

(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.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

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

The Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 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. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

2021–04–16 Amendment 39–21438; Docket No. FAA–2020–0791; Project Identifier AD–2020–00676–R.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective April 14, 2021.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation (Sikorsky) Model S-92A helicopters, certificated in any category, with serial numbers (S/Ns) 920006 through 920334 inclusive.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 3220, Nose/Tail Landing Gear; 3210, Main Landing Gear.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by the manufacturer determining that because of non-conforming threads, due to a quality escape, the life limit of the threaded hinge pin and main landing gear (MLG) and nose landing gear (NLG) actuator pins is reduced. The FAA is issuing this AD to prevent failure of components on the MLG and NLG. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in damage to the helicopter and reduced ability to control the helicopter during landing.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Required Actions

Within 300 hours time in service after the effective date of this AD, visually inspect the components of the right MLG assembly, left

MLG assembly, and NLG kit for threaded hinge pins, part number (P/N) 92250–12281–101, and actuator pins, P/N 92240–12287–101 and 92240–12287–103, with serial numbers (S/Ns) identified in Table 1 or 2 (threaded hinge pins) or in Table 1 (actuator pins), in Section 3, the Accomplishment Instructions, in the Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) 92–32–008, Basic Issue, dated January 21, 2020 (the ASB).

Note 1 to the introductory text of paragraph (g): See Figures 1 and 2 in Section 3, the Accomplishment Instructions, in the ASB for guidance on performing the visual inspection.

(1) If there is any threaded hinge pin, P/N 92250–12281–101, with an S/N listed in Table 1 or 2 in the ASB, before further flight, remove the threaded hinge pin from service.

(2) If there is any MLG or NLG actuator pin, P/N 92250–12287–101 or P/N 92250–12287–103, with an S/N listed in Table 1 in the ASB, before further flight, remove the actuator pin from service.

(h) Installation Prohibition

As of the effective date of this AD, do not install any threaded hinge pin, P/N 92250–12281–101, or actuator pin, P/N 92240–12287–101 or 92240–12287–103, with an S/N listed in Table 1 or 2 in Section 3, the Accomplishment Instructions, in the ASB, on any helicopter.

(i) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Boston ACO Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the certification office, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j)(1) of this AD.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(j) Related Information

For more information about this AD, contact Dorie Resnik, Aerospace Engineer, Boston ACO Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 1200 District Avenue, Burlington, MA 01803; phone: 781–238–7693; fax: 781–238–7199; email: dorie.resnik@faa.gov. You may view the related service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N–321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 817–222–5110.

(k) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference (IBR) of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation Alert Service Bulletin 92–32–008, Basic Issue, dated January 21, 2020.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For Sikorsky service information identified in this AD, contact Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, Commercial Systems and Services, 124 Quarry Road, Trumbull, CT 06611; phone: 203–416–4000; email: product_safety.gr-sik@lmco.com. Operators may also log on to the Sikorsky 360 website at: <https://customerportal.sikorsky.com>.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N–321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 817–222–5110.

(5) You may view this service information that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email: fedreg.legal@nara.gov, or go to: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on February 9, 2021.

Gaetano A. Sciertino,

Deputy Director for Strategic Initiatives, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2021–04940 Filed 3–9–21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA–2020–0847; Product Identifier 2018–SW–087–AD; Amendment 39–21434; AD 2021–04–13]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, and AS350D helicopters; Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters; and Model EC130 B4 and EC130 T2 helicopters. This AD requires a one-time inspection to verify the presence and correct installation of the main rotor mast (MRM) upper bearing retaining rings, a repetitive inspection of the sealant bead on the MRM for damage, and corrective actions if necessary. This AD was prompted by a

report of a missing retaining ring of the inner race of the MRM upper bearing. The actions of this AD are intended to address an unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective April 14, 2021.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of certain documents listed in this AD as of April 14, 2021.

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this final rule, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 N Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone 972-641-0000 or 800-232-0323; fax 972-641-3775; or at <https://www.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html>. You may view the referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. It is also available on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0847.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0847; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, the European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD, any service information that is incorporated by reference, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Scott Franke, Aviation Safety Engineer, General Aviation & Rotorcraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone 817-222-5110; email scott.franke@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, and AS350D helicopters; Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters; and Model EC130 B4 and EC130 T2 helicopters. The

NPRM published in the **Federal Register** on September 21, 2020 (85 FR 59217). The NPRM proposed to require a one-time inspection to verify the presence and correct installation of the MRM upper bearing retaining rings, a repetitive inspection of the sealant bead on the MRM for damage, and corrective actions if necessary. The proposed requirements were intended to detect, and correct if applicable, a missing retaining ring of the inner race of the MRM upper bearing. The FAA is issuing this AD to address this condition, which, if not detected and corrected, can lead to damage to the MRM and surrounding elements, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter.

