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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2002-SW-17-AD; Amendment 39-13330; AD 2003-20-12]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Model AS 350B3, SA-365N, N1, AS-365N2, AS 365N3, and EC 155B Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) for the specified Eurocopter France (Eurocopter) model helicopters that requires modifying the SIREN cargo hook and inspecting the cargo hook locking catch (locking catch) for corrosion. This amendment is prompted by the discovery of internal corrosion on a Siren locking catch that may weaken the locking catch. The actions specified by this AD are intended to detect internal corrosion of the locking catch, which can cause the locking catch to return to an incomplete locking position, undetectable by the operator, and result in an unexpected cargo load release.

DATES: Effective November 18, 2003.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of November 18, 2003.

ADDRESSES: 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 and Guidance Group, Fort Worth, Texas 76193-0111, telephone (817) 222-5120, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend 14 CFR part 39 to include an AD for Eurocopter Model AS 350B3, SA-365N, N1, AS-365N2, AS 365N3, and EC 155B helicopters was published in the Federal Register on April 22, 2003 (68 FR 19757). That action proposed to require modifying the SIREN cargo hook and inspecting the cargo hook locking catch for corrosion.

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 350 B3, AS-365N, N1, AS 365N2, AS 365N3, and EC 155 B helicopters fitted with Siren cargo hooks, part number (P/N) AS-21-5-7. The DGAC advises that corrosion was discovered on a locking catch, which might lead to untimely load release.

Eurocopter has issued Alert Telexes No. 05.00.39, for Model AS 350B3 helicopters; No. 05.00.41, for Model AS 365N, N1, AS 365N2, and AS 365N3 helicopters; and No. 05A002, for Model EC 155B helicopters; all dated December 20, 2001, which specify an initial corrosion check, and verification of Amendment B to prevent any risk of untimely load release due to locking catch corrosion combined with in-flight vibrations. Amendment B requires marking a permanent reference line across the rotating bolt and stationary cover plate for the cargo hook, affixing a placard to the cover plate, and marking the letter "B" on the amendment identification plate of the release unit and on the equipment log card. The DGAC classified these alert telexes as mandatory and issued AD No. 2002-044(A), dated January 23, 2002, to ensure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in France.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. No comments were received on the proposal or the FAA's determination of the cost to the public. The FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed, except changing the FAA office name and revising the cites in proposed paragraph (b) to clarify that an owner/operator (pilot) may perform all the actions required by paragraph (a). The FAA has determined that these changes will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

The action in paragraph (a) of this AD, for cargo hook, P/N AS-21-5-7, with Amendment B incorporated, may be performed by an owner/operator (pilot), and must be entered into the helicopter records showing compliance with that paragraph in accordance with 14 CFR sections 43.11 and 91.417(a)(2)(v). This AD allows a pilot to perform these actions because they involve only manipulating the manual cargo release and checking the reference line for continuity, and can be performed equally well by a pilot or a mechanic. For cargo hook, P/N AS-21-5-7, without Amendment B incorporated, a mechanic must incorporate Amendment B in accordance with the applicable alert telex.

On July 10, 2002, the FAA issued a new version of 14 CFR part 39 (67 FR 47997, July 22, 2002), which governs the FAA's AD system. The regulation now includes material that relates to altered products, special flight permits, and alternative methods of compliance. However, for clarity and consistency in this final rule, we have retained the language of the NPRM regarding that material.

The FAA estimates that of the 60 helicopters of U.S. registry, 6 helicopters have the Siren cargo hook installed and will be affected by this AD. The FAA also estimates that it will take approximately 3 work hours per helicopter to incorporate Amendment B and .25 work hour to conduct and record the pilot check with 60 pilot checks performed per year, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Required parts to incorporate Amendment B will cost \$4 for each label. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of this AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$6,504.

The regulations adopted herein will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government. Therefore, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption "ADDRESSES."

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) as follows:

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive to read as follows:

AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE



Aircraft Certification Service
Washington, DC

U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

We post ADs on the internet at "www.faa.gov"

The following Airworthiness Directive issued by the Federal Aviation Administration in accordance with the provisions of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 39, applies to an aircraft model of which our records indicate you may be the registered owner. Airworthiness Directives affect aviation safety and are regulations which require immediate attention. You are cautioned that no person may operate an aircraft to which an Airworthiness Directive applies, except in accordance with the requirements of the Airworthiness Directive (reference 14 CFR part 39, subpart 39.3).

2003-20-12 Eurocopter France: Amendment 39-13330. Docket No. 2002-SW-17-AD.

Applicability: Model AS 350B3, SA-365N, N1, AS-365N2, AS 365N3, and EC 155B helicopters, with an optional Siren load release unit cargo hook, part number (P/N) AS-21-5-7, installed, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each helicopter identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For helicopters that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (d) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To detect internal corrosion of the Siren cargo hook locking catch (locking catch), which can cause the locking catch to return to an incomplete locking position, undetectable by the operator, and result in an unexpected cargo load release, accomplish the following:

(a) For cargo hook, P/N AS-21-5-7, with Amendment B incorporated, before the first use of the cargo hook on each day that the cargo hook is used, check for corrosion on the locking catch as follows. Amendment B has been incorporated if the letter "B" is marked on the amendment identification plate of the release unit of the cargo hook and placard "G" is installed on the release unit cover plate "D" and reference line "B" is marked over the nut and cover plate as depicted in Figure 1 of this AD. The identification plate "A" is located on cover plate "D", on the opposite side of the electrical connector. See Figure 1:

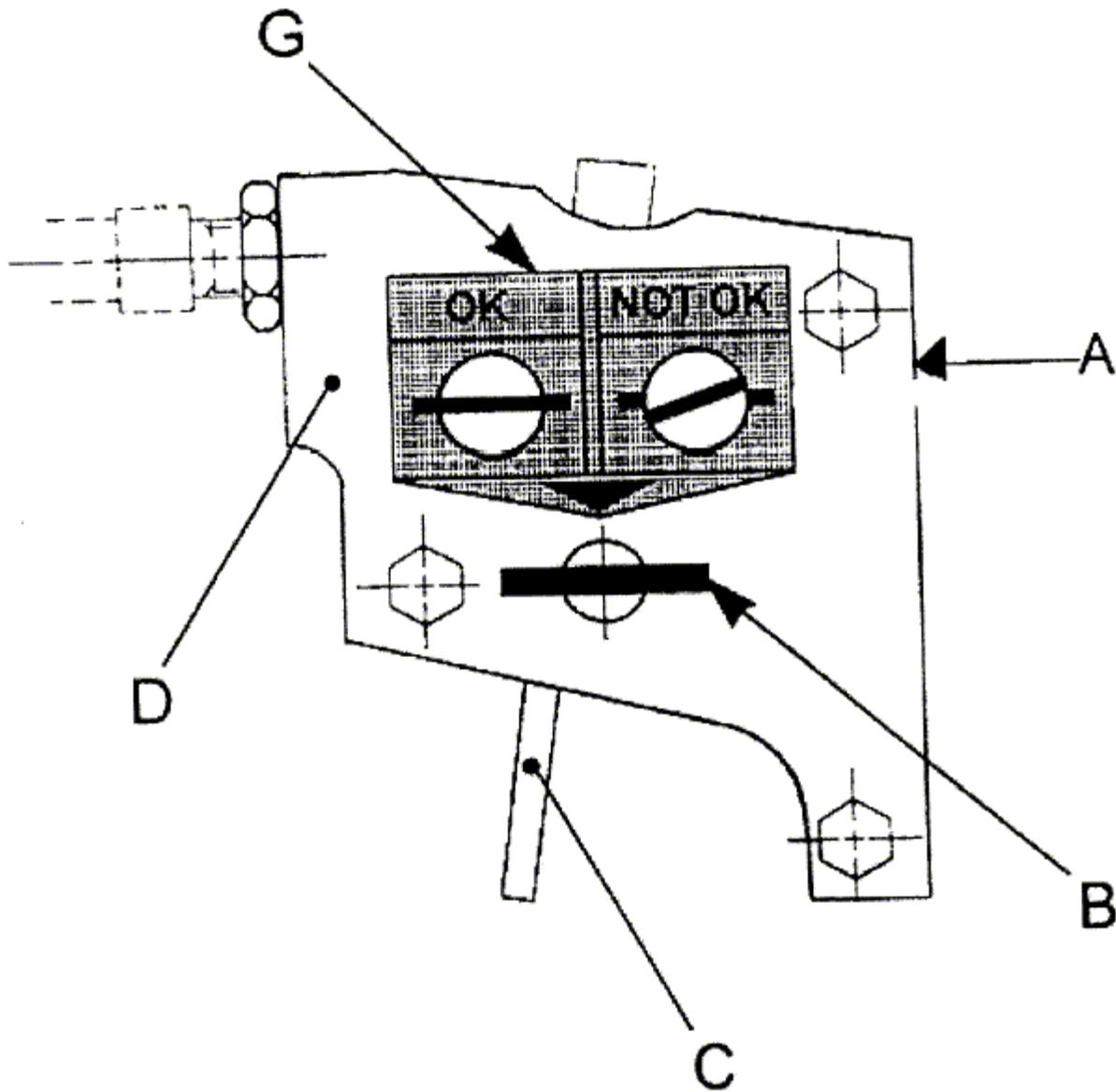


Figure 1

- (1) With the cargo hook installed, cycle the red manual release control lever several times over its travel range.
 - (2) Return the red manual release control lever to the initial position.
 - (3) Determine whether the section of reference line (B) marked on the bolt (A) and the section of reference line (B) marked on the cover plate (D) form a straight line.
 - (i) If the reference line is straight, the cargo hook is considered airworthy.
 - (ii) If the reference line is not straight, the cargo hook is unairworthy and may not be used.
- (b) The requirements of paragraph (a) may be performed by an owner/operator (pilot) holding at least a private pilot certificate, and must be entered into the aircraft records showing compliance with that paragraph of this AD in accordance with 14 CFR sections 43.11 and 91.417(a)(2)(v).

(c) For cargo hook, P/N AS-21-5-7, without Amendment B, before the next sling load flight, incorporate Amendment B to the cargo hook in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraphs 2.A.2.a) and 2.A.2.b), of Eurocopter Alert Telex No. 05.00.39, for Model AS 350B3 helicopters; No. 05.00.41, for Model SA-365N, N1, AS-365N2, and AS 365N3 helicopters; and No. 05A002, for Model EC 155B helicopters; all dated December 20, 2001, as applicable.

(d) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Safety Management Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and 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.

(e) Special flight permits will not be issued allowing use of the cargo hook until the requirements of this AD are accomplished.

(f) The actions shall be done in accordance with Eurocopter Alert Telex No. 05.00.39, for Model AS 350B3 helicopters; No. 05.00.41, for Model SA-365N, N1, (AS-365N, N1) AS-365N2, and AS 365N3 helicopters; and No. 05A002, for Model EC 155B helicopters; all dated December 20, 2001. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from American Eurocopter Corporation, 2701 Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, Texas 75053-4005, telephone (972) 641-3460, fax (972) 641-3527. Copies may be inspected 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.

(g) This amendment becomes effective on November 18, 2003.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Direction Generale De L'Aviation Civile (France) AD 2002-044(A), dated January 23, 2002.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on September 29, 2003.

David A. Downey,

Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 03-25593 Filed 10-10-03; 8:45 am]

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