



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2019-0970; Product Identifier 2018-SW-089-AD; Amendment 39-19870; AD 2020-05-20]

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 Airbus Helicopters Model AS332C, AS332C1, AS332L, AS332L1, and AS332L2 helicopters. This AD requires removing the drain plugs from the fuel tank compartments located under the bottom structure. This AD was prompted by the discovery that a modification to the fuel tank could lead to fuel accumulating in an area containing electrical equipment and subsequent ignition of fuel vapors. The actions of this AD are intended to address an unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain document listed in this AD as of [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

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 this 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-2019-0970.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> in Docket No. FAA-2019-0970; 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 Union Aviation Safety Agency (previously European 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: James Blyn, Aviation Safety Engineer, Regulations and Policy Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone 817-222-5110; email james.blyn@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Discussion

On December 3, 2019, at 84 FR 66080, the *Federal Register* published the FAA's notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), which proposed to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to Airbus Helicopters Model AS332C, AS332C1, AS332L, AS332L1, and AS332L2 helicopters, except those with modification 0726383 installed. The NPRM proposed to require removing drain plugs from the fuel tank compartments. The proposed requirements were intended to prevent fuel accumulating in an area containing electrical equipment and ignition of fuel vapors, which could result in a fire and subsequent damage to the helicopter or injury to the occupants.

The NPRM was prompted by EASA AD No. 2018-0209, dated September 21, 2018 (EASA AD 2018-0209), issued by EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, to correct an unsafe condition for Airbus Helicopters (formerly Eurocopter, Eurocopter France, Aerospatiale) Model AS332C, AS332C1, AS332L, AS332L1, and AS332L2 helicopters, except those with modification 0726383. EASA advises that during production of AS332 helicopters, closure of the fuel tank drains with plugs was implemented. EASA states that this closure disregards compliance with an airworthiness certification requirement and in the event of fuel leakage in flight, a closed fuel drain creates the risk of fuel accumulation and/or migration to an adjacent area. EASA advises this area may contain electrical equipment that could be susceptible to creating a source of ignition. Accordingly, EASA AD 2018-0209 requires modification of the draining system of the fuel tank

compartments by removing the drain plugs from the fuel tank compartments located under the bottom structure.

Comments

The FAA gave the public the opportunity to participate in developing this AD, but the FAA did not receive any comments on 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 of the unsafe condition described in its AD. The FAA is issuing this AD after evaluating all information provided by EASA and determining the unsafe condition exists and is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of these same type designs and that air safety and the public interest require adopting the AD requirements as proposed.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR part 51

The FAA reviewed Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin (ASB) No. AS332-53.01.62, Revision 1, dated May 28, 2019 (ASB AS332-53.01.62, Revision 1), which specifies procedures for removing the drain plugs from the fuel tank compartments located under the bottom structure of the helicopter. This service information also specifies that the number of drain plugs varies depending on the version of the helicopter.

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.

Other Related Service Information

The FAA also reviewed Airbus Helicopters ASB No. AS332-53.01.62, Revision 0, dated June 7, 2018 (AS332-53.01.62, Revision 0). AS332-53.01.62, Revision 0, contains the same procedures as AS332-53.01.62, Revision 1. However, AS332-53.01.62, Revision 1, also addresses military versions.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 11 helicopters of U.S. Registry. The FAA estimates that operators may incur the following costs in order to comply with this AD. Labor costs are estimated at \$85 per work-hour.

Removing the 6 drain plugs installed on Model AS332C and AS332C1 helicopters takes about 2 work-hours for an estimated cost of \$170 per helicopter and \$170 for the U.S. fleet size of 1 helicopter.

Removing the 7 drain plugs installed on Model AS332L, AS332L1, and AS332L2 helicopters takes about 2 work-hours for an estimated cost of \$170 per helicopter and \$1,700 for the U.S. fleet size of 10 helicopters.

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 (AD):

2020-05-20 **Airbus Helicopters:** Amendment 39-19870; Docket No. FAA-2019-0970; Product Identifier 2018-SW-089-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model AS332C, AS332C1, AS332L, AS332L1, and AS332L2 helicopters, certificated in any category, except those with modification 0726383 installed.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as closure of fuel tank drains. This condition could result in fuel accumulating in an area containing electrical equipment and ignition of fuel vapors. This condition could result in a fire and subsequent damage to the helicopter or injury to the occupants.

(c) Effective Date

This AD becomes effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(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

Within 110 hours time-in-service or during the next scheduled maintenance, whichever occurs first:

(1) For Model AS332C and AS332C1 helicopters, remove the 6 fuel tank drain plugs by following the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 3.B.2. of Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. AS332-53.01.62, Revision 1, dated May 28, 2019 (ASB AS332-53.01.62), except you are not required to place the drain plugs in stock.

(2) For Model AS332L, AS332L1, and AS332L2 helicopters, remove the 7 fuel tank drain plugs by following the Accomplishment Instructions, paragraph 3.B.2. of ASB AS332-53.01.62, except you are not required to place the drain plugs in stock.

(f) Credit for Previous Actions

Actions accomplished before the effective date of this AD in accordance with the procedures specified in Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. AS332-53.01.62, Revision 0, dated June 7, 2018, are considered acceptable for compliance with the corresponding actions specified in paragraph (e) of this AD.

(g) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: James Blyn, Aviation Safety Engineer, Regulations and Policy Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone 817-222-5110; email 9-ASW-FTW-AMOC-Requests@faa.gov.

(2) For operations conducted under a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate or under 14 CFR part 91, subpart K, the FAA suggests 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.

(h) Additional Information

(1) Airbus Helicopters Alert Service Bulletin No. AS332-53.01.62, Revision 0, dated June 7, 2018, which is not incorporated by reference, contains additional information about the subject of this AD. For service information identified in this AD, 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.

(2) The subject of this AD is addressed in European Union Aviation Safety Agency (previously European Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD No. 2018-0209, dated September 21, 2018. You may view the EASA AD on the Internet at <https://www.regulations.gov> in Docket No. FAA-2019-0970.

(i) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 2810, Fuel Storage.

(j) 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 No. AS332-53.01.62, Revision 1, dated May 28, 2019.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For service information identified in this AD, 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>.

(4) You may view this service information at 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 March 11, 2020.

Lance T. Gant, Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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