

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION****Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 39**

[Docket No. FAA-2018-0091; Product Identifier 2017-SW-054-AD; Amendment 39-19334; AD 2018-15-02]

RIN 2120-AA64

**Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters**

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

**ACTION:** Final rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350BA, AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters. This AD requires inspecting the tail rotor (TR) pitch rod. This AD is prompted by a report of several cases of damaged TR pitch rod ball joints. The actions of this AD are intended to correct an unsafe condition on these helicopters.

**DATES:** This AD becomes effective August 3, 2018.

We must receive comments on this AD by September 17, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Docket:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for sending your comments electronically.

- *Fax:* 202-493-2251.

- *Mail:* Send comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- *Hand Delivery:* Deliver to the "Mail" address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

**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-2018-0091; 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 AD, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, the economic evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the **ADDRESSES** section.

Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

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 [http://www.helicopters.airbus.com/website/en/ref/Technical-Support\\_73.html](http://www.helicopters.airbus.com/website/en/ref/Technical-Support_73.html). 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.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

David Hatfield, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email [david.hatfield@faa.gov](mailto:david.hatfield@faa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Comments Invited**

This AD is a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety, and we did not provide you with notice and an opportunity to provide your comments prior to it becoming effective. However, we invite you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written comments, data, or views. We also invite comments relating to the economic, environmental, energy, or federalism impacts that resulted from adopting this AD. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the AD, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. To ensure the docket does not contain duplicate comments, commenters should send only one copy of written comments, or if comments are filed electronically, commenters should submit them only one time. We will file in the docket all comments that we receive, as well as a report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerning this rulemaking during the comment period. We will consider all the comments we receive and may conduct additional rulemaking based on those comments.

**Discussion**

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued Emergency AD No. 2017-0020-E, dated February 7, 2017, to correct an unsafe condition for Airbus Helicopters Model AS 350 B, AS 350 BA, AS 350 BB, AS 350 B1, AS 350 B2, AS 350 B3, AS 355 E, AS 355 F, AS 355 F1, AS 355 F2, AS 355 N and AS 355 NP helicopters with modification (MOD) 075601 or MOD 076602 installed. EASA advises of several

reports of damaged horn-side TR pitch rod elastomeric ball joints, and of an ongoing investigation to determine the cause of the damage. EASA states that this condition could result in loss of control of the helicopter. To address this unsafe condition, the EASA AD requires repetitive inspections of the TR pitch rod. While the inspections are contained in the Airworthiness Limitations Section of the helicopter maintenance manual, the EASA AD reduces the interval from 50 flight hours to 10 flight hours.

**FAA's Determination**

These helicopters have been approved by the aviation authority of France and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with France, 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.

**Related Service Information**

We reviewed Airbus Helicopters Emergency Alert Service Bulletin (EASB) No. 05.00.86 for Model AS350-series helicopters and EASB No. 05.00.75 for Model AS355-series helicopters, both Revision 1 and both dated February 6, 2017. This service information contains procedures for inspecting the TR pitch change rod elastomeric ball joint for damage.

**AD Requirements**

This AD requires, for helicopters with a TR pitch change rod elastomeric ball joint installed, within 10 hours time-in-service (TIS) and thereafter at intervals not exceeding 10 hours TIS, inspecting each face of the TR pitch rod blade side ball joint for debonding, extrusion, and a crack. If there is debonding, extrusion, or a crack with a circumference of 90 degrees or more, this AD requires replacing the TR pitch rod before further flight. Airbus Helicopters identifies the installation of a TR pitch change rod elastomeric ball joint as MOD 075601 or MOD 076602.

**Differences Between This AD and the EASA AD**

The EASA AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model AS 350 BB helicopters. This AD does not as that model is not type-certificated in the U.S.

**Interim Action**

We consider this AD to be an interim action. If final action is later identified,

we might consider further rulemaking then.

### Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects 896 helicopters of U.S. Registry.

We estimate that operators may incur the following costs in order to comply with this AD. At an average labor rate of \$85 per hour, inspecting the TR pitch rod ball joint requires 0.5 hour, for a cost of \$43 per helicopter and \$38,528 for the U.S. fleet, per inspection cycle.

If required, replacing a TR pitch rod requires one work-hour and required parts cost \$3,174, for a cost per helicopter of \$3,259.

### FAA's Justification and Determination of the Effective Date

An unsafe condition exists that requires the immediate adoption of this AD without providing an opportunity for public comments prior to adoption. The FAA has found that the risk to the flying public justifies waiving notice and comment prior to adoption of this rule because the inspections required by this AD must be accomplished within 10 hours TIS and thereafter every 10 hours TIS. Therefore, we find good cause that notice and opportunity for prior public comment are impracticable. In addition, for the reason stated above, we find that good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

### 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 products identified in this rulemaking action.

### Regulatory Findings

We determined that 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, 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):

#### 2018–15–02 Airbus Helicopters:

Amendment 39–19334; Docket No. FAA–2018–0091; Product Identifier 2017–SW–054–AD.

#### (a) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350BA, AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters, certificated in any category, with a tail rotor (TR) pitch change rod elastomeric ball joint installed.

Note 1 to paragraph (a): Airbus Helicopters modification (MOD) 075601 and MOD 076602 consist of replacing the TR pitch change rod with an elastomeric ball joint rod.

#### (b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as a damaged elastomeric ball joint on the TR pitch change rod. This condition could result in failure of the TR pitch change rod and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

#### (c) Effective Date

This AD becomes effective August 3, 2018.