The NPRM was prompted by EASA AD 2018-0206, dated September 20, 2018 (EASA AD 2018-0206), issued by EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, to correct an unsafe condition for certain Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350BB, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, and AS350D helicopters; Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters; and Model EC130 B4 and EC130 T2 helicopters. Model AS355BB helicopters are not certificated by the FAA and are not included on the U.S. type certificate data sheet; this AD therefore does not include those helicopters in the applicability. EASA advises that during a scheduled inspection on an Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B3 helicopter, one of the two retaining rings of the inner race of the MRM upper bearing was found missing. These two retaining rings ensure that the inner race is correctly positioned with respect to the rollers, and, if one or both of these retaining rings are missing, it can lead to an unlimited shift of the inner race and compromise the function of the MRM upper bearing. This condition, if not detected and corrected, can lead to damage to the MRM and surrounding elements, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter.

Airbus Helicopters developed an inspection to check that the upper and lower retaining rings of the inner race of the MRM upper bearing are present and correctly installed. EASA determined that the same condition may exist or develop on Airbus Helicopters Model AS350 helicopters, Model AS355 helicopters, and Model EC130 helicopters because they share a similar design and supply chain. Until the check of the upper and lower bearing retaining rings is accomplished, EASA specifies that repetitive inspections of the MRM upper bearing sealant bead

(sealant bead) should be accomplished to ensure the MRM remains serviceable. EASA considers its AD an interim measure pending further investigation results, and notes that further AD action may follow.

Comments

The FAA gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this final rule. The FAA received 4 comments in support of the NPRM.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by EASA and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the European Union, EASA has notified the FAA about the unsafe condition described in its AD. The FAA is issuing this AD after evaluating all of the information provided by EASA and determining the unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of the same type design and that air safety and the public interest require adopting the AD requirements as proposed.

Differences Between This AD and the EASA AD

Although EASA AD 2018-0206 specifies accomplishing the inspection of the installation of the MRM upper bearing inner race retaining rings within 660 hours time in service (TIS) or 24 months, whichever occurs first, the FAA has determined that interval does not address the identified unsafe condition soon enough to ensure an adequate level of safety for the affected fleet. In developing an appropriate compliance time for this AD, the FAA considered the degree of urgency associated with the subject unsafe condition and the manufacturer's recommendation. In light of all of these factors, the FAA finds that a compliance time of within 660 hours TIS or 6 months, whichever occurs first, represents an appropriate interval of time for affected helicopters to continue to operate without compromising safety.

Although paragraph (5) of EASA AD 2018-0206 specifies that operators may contact the manufacturer for instructions if there are signs of degradation on the MRM inner race, paragraph (i)(3) of this AD requires operators to repair or replace the MRM if there is any degradation as indicated by damage to the retaining rings (including but not limited to cracks, scratches, and gouges), deterioration, or wear.

Related Service Information Under 14 CFR Part 51

Airbus Helicopters has issued the following service information.

- Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS350–62.00.42, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018.
- Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS355–62.00.37, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018.
- Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin EC130–62A017, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018.

This service information describes procedures for a one-time inspection to verify presence and correct installation of the MRM upper bearing retaining rings, a repetitive inspection of the sealant bead on the MRM for damage, and corrective actions. Damage of the sealant bead includes flaws, cracks, folds, separation, or absence of the sealant bead. Corrective actions include repair and replacement. These documents are distinct since they apply to different helicopter models.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the **ADDRESSES** section.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 1,212 helicopters of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

ESTIMATED COSTS FOR REQUIRED ACTIONS

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Up to 30 work-hours × \$85 per hour = Up to \$2,550	\$0	Up to \$2,550	Up to \$3,090,600.

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any necessary on-condition actions that would be required based on

the results of any required actions. The FAA has no way of determining the

number of aircraft that might need these on-condition actions:

ESTIMATED COSTS OF ON-CONDITION ACTIONS

Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product
Up to 80 work-hours × \$85 per hour = Up to \$6,800	Up to \$33,124	Up to \$39,924.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on helicopters identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

This AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD 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.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this AD:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, 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.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

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

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 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. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive.

