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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2013-0735; Directorate Identifier 2013-SW-014-AD; Amendment 39-17748; AD 2014-03-11]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. (Bell) Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: We are adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Bell Model 204B helicopters with a certain cable assembly installed. This AD requires inspecting the tail rotor (T/R) cable assembly for an incorrectly machined body. This AD is prompted by a report from Bell that a defective body on the cable prevents the barrel assembly from fully engaging in the body cavity. These actions are intended to prevent disengagement of the cable from the barrel, failure of the T/R pitch control, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: This AD is effective March 26, 2014.

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain document listed in this AD as of March 26, 2014.

ADDRESSES: For service information identified in this AD, contact Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc., P.O. Box 482, Fort Worth, TX 76101; telephone (817) 280-3391; fax (817) 280-6466; or at http://www.bellcustomer.com/files/. You may review a copy of the referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at http://www.regulations.gov or in person at the Docket Operations Office between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this AD, any incorporated-by-reference service information, the economic evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for the Docket Operations Office (phone: 800-647-5527) is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket

Operations Office, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20590.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Helene Gandy, Aviation Safety Engineer, Rotorcraft Certification Office, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137; telephone (817) 222-5413; email 7-AVS-ASW-170@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

On August 20, 2013, at 78 FR 51126, the Federal Register published our notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), which proposed to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to Bell Model 204B helicopters with a cable assembly, part number 205-001-720-001 installed. The NPRM proposed to require inspecting each cable assembly to determine if an incorrectly machined body is installed. If an incorrectly machined body is installed, the NPRM proposed to require replacing the cable assembly within 100 hours time-in-service (TIS). Until the cable assembly is replaced, the NPRM proposed to require inspecting the assembly for separation daily.

The proposed requirements were intended to prevent disengagement of the cable from the body, T/R pitch control failure in a fixed position, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Comments

We gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD, but we did not receive any comments on the NPRM (78 FR 51126, August 20, 2013).

FAA's Determination

We have reviewed the relevant information and determined that an unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design and that air safety and the public interest require adopting the AD requirements as proposed.

Related Service Information

We reviewed Bell Alert Service Bulletin No. 204B-12-68, dated October 10, 2012 (ASB), which describes procedures for inspecting the barrel assembly to determine if an incorrectly machined body is installed. If an incorrectly machined body is installed, the ASB specifies replacing the cable assembly. The ASB further specifies inspecting the barrel assembly and cable connection daily until the cable assembly is replaced.

Differences Between This AD and the Service Information

The ASB specifies replacing any defective cable assembly within 100 hours TIS or by January 31, 2013; this AD requires replacing the cable assembly within 100 hours TIS.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD will affect 9 helicopters of U.S. Registry. We estimate that operators will incur the following costs in order to comply with this AD. At an average labor rate of $85 per hour, inspecting the barrel assembly requires about 1 work-hour, for a cost per helicopter of $85 and a total cost of $765 for the fleet. If required, replacing a defective cable assembly requires about 8 work-hours, and required parts cost about $625, for a cost per helicopter of $1,305.

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.

We are 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 products 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) Is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);

(3) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska to the extent that it justifies making a regulatory distinction; and

(4) 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.

We prepared an economic evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this AD and placed it in the AD docket.

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 (AD):

2014-03-11 Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. (Bell) Helicopters: Amendment 39-17748; Docket No. FAA-2013-0735; Directorate Identifier 2013-SW-014-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to Bell Model 204B helicopters with a cable assembly, part number 205-001-720-001 installed, certificated in any category.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as an incorrectly machined body on the cable assembly, which could prevent the barrel assembly from fully engaging in the body cavity. This condition could result in disengagement of the cable from the barrel, failure of the tail rotor pitch control, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

(c) Effective Date

This AD becomes effective March 26, 2014.

(d) 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.

(e) Required Actions

(1) Within 25 hours time in service (TIS), inspect each cable assembly to determine if there is a false cut on the body of the barrel assembly, as depicted in Figure 1 of Bell Alert Service Bulletin No. 204B-12-68, dated October 10, 2012.

(2) If there is a false cut, before the first flight of each day, inspect the cable assembly for separation of the barrel assembly from the body. If there is any separation, before further flight, replace the cable assembly.

(3) Within 100 hours TIS, replace the cable assembly with an airworthy cable assembly that does not have a false cut in the body. Replacing the cable assembly is terminating action for the inspections required by paragraph (e)(2) of this AD.

(f) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Rotorcraft Certification Office, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: Helene Gandy, Aviation Safety Engineer, Rotorcraft Certification Office, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137; telephone (817) 222-5413; email 7-AVS-ASW-170@faa.gov.

(2) For operations conducted under a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate or under 14 CFR part 91, subpart K, we suggest that you 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.

(g) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 6720: Tail Rotor Control System.

(h) 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) Bell Alert Service Bulletin No. 204B-12-68, dated October 10, 2012.

(ii) Reserved.

(3) For Bell service information identified in this AD, contact Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc., P.O. Box 482, Fort Worth, TX 76101; telephone (817) 280-3391; fax (817) 280-6466; or at http://www.bellcustomer.com/files/.

(4) You may view this service information at FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. 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, call (202) 741-6030, or go to: http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations.html.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on January 31, 2014.
Lance T. Gant,
Acting Directorate Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.