#### (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 10 hours time-in-service (TIS) and thereafter at intervals not exceeding 10 hours TIS:

- (1) Manually induce a flapping movement in the TR blade until the pitch change rod rotates a minimum of 10 degrees.
- (2) Inspect both faces of the blade side of the ball joint elastomer for debonding, extrusion, and cracks. If there is a crack or any debonding or extrusion with a circumference of 90 or more degrees, before further flight, replace the pitch change rod.

#### (f) Special Flight Permits

Special flight permits are prohibited.

#### (g) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: David Hatfield, Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, 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.

#### (h) Additional Information

(1) Airbus Helicopters Emergency Alert Service Bulletin (EASB) No. 05.00.86 and EASB No. 05.00.75, both Revision 1 and both dated February 6, 2017, which are not incorporated by reference, contain additional information about the subject of this AD. 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 [http://www.helicopters.airbus.com/website/en/ref/Technical-Support\\_73.html](http://www.helicopters.airbus.com/website/en/ref/Technical-Support_73.html). You may review a copy of the service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N–321, Fort Worth, TX 76177.

(2) The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Emergency AD No. 2017–0020–E, dated February 7, 2017. You may view the EASA Emergency AD on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating it in Docket No. FAA–2018–0091.

#### (i) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 6720 Tail Rotor Control System.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on July 6, 2018.

**Scott A. Horn,**

*Deputy Director for Regulatory Operations,  
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,  
Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 2018-15303 Filed 7-18-18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-13-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2018-0166; Product Identifier 2017-NM-169-AD; Amendment 39-19331; AD 2018-14-11]

**RIN 2120-AA64**

#### **Airworthiness Directives; ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Régional Airplanes**

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

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Régional Model ATR72 airplanes. This AD was prompted by a determination that more restrictive maintenance instructions and airworthiness limitations are necessary. This AD requires revising the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or revised maintenance instructions and airworthiness limitations. We are issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** This AD is effective August 23, 2018.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of August 23, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** For service information identified in this final rule, contact ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Régional, 1, Allée Pierre Nadot, 31712 Blagnac Cedex, France; telephone +33 (0) 5 62 21 62 21; fax +33 (0) 5 62 21 67 18; email [continued.airworthiness@atr-aircraft.com](mailto:continued.airworthiness@atr-aircraft.com). You may view this service information at the FAA, Transport Standards Branch, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 206-231-3195. It is also available on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0166.

#### **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-2018-0166; 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, the regulatory evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations (phone: 800-647-5527) is in the **ADDRESSES** section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Shahram Daneshmandi, Aerospace Engineer, International Section, Transport Standards Branch, FAA, 2200 South 216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; telephone and fax 206-231-3220.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Discussion**

We issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Régional Model ATR72 airplanes. The NPRM published in the **Federal Register** on March 22, 2018 (83 FR 12508). The NPRM was prompted by a determination that more restrictive maintenance instructions and airworthiness limitations are necessary. The NPRM proposed to require revising the maintenance or inspection program, as applicable, to incorporate new or revised maintenance instructions and airworthiness limitations. We are issuing this AD to address fatigue cracking, damage, and corrosion in principal structural elements, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane.

The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2017-0223R1, dated December 15, 2017 (referred to after this as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or “the MCAI”), to correct an unsafe condition for all ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Régional Model ATR72 airplanes. The MCAI states:

The airworthiness limitations and certification maintenance requirements (CMR) for ATR aeroplanes, which are approved by EASA, are currently defined and published in the ATR72-101/-201/-102/-202/-211/-212/-212A Time Limits (TL) document. These instructions have been identified as mandatory actions for continued airworthiness.

Failure to accomplish these instructions could result in an unsafe condition.

Consequently, ATR published Revision 15 of the ATR72-101/-201/-102/-202/-211/-212/-212A TL document, which contains new and/or more restrictive CMRs and airworthiness limitation tasks.

For the reasons described above, this [EASA] AD requires accomplishment of the actions specified in the ATR72-101/-201/-102/-202/-211/-212/-212A TL document Revision 15, hereafter referred to as ‘the TLD’ in this [EASA] AD.

This [EASA] AD, in conjunction with two other [EASA] ADs related to ATR42-200/-300/-320 (EASA AD 2017-0221) and ATR42-400/-500 (EASA AD 2017-0222) aeroplanes, retains the requirements of EASA AD 2009-0241 and EASA AD 2012-0193. Once all these three ADs are effective, EASA will cancel EASA AD 2009-0242 and EASA AD 2012-0193.

This [EASA] AD is revised to provide the correct issue date (02 May 2017) of the TLD. The original [EASA] AD inadvertently referenced the EASA approval date for that document.

This AD requires revising the maintenance or inspection program to incorporate certain maintenance instructions and airworthiness limitations. The unsafe condition is fatigue cracking, damage, and corrosion in principal structural elements, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the airplane. You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2018-0166.

#### **Comment**

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this final rule. The following presents the comment received on the NPRM and the FAA’s response.

#### **Request To Correct Typographical Error**

Empire Airlines asked that airworthiness limitations (AWL) task number 572401-1, identified in table 1 to paragraph (h) of this AD, be changed to AWL task number 572402-1. Empire Airlines stated that AWL task number 572401-1 corresponds to maintenance review board report (MRBR) task numbers ZL-500-01-1 and ZL-600-01-1; and the MRBR task numbers ZL-520-01-1 and ZL-620-01-1, identified in table 1 to paragraph (h) of this AD, correspond with AWL task number 572402-1. Empire Airlines provided substantiation data to this effect.

We agree with the commenter that a typographical error was made in the AWL task number 572401-1, identified in table 1 to paragraph (h) of this AD. We have corrected this error accordingly.