

then send it to the Manager, Safety Management Group.

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

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

**Note 3:** The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD 1988-099-035(A) R5, dated June 14, 2000.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on July 9, 2003.

**Mark R. Schilling,**

*Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 03-17953 Filed 7-15-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4910-13-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2003-SW-09-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### **Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model SA-365N, 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 the specified Eurocopter France (Eurocopter) model helicopters. This proposal would require inspecting the fuel air vent hoses (air vent hoses) for chafing and fuel leakage in the interference areas, inspecting the length of the latch support attachment screws, installing spacers to prevent interference with the latch support attachment screws, and removing one tyrap clamp support. This proposal is prompted by a report of a fuel leak in the air vent hose at the 9° frame on the pilot's side of the helicopter. The actions specified by this proposed AD are intended to prevent fuel leakage, toxic fumes inside the cabin creating a fire hazard that could lead to a fire and smoke in the cabin, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

**DATES:** Comments must be received on or before September 15, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the

Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2003-SW-09-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:** Ed Cuevas, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Safety Management Group, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0111, telephone (817) 222-5355, 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. 2003-SW-09-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 AS 365N, N1, N2, and AS 365 N3 helicopters. The DGAC advises of a report of a fuel leak that was discovered on the cabin floor of an aircraft, at the air vent hose, at the 9° frame, on the pilot's side. The fuel leak

was caused by interference between the air vent hose and the attachment screws of the latch support of the right-hand front passenger door.

Eurocopter has issued Alert Telex No. 28.00.31, dated January 14, 2003, that describes:

- Checking the condition of the air vent hoses in the interference areas for damage to the external protection of the air vent hoses and fuel leaks, and if leaks are discovered, replacing the hoses and if the external protection is damaged, replacing the hose at 500 hours time-in-service (TIS);
- Protecting the air vent hoses in the interference areas with adhesive tape;
- Checking the attachment screws of the latch support on the right-hand and left-hand sides for correct length;
- On the right-hand side of the aircraft, installing spacers to prevent any interference between the attachment screws of the latch support and the air vent hose; and
- On the left-hand side of the aircraft, removing one of the tyrap clamp supports that secure the air vent hose to the 9° frame at the latch support.

The DGAC classified this alert telex as mandatory and issued AD 2003-028(A), dated February 5, 2003, 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 previously described unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type design registered in the United States. Therefore, the proposed AD would require, within 50 hours TIS or 1 month, whichever occurs first, inspecting the fuel air vent hoses for chafing and fuel leakage in the interference areas and replacing leaking air vent hoses. It would also require inspecting the length of the latch support attachment screws on both passenger doors, and if necessary, installing airworthy attachment screws. The proposed AD would also require installing spacers to prevent interference with the latch support attachment screws and the removal of one tyrap clamp support. These actions would be required to be