

365A33-3500-02), tail rotor hub attachment bushings, part number (P/N) 365A33-3530-20, and a reinforced control shaft, P/N 365A33-6214-20, on the tail rotor hub control shaft assembly, installed, certificated in any category.

Compliance: Within 3 months, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent vibration in the tail rotor attachments and the pilot's anti-torque pedals, blade pitch control failure, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Install a tail rotor blade (blade)-to-torsion bar attachment tuning weight assembly, P/N 365A33-3546-00, on each blade of the Quiet Fenestron tail rotor in accordance with paragraph 2, Accomplishment Instructions, of Eurocopter France Alert Service Bulletin 64.00.23, dated October 30, 2002. Replace each of the 10 blade attachment bushings, P/N 365A33-3530-20, at the same time. Do not mix the existing blade attachment bushings, P/N 365A33-3530-20, and the new tuning weight assemblies, P/N 365A33-3546-00, on the same tail rotor hub.

(b) To request a different method of compliance or a different compliance time for this AD, follow the procedures in 14 CFR 39.19. Contact the Safety Management Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, for information about previously approved alternative methods of compliance.

Note: The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD 2002-622(A), dated December 11, 2002.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on November 17, 2003.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2003-SW-12-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model EC 155B 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 installing a tail rotor blade (blade)-to-torsion bar attachment bushing (bushing) with a tuning weight assembly on each blade of

the Quiet Fenestron tail rotor, and replacing each blade attachment bushing. This proposal is prompted by a discovery of tail rotor induced vibration during flight tests. The actions specified by this proposed AD are intended to prevent vibrations in the tail rotor and the pilot's anti-torque pedals, blade pitch control failure, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before January 23, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2003-SW-12-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:

Richard Monschke, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0110, telephone (817) 222-5116, 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-12-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 155B helicopters. The DGAC advises of a report of the discovery of an increased level of vibration felt by the crew in the pedal units.

Eurocopter has issued Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) No. 64A001, dated October 30, 2002, which specifies installing a tuning weight assembly, part number (P/N) 365A33-3546-00, on each blade of the Fenestron tail rotor. Compliance with this ASB requires prior compliance with Eurocopter Service Bulletin 64-002, dated December 19, 2002 (modifications 0765B35 and 0764B39), which specifies upgrading the Quiet Fenestron tail rotor hub and tail rotor gearbox for embodiment of the tuning weight modification, or Eurocopter Service Bulletin 65-003, dated December 10, 2001 (modification 0765B41), which specifies installing a reinforced control shaft on the tail rotor hub control shaft assembly or both. The DGAC classified service bulletin ASB 64A001, dated October 30, 2002, as mandatory and issued AD No. 2002-621(A), dated December 11, 2002, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in France.

This helicopter model is manufactured in France and is 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 this type design 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 removing each tail rotor attachment bushing, P/N 365A33-3530-20, and then installing a blade-to-torsion bar attachment tuning weight assembly, P/N 365A33-3546-00, on each blade of the Quiet Fenestron tail rotor at the same time. Mixing the existing blade attachment bushings, P/N 365A33-