

the tail rotor gearbox from the helicopter. The actions specified in this AD are intended to prevent loss of the abrasion strip, separation of a tail rotor blade, separation of the tail rotor gearbox, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective March 1, 1995.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of March 1, 1995.

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-21-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems, Technical Publications, Bldg. 530/B111, 5000 E. McDowell Road, Mesa, Arizona 85205-9797. 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. Brent Bandle, Aerospace Engineer, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, FAA, Transport Airplane Directorate, 3960 Paramount Blvd., Lakewood, California 90712, telephone (310) 627-5237, fax (310) 627-5210.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On August 30, 1994, the FAA issued AD 94-18-08, Amendment 39-9021 (59 FR 46163, September 7, 1994) to require installation of abrasion strip rivets (rivets) within 25 hours time-in-service or 7 calendar days, whichever occurs first, on certain tail rotor blades. Also required are owner/operator checks of the abrasion strips for evidence of debonding along the abrasion strip bond line before the first flight of each day; a dye-penetrant and tap-test inspection to ensure the abrasion strip is secure if the owner/operator checks reveal evidence of debonding; and, if debonding is confirmed, replacement of the tail rotor blade with an airworthy blade that has been modified with the installation of rivets. Since the issuance of that AD, there have been several incidents of riveted tail rotor blade abrasion strips debonding and separating during flight, resulting in severe out-of-balance conditions, and subsequent separation of the tail rotor

gearbox from the helicopter. Based on these incidents, the FAA has determined that riveting the abrasion strips alone does not create a fail-safe design. