and this AD must be issued immediately.

None of the Model SA.315B, SA.316B, SA.316C, SA 318B, SA 318C, SA.319B, SE 313B, SE 3130, SE.3160, and SA 3180 helicopters affected by this action are on the U.S. Register. All helicopters included in the applicability of this rule are operated by non-U.S. operators under foreign registry; therefore, they are not directly affected by this AD action. However, the FAA considers that this rule is necessary to ensure that the unsafe condition is addressed in the event that any of these subject helicopters are imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future.

Should an affected helicopter be imported and placed on the U.S. Register in the future, it would require only a few minutes to note the changed retirement life in the maintenance manual, therefore the cost impact is negligible.

Since this AD action does not affect any helicopter that is currently on the U.S. Register, it has no adverse economic impact and imposes no additional burden on any person. Therefore, notice and public procedures hereon are unnecessary and the amendment may be made effective in

less than 30 days after publication in the **Federal Register**.

Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified under the caption **ADDRESSES**. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 99-SW-76-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

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.

The FAA has determined that notice and public comment are unnecessary in promulgating this regulation; therefore, it can be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft since none of these model helicopters are registered in the United States. The FAA has also determined that this regulation is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866. It has

been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it, if filed, 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, 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:

AD 2000-05-11 Eurocopter France:
Amendment 39-11620. Docket No. 99-SW-76-AD.

Applicability: Eurocopter France SA.315B, SA.316B, SA.316C, SA 318B, SA 318C, SA.319B, SE 313B, SE 3130, SE.3160, and SA 3180 helicopters, with tail rotor blades, part number (P/N) 3160S34.11.000.00, serial numbers (S/N) 23484 through 23493, 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 (c) 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 before further flight, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent failure of a tail rotor blade and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Remove each tail rotor blade, P/N 3160S34.11.000.00, S/N 23484 through

23493, upon reaching 400 hours time-in-service (TIS). Replace each blade with an airworthy tail rotor blade.

(b) This AD revises the Limitations Section of the maintenance manual by establishing a new life limit of 400 hours TIS for the tail rotor blades.

(c) 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, Regulations 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, Regulations Group.

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

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

(e) This amendment becomes effective on March 24, 2000.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD T1999-127-057(A); AD T1999-128-060(A); and AD T1999-129-043(A), all dated March 25, 1999 and AD 1999-129-043(A), AD 1999-127-057(A), and AD 1999-128-060(A), all dated April 7, 1999.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 1, 2000.

Eric Bries,

Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98-CE-88-AD; Amendment 39-11621; AD 98-21-21 R1]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bob Fields Aerocessories Inflatable Door Seals

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment revises Airworthiness Directive (AD) 98-21-21, which currently requires deactivating the electric door seal inflation system for all aircraft equipped with Bob Fields Aerocessories inflatable door seals. Since issuance of that AD, the manufacturer has developed a modification that would allow these electric door seal inflation systems to remain in service, and the Federal