

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

[Docket No. 2002–SW–57–AD; Amendment 39–13134; AD 2003–09–05]

RIN 2120–AA64

**Airworthiness Directives; Schweizer Aircraft Corporation Model 269D Helicopters**

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

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

**SUMMARY:** This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Schweizer Aircraft Corporation (Schweizer) Model 269D helicopters. This action requires inspecting each aluminum horizontal stabilizer endplate (endplate) and the attach angles for cracks, fretting, and endplate bending. If fretting is found, as indicated by a powder residue adjacent to a rivet head, installing an inspection hole in the horizontal stabilizer and inspecting the internal structure is required. Replacing unairworthy parts is required before further flight. Finally, reporting any cracked or bent endplate, any cracked attach angles, or fretting to the FAA is required. This amendment is prompted by reports of loose endplates, and one report of an endplate separating from the helicopter during flight. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent loss of an endplate during flight, which could strike the tail rotor and result in loss of control of the helicopter.

**DATES:** Effective May 16, 2003.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of May 16, 2003.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before June 30, 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–57–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).

The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, P.O. Box 147, Elmira, New York 14902. This information may be examined at the

FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

George Duckett, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, New York Aircraft Certification Office, Airframe and Propulsion Branch, 10 Fifth Street, 3rd Floor, Valley Stream, New York, telephone (516) 256–7255, fax (516) 568–2716.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This amendment adopts a new AD for Schweizer Model 269D helicopters. This action requires inspecting each aluminum endplate and the attach angles for cracks, fretting, and endplate bending before further flight, and thereafter at each 100-hour inspection. Installing an inspection hole in the horizontal stabilizer and inspecting the internal structure is required before further flight if fretting is found, as indicated by a powder residue adjacent to a rivet head. If no powder residue is found, then installing an inspection hole is required at the next 100-hour inspection. Replacing unairworthy parts is required before further flight. Schweizer Basic Handbook of Maintenance Instructions (HMI), dated December 9, 2002, pertains to the subject of this AD. Section 11 of the HMI describes the inspection and replacement procedures. Reporting any cracked or bent endplate, any cracked attach angles, or fretting to the FAA is required within one day of the inspection. The report must include the helicopter model, configuration, and serial number; description of the damage; the TIS of the damaged part; and the TIS since the last 100-hour TIS inspection. This amendment is prompted by reports of loose endplates, and one report of an endplate separating from the helicopter during flight. There are two types of endplates currently in service: an aluminum honeycomb endplate, part number (P/N) 269D3413–11, and a fiberglass honeycomb endplate, P/N 269D3413–13. The reports of difficulties have been limited to the aluminum endplates. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent loss of an endplate during flight, which could strike the tail rotor and result in loss of control of the helicopter.

The FAA has reviewed Schweizer Service Bulletin No. DB–011.1, dated March 20, 2003, which describes procedures for inspecting the horizontal stabilizer, endplate, and attach angles,

and installing an inspection hole in the horizontal stabilizer.

This unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type design. Therefore, this AD is being issued to prevent loss of an endplate during flight, which could strike the tail rotor and result in loss of control of the helicopter. This AD requires inspecting each aluminum endplate for a crack or bending, and inspecting each attach angle for cracks or fretting. If fretting is found, as indicated by a powder residue adjacent to a rivet head, installing an inspection hole in the horizontal stabilizer and inspecting the internal structure is required. Replacing unairworthy parts is required before further flight. Finally, reporting any cracked or bent endplate, any cracked attach angles, or fretting to the FAA is required within one day of the inspection. The report must include the helicopter model, configuration, and serial number; the TIS of the damaged part; and the TIS since the last 100-hour TIS inspection. The actions must be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously. The short compliance time involved is required because the previously described critical unsafe condition can adversely affect the controllability and structural integrity of the helicopter. Therefore, inspecting the horizontal stabilizer, endplate and attach angles and replacing parts, if necessary, is required before further flight and this AD must be issued immediately.

Since a situation exists that requires the immediate adoption of this regulation, it is found that notice and opportunity for prior public comment hereon are impracticable, and that good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

The FAA estimates that 22 helicopters will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately: 0.5 work hour to inspect the exterior of the horizontal stabilizer and endplate; 0.5 work hour to inspect the interior of the horizontal stabilizer; 1.5 work hours to cut an inspection hole and make a cover plate; and 4.5 work hours to replace a rib, two angles, a doubler, and an endplate. The average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts will cost approximately \$20 for the access cover and \$1,380 per side for the rib, two angles, doubler, endplate, and fasteners, per helicopter. Based on these figures, and assuming 7 helicopters (approximately one-third of the inspected helicopters) will require one endplate replacement on one side, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$15,290.