



FAA
Aviation Safety

SPECIAL AIRWORTHINESS INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUBJ: ENGINE EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN SYSTEM

SAIB: AIR-21-13

Date: August 13, 2021

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) informs registered owners and operators of an airworthiness concern for Airbus Helicopters Models **AS350 B2 and AS350 B3 helicopters** under Type Certificate Data Sheet H9EU. Specifically, this SAIB provides a design modification to prevent inadvertent activation of the floor-mounted Fuel Shutoff Lever (FSOL).

At this time, the airworthiness concern is not an unsafe condition that would warrant airworthiness directive (AD) action under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 39.

Background

On March 11, 2018, an Airbus Helicopters AS350 B2 lost engine power during cruise flight and subsequently ditched in the East River in New York, New York. The pilot sustained minor injuries, the five passengers aboard drowned, and the helicopter was substantially damaged. Investigation determined that the fatal accident was due to a chain of events, starting with loss of engine power due to inadvertent activation of the floor mounted FSOL by a passenger seated in the front seat.

In this accident, the air tour operator permitted the passenger in the front to leave his seat while being tethered by a supplemental passenger restraint system. The passenger's tether inadvertently caught on the FSOL and moved it to the shutoff position.

This SAIB addresses the risk of external interference with critical rotorcraft controls, specifically the FSOL. This safety issue is the subject of the National Transportation Safety Board Safety Recommendation A-19-33 to modify the floor mounted FSOL on AS350 helicopters. This safety issue is also the subject of European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Service Information Bulletin No. 2021-05 dated March 19, 2021.

Recommendations

In response to the accident and subsequent safety recommendation, Airbus Helicopters developed a design modification to replace the stop plate of the floor-mounted FSOL to better protect it from accidental activation due to external influence. This redesigned plate adds a sharp stop so that the pilot will need to operate the FSOL handle in two stages, preventing it from being accidentally operated due to external forces. This design modification is detailed in Airbus Helicopters Service Bulletin No. AS350-76.00.24 Revision 0 dated December 12, 2020. A similar modification is under development for the other models of the AS350/EC130 legacy fleet having a floor mounted FSOL.

The FAA recommends owners and operators, especially air tour operators and those operators which permit passengers in the front seat, to incorporate the design modification detailed in Airbus Helicopters Service Bulletin No. AS350-76.00.24 Revision 0, dated December 11, 2020.

For Further Information Contact

Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, AIR-722, Operational Safety Branch, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Fort Worth, TX 76177; phone: (817) 222-5485; email: kristin.bradley@faa.gov.