

Proposed Rules

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains notices to the public of the proposed issuance of rules and regulations. The purpose of these notices is to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in the rule making prior to the adoption of the final rules.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 94-SW-19-AD]

Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH (ECD) Model MBB-BK 117 Series Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH (ECD) Model MBB-BK 117 series helicopters. This proposal would require initial and repetitive inspections of the main rotor (M/R) blade upper and lower surface for bulging. This proposal is prompted by two reported incidents in which a balance weight became detached from inside the M/R blade structure and migrated toward the tip of the M/R blade. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to detect movement of a balance weight to prevent severe vibrations and a subsequent precautionary landing.

DATES: Comments must be received by April 14, 1995.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 94-SW-19-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. Comments may be inspected at this location between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

The service information referenced in the proposed rule may be obtained from American Eurocopter Corporation, 2701 Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, Texas 75053-4005. This information may be examined at the FAA, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Richard Monschke, Aerospace Engineer, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222-5116, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed rule by submitting such written data, views, or arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified above. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this notice may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule. All comments submitted will be available, both before and after the closing date for comments, in the Rules Docket for examination by interested persons. A report summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this notice must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 94-SW-19-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 94-SW-19-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

Discussion

The Luftfahrt-Bundesamt, which is the airworthiness authority for the Federal Republic of Germany, recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH (ECD) Model MBB-

BK 117 series helicopters. The Luftfahrt-Bundesamt advises that the M/R blade upper and lower surfaces in the area of the balance weights may bulge or have creep deformations.

Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH (ECD) has issued Alert Service Bulletin ASB-MBB-BK 117-10-108, Revision 1, dated October 14, 1994, which specifies initial and repetitive inspections of the upper and lower surfaces of the main rotor blades for bulging in the area of the outboard lead balance weight. The Luftfahrt-Bundesamt classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued AD 94-280 in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in the Federal Republic of Germany.

This helicopter model is manufactured in the Federal Republic of Germany and is type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the Luftfahrt-Bundesamt has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the Luftfahrt-Bundesamt, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design that are certificated for operation in the United States.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other Eurocopter Deutschland GmbH (ECD) Model MBB-BK 117 series helicopters of the same type design registered in the United States, the proposed AD would require initial and repetitive inspections of the M/R blade upper and lower surface for bulging. The actions would be required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

The FAA estimates that 125 helicopters of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take approximately one-half work hour per helicopter to accomplish the proposed actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$3,750.

The regulations proposed herein would not have substantial direct effects