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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002–SW–47–AD; Amendment 39–13062; AD 2003–04–13]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model SA341G and SA342J Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Eurocopter France (Eurocopter) Model SA341G and SA342J helicopters. This action requires modifying an electric hoist (hoist) junction box (junction box). This amendment is prompted by the discovery of an anomaly affecting the resistor that is located in the junction box. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent failure of the hoist emergency load jettison switch, resulting in an inability of the pilot to cut the rescue hoist cable in the event of cable entanglement or other emergency and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective March 17, 2003.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 17, 2003.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before April 29, 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–47–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.

The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from American Eurocopter Corporation, 2701 Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, Texas 75053–4005, telephone (972) 641–3460, fax (972) 641–3527. 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: Carroll Wright, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Regulations Group, Fort Worth, Texas 76193–0111, telephone (817) 222–5120, fax (817) 222–5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: 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 SA341G and SA342J helicopters with a 300 lb. hoist manufactured by Breeze. The helicopter is fitted with a hoist junction box, part number (P/N) 341A63–1103–00. The DGAC advises of the discovery of an anomaly affecting the current-limiting resistor located in the junction box, which results in insufficient current intensity and can cause failure of the emergency jettison control squib percussion to operate. The unmodified hoist electric junction box is designed to generate 2 amperes for the hoist cable cut percussion squib. The Breeze 300 lb. hoist requires a minimum of 10 amperes to activate the cable cut percussion squib. This AD will modify the limiting resistor in the hoist electric junction box and result in a percussion squib activation current of 18 amperes.

Eurocopter has issued Alert Telex No. 45.05, dated July 8, 2002, which specifies modifying the control unit of the hoist. The DGAC classified this alert telex as mandatory and issued AD 2002–370–043(A), dated July 24, 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. The DGAC recommended modifying the junction box for helicopters with Breeze or TRW (or Lucas or Air Equipment) hoists installed. However, the unmodified junction box functions properly with the TRW (Lucas or Air Equipment) hoists and the FAA does not propose to modify the junction box for helicopters with TRW hoists installed. Helicopters with the Breeze hoist, P/N BL 16–600, BL 16–600–11 or BL 16–600–12, installed require this junction box modification.

This unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type designs registered in the United States. Therefore, this AD is being issued to prevent failure of the hoist emergency load jettison switch, resulting in an inability of the pilot to cut the rescue hoist cable in the event of cable entanglement or other emergency and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. This AD requires modifying the limiting resistor in the junction box. The actions must be accomplished in accordance with the alert telex described previously. The modification is terminating action for the requirements of this AD. The short compliance time involved is required because the previously described critical unsafe condition can adversely affect the controllability of the helicopter. Therefore, the modification is required before the next hoist operation 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 2 helicopters will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 1 work hour to accomplish the modification, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts will cost approximately \$20 per helicopter. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of