

Done in Washington, DC, this 1st day of April, 2003.

**Peter Fernandez,**

*Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-SW-53-AD]

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:** Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

**SUMMARY:** This document proposes adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Eurocopter France (Eurocopter) Model EC 155B, SA-365N and N1, AS-365N2, and AS 365 N3 helicopters with emergency flotation gear installed. This proposal would require inspecting the hydraulic brake hose (hose) for crazing, pinching, distortion, or leaks at the torque link hinge and replacing the hose, if necessary. This proposal would also require inspecting the hose and the emergency flotation gear pipe to ensure adequate clearance, and adjusting the landing gear leg, if necessary. This proposal 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 proposed 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:** Comments must be received on or before June 6, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2002-SW-53-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. You may also send comments electronically to the Rules Docket at the following address: [9-asw-adcomments@faa.gov](mailto:9-asw-adcomments@faa.gov). Comments may be inspected at the Office of the Regional Counsel between

9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

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

Uday Garadi, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0110, telephone (817) 222-5123, fax (817) 222-5961.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Comments Invited**

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed 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 above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this document may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed 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 summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their mailed comments submitted in response to this proposal must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 2002-SW-53-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

##### **Discussion**

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 155 B, AS 365 N, N1, N2, and N3 helicopters. 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.

These helicopter models are manufactured in France and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of 14 CFR 21.29 and the applicable bilateral agreement. Pursuant to the applicable bilateral 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.

This unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type designs registered in the United States. Therefore, the proposed AD would 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. The proposed AD would also 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 actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the alert telexes described previously.

The FAA estimates that 44 helicopters of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would 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 would cost approximately \$459 for the hose; if replacing the hose on two sides is required, the cost would be approximately \$918. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed 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 proposed herein would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of