2021–04–13 Airbus Helicopters:

Amendment 39–21434; Docket No.

FAA–2020–0847; Product Identifier 2018–SW–087–AD.

(a) Effective Date

This Airworthiness Directive (AD) becomes effective April 14, 2021.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus Helicopters, certificated in any category, as identified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (3) of this AD.

(1) Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, and AS350D helicopters.

(2) Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters.

(3) Model EC130 B4 and EC130 T2 helicopters.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code 6230, Main Rotor Mast Inner Race Rings.

(e) Reason

This AD was prompted by a report of a missing retaining ring of the inner race of the main rotor mast (MRM) upper bearing. The FAA is issuing this AD to address this condition, which, if not detected and corrected, can lead to damage to the MRM and surrounding elements, possibly resulting in loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

You are responsible for performing each action required by this AD within the

specified compliance time unless it has already been accomplished prior to that time.

(g) Definitions

(1) For the purposes of this AD, an affected part is any MRM having part number (P/N) 350A37-1290-XX (where XX can be any numerical combination) and a serial number as listed in Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS350-62.00.42, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018; Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS355-62.00.37, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018; or Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin EC130-62A017, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018, as applicable to your model helicopter,

unless the upper bearing inner race retaining rings are verified to be installed correctly as specified in the inspection required in paragraph (i)(1) of this AD.

(2) For the purposes of this AD, a Group 1 helicopter is one on which an affected part is installed.

(3) For the purposes of this AD, a Group 2 helicopter is one on which an affected part is not installed.

(h) MRM Upper Sealant Bead Inspection

(1) For Group 1 helicopters, within the compliance time specified in Figure 1 to paragraph (h) of this AD, and, thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 165 hours time-in-

service (TIS): Inspect the MRM upper bearing sealant bead for damage in accordance with section 3.B.2.a of the Accomplishment Instructions of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS350-62.00.42, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018; Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS355-62.00.37, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018; or Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin EC130-62A017, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018, as applicable to your model helicopter, except you are not required to discard the plastic clamps (Item vv). For the purposes of this inspection, damage may be indicated by flaws, cracks, folds, separation, or absence of the sealant bead.

Figure 1 to paragraph (h) – Initial Inspection of MRM Upper Bearing Sealant Bead

Accumulated Hours TIS	Compliance Time
Less than 115 hours TIS	Before exceeding 165 hours TIS
115 or more hours TIS	Within 50 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD

Note 1 to paragraph (h)(1): Unless specified otherwise, the hours TIS specified in figure 1 to paragraph (h) of this AD are those accumulated on the effective date of this AD by the helicopter since first flight.

(2) If, during any inspection of the MRM upper bearing sealant bead as required by paragraph (h)(1) of this AD, there is damage, before further flight, inspect the installation of the MRM upper bearing inner race retaining rings for discrepancies in accordance with paragraph (i)(1) of this AD.

(i) MRM Inner Race Retaining Rings Inspection

(1) For Group 1 Helicopters: Within 660 hours TIS or 6 months, whichever occurs first after the effective date of this AD: Inspect the installation of the MRM upper bearing inner race retaining rings for discrepancies in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of section 3.B.2.b of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS350 62.00.42, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018; Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS355-62.00.37, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018; or Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin EC130-62A017, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018, as applicable to your model helicopter, except you are not required to discard the plastic clamps (Item vv). For the purposes of this inspection, discrepancies may be indicated by incorrect positioning or missing rings.

(2) If, during the inspection required by paragraph (i)(1) of this AD there are any discrepancies, before further flight, remove the affected part, inspect the MRM inner race for degradation, and replace the retaining rings in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of section

3.B.2.c of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS350 62.00.42, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018; Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS355-62.00.37, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018; or Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin EC130-62A017, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018, as applicable to your model helicopter, except you are not required to return parts to Airbus Helicopters. For the purposes of this inspection, degradation is indicated by damage to the retaining rings (including but not limited to cracks, scratches, and gouges), deterioration, or wear.

(3) If, during the inspection of the MRM inner race, as required by paragraph (i)(2) of this AD, there is any degradation, before next flight, repair or replace the MRM.

(j) Terminating Action

Verification on a helicopter of correct installation of the MRM upper bearing inner race retaining rings, as required by paragraph (i)(1) of this AD, or corrective action on a helicopter, as specified in paragraphs (h)(2), (i)(2), or (i)(3) of this AD, as applicable, constitute terminating action for the repetitive inspections required by paragraph (h)(1) of this AD for that helicopter.

(k) Parts Installation Prohibition

As of the effective date of this AD, no person may install, on any helicopter, an affected part as identified in paragraph (g)(1) of this AD.

(l) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: Scott Franke, Aviation Safety Engineer, International

Validation Branch, General Aviation & Rotorcraft Unit, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone 817-222-5110; email 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) For operations conducted under a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate or under 14 CFR part 91, subpart K, notify your principal inspector or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office or certificate holding district office, before operating any aircraft complying with this AD through an AMOC.

(m) Related Information

The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD 2018-0206, dated September 20, 2018. This EASA AD may be found in the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2020-0847.

(n) Material Incorporated by Reference

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of the service information listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this service information as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(i) Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS350-62.00.42, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018.

(ii) Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin AS355-62.00.37, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018.

(iii) Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin EC130-62A017, Revision 0, dated September 17, 2018.

(3) For service information identified in this AD, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 N Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; telephone 800-232-0323 or Fax: 972-641-3775; or at <https://www.airbus.com/helicopters/services/technical-support.html>.

(4) You may view this service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 817-222-5110.

(5) You may view this service information that is incorporated by reference at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, email fedreg.legal@nara.gov, or go to: <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html>.

Issued on February 8, 2021.

Lance T. Gant,

Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 2021-04806 Filed 3-9-21; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-0096; Project Identifier MCAI-2021-00040-R; Amendment 39-21440; AD 2021-04-18]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The FAA is superseding Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2020-23-02, which applied to all Airbus Helicopters Model EC225LP helicopters. AD 2020-23-02 required repetitive inspections of the bearing in the swashplate assembly of the main rotor mast assembly for discrepancies (ceramic balls that have a hard point or sensitive axial play or both) and, depending on the findings, replacement of an affected main rotor mast assembly with a serviceable main rotor mast assembly. Since the FAA issued AD 2020-23-02, the FAA has determined additional main rotor mast assemblies are affected by the unsafe condition. This AD continues to require the actions specified in AD 2020-23-02, and also includes additional affected main rotor mast assemblies; as specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is incorporated by reference. The FAA is issuing this AD

to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD becomes effective March 25, 2021.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of March 25, 2021.

The FAA must receive comments on this AD by April 26, 2021.

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

- **Fax:** 202-493-2251.

- **Mail:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

- **Hand Delivery:** U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For material incorporated by reference (IBR) in this AD, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: ADs@easa.europa.eu; internet: www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call 817-222-5110. It is also available in the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0096.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0096; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathleen Arrigotti, Aerospace Engineer, Large Aircraft Section, International Validation Branch, FAA, 2200 South

216th St., Des Moines, WA 98198; phone and fax: 206-231-3218; email: kathleen.arrigotti@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

The FAA issued AD 2020-23-02, Amendment 39-21318 (85 FR 73607, November 19, 2020) (AD 2020-23-02), which applied to all Airbus Helicopters Model EC225LP helicopters. AD 2020-23-02 required repetitive inspections of the bearing in the swashplate assembly of the main rotor mast assembly for discrepancies (ceramic balls that have a hard point or sensitive axial play or both) and, depending on the findings, replacement of an affected main rotor mast assembly with a serviceable main rotor mast assembly. The FAA issued AD 2020-23-02 to address defective ceramic balls in the bearing installed in the swashplate assembly of the main rotor mast assembly, which could lead to premature spalling of the ball itself and of the bearing, loss of function of the bearing, and overload of the main rotor mast scissor, resulting in reduced control of the helicopter.

Actions Since AD 2020-23-02 Was Issued

Since the FAA issued AD 2020-23-02, the FAA has determined that additional main rotor mast assemblies are affected by the unsafe condition.

The EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2020-0264, dated December 2, 2020 (EASA AD 2020-0264) (also referred to as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for all Airbus Helicopters Model EC225LP helicopters. EASA AD 2020-0264 supersedes EASA AD 2020-0079, dated April 1, 2020 (which corresponds to FAA AD 2020-23-02).

This AD was prompted by a report of a manufacturing and control issue regarding the ceramic balls in the bearing installed in the swashplate assembly of the main rotor mast assembly. The FAA is issuing this AD to address defective ceramic balls in the bearing installed in the swashplate assembly of the main rotor mast assembly, which could lead to premature spalling of the ball itself and of the bearing, loss of function of the bearing, and overload of the main rotor mast scissor, resulting in reduced control of the helicopter. See the MCAI for additional background information.

Explanation of Retained Requirements

Although this AD does not explicitly restate the requirements of AD 2020-