

comments from the 1998 notice. In addition, we will consider the remaining comments from our 1998 notice in subsequent rulemakings and other guidance.

IV. Requesting Comments

In light of changes in the financial industry and its customers since our 1998 notice, we request comments on any FCA regulations or other guidance³ that may duplicate other requirements, are ineffective, or impose burdens that are greater than the benefits received.

Your comments are appreciated and will assist us in our continuing efforts to identify and reduce regulatory burden on System institutions. We will also continue our efforts to maintain and adopt regulations and policies that are necessary to implement the Act and ensure the safety and soundness of the System. These actions will enable the System to better serve America's farmers, ranchers, aquatic producers and harvesters, agricultural cooperatives, and rural utilities in changing agricultural credit markets.

Dated: May 13, 2003.

Jeanette C. Brinkley,
Secretary, Farm Credit Administration Board.
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-SW-44-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350C, AS350D, AS350D1, AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, and AS355N Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes superseding an existing airworthiness directive (AD) for the specified Eurocopter France (ECF) model helicopters. The existing AD requires inspecting the main rotor swashplate bearing (bearing) for play or binding, proper assembly and lubrication, and measuring the swashplate rotational

torque. In addition, that AD requires plugging the nonrotating swashplate vent holes and barrel nut orifices. This amendment would eliminate most of those AD actions because they are now incorporated into the Airworthiness Limitations section of the maintenance manual but would retain the requirements for the initial and repetitive inspections and lubrication of the main rotor swashplate and clarify that repetitive maintenance of the main rotor swashplate and bearing is required at intervals not to exceed 100 hours time-in-service (TIS). This proposal is prompted by the need to clarify the AD wording to avoid any misinterpretation of the required interval for inspecting and lubricating the main rotor swashplate and bearing. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent failure of the bearing and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before July 15, 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-44-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. 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: Jim Grigg, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0110, telephone (817) 222-5490, 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-44-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Discussion

On March 21, 1990, the FAA issued AD 89-21-01, Amendment 39-6562, Docket No. 89-ASW-53 (55 FR 12332, April 3, 1990), to require inspecting the bearing for play or binding, proper assembly and lubrication, and for measuring the swashplate rotational torque. In addition, that AD requires plugging the nonrotating swashplate vent holes and barrel nut orifices at specified hours TIS. The requirements of that AD are intended to prevent failure of the bearing, which could result in loss of helicopter control.

Since issuing that AD, an FAA inspector reports that the repetitive lubrication requirement in paragraph (c) of AD 89-21-01 requiring lubrication "within every 100 hours' additional time-in-service" is being misinterpreted by a certain operator to only require lubrication every 199 hours rather than the intended 100-hour interval. Therefore, the inspector recommends that AD 89-21-01 be rewritten to clearly state that lubrication of the bearings be required at intervals not to exceed 100 hours TIS. To remove any doubt as to the intended lubrication interval, we propose to adopt the suggested language. The additional requirements contained in AD 89-21-01 for inspecting and servicing the main rotor swashplate are omitted from this proposal because they are contained currently in the mandatory Airworthiness Limitations section of the Eurocopter Master Servicing Recommendations (maintenance manual) for the Model AS 350, dated April 26, 2001, and for the Model AS 355, dated May 31, 2001.

This unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type designs. Therefore, the proposed AD would supersede AD 89-21-01 to clarify that the required inspection and lubrication interval of the main rotor swashplate must be accomplished within 10 hours TIS,

³ FCA regulations and other guidance may be reviewed through the FCA Handbook section of the FCA's Web site at <http://www.fca.gov>.