

# Rules and Regulations

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## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 94-SW-15-AD; Amendment 39-9148; AD 95-03-12]

#### Airworthiness Directives; Schweizer Aircraft Corporation and Hughes Helicopters, Inc. Model 269A, 269A-1, 269B, 269C, and TH-55A Series Helicopters

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

**ACTION:** Final rule; request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** This amendment supersedes an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to Schweizer Aircraft Corporation and Hughes Helicopters, Inc. Model 269A, 269A-1, 269B, 269C, and TH-55A series helicopters, that currently requires an initial and repetitive visual inspection of the clutch control spring assembly for component wear and replacement of affected unairworthy parts. This amendment requires the same initial and repetitive visual inspection and replacements required by the existing Priority Letter AD, but references a revised service bulletin and provides replacement procedures for the aluminum spring retainer thermofit tube (plastic sleeve). This amendment is prompted by a recent accident involving a Model 269C helicopter that reportedly lost engine drive power at 100 feet above ground level (AGL) with a resulting unsuccessful autorotative landing, and the manufacturer's issuance of revised service information that provides more detailed instructions for replacement of two components of the belt drive clutch control assembly. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent failure of the aluminum spring retainer,

loss of power to the rotor drive system, and a subsequent forced landing.

**DATES:** Effective March 1, 1995.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations was approved previously by the Director of the Federal Register as of September 1, 1994 (59 FR 38354, July 28, 1994).

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before April 17, 1995.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 94-SW-15-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Schweizer Aircraft Corporation, P.O. Box 147, Elmira, New York 14902. This information may be examined at the FAA, Office of the Assistant Chief Counsel, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street NW., suite 700, Washington, DC.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Raymond Reinhardt, Aerospace Engineer, New York Aircraft Certification Office, FAA, New England Region, 10 Fifth Street, Valley Stream, New York 11581, telephone (516) 256-7532; fax (516) 568-2716.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On March 4, 1993, the FAA issued Priority Letter AD 93-03-01, to require an initial and repetitive visual inspection of the clutch control spring assembly (assembly) for component wear and security, and replacement of affected unairworthy parts. That action was prompted by an accident involving a Schweizer Aircraft Corporation Model 269C helicopter. Reportedly, the helicopter lost engine drive power and was unsuccessful in performing a forced landing from 100 feet above ground level (AGL). A subsequent investigation revealed that the assembly had failed, and that the aluminum spring retainer, part number (P/N) 269A5483-7, of the failed assembly had excessive wear. That condition, if not corrected, could result in failure of the aluminum spring retainer, loss of power to the rotor drive system, and a subsequent forced landing.

Since the issuance of that AD, the manufacturer has issued a revised service bulletin, Schweizer Service Bulletin (SB) B-256.2, dated June 11, 1993, that describes procedures for an initial and repetitive inspection for component wear of the assembly in greater detail than the previously-issued service bulletin, and describes procedures for further inspections if disassembly is necessary. It also describes procedures for replacement of the aluminum spring retainer, P/N 269A5452, P/N 269A5452-3, P/N 269A5452-5, or P/N 269A5483-7, and the plastic sleeve, P/N 269A5590-101, which was not described in SB B-256.1, dated January 20, 1993, the SB cited in AD 93-03-01.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other Schweizer Aircraft Corporation and Hughes Helicopters, Inc. Model 269A, 269A-1, 269B, 269C, and TH-55A helicopters of the same type design, this AD supersedes AD 93-03-01 to require an initial and repetitive visual inspection of the assembly for component wear; and, if any worn or unairworthy parts are found, disassembly, further inspections, and replacement of any unairworthy parts. The actions are required to be accomplished in accordance with SB B-256.2, dated June 11, 1993, described previously. The assembly puts tension on the belt drive between the transmission and the main rotor. If the assembly fails and there is no tension on the belt, the transmission will not turn the main rotor. Due to the criticalness of the clutch control assembly, and a short compliance time, this rule must be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft.

Since a situation exists that requires the immediate adoption of this regulation, it is found that notice and opportunity for prior public comment hereon are impracticable, and that good cause exists for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days.

#### Comments Invited

Although this action is in the form of a final rule that involves requirements affecting flight safety and, thus, was not preceded by notice and an opportunity for public comment, comments are invited on this rule. Interested persons are invited to comment on this rule by submitting such written data, views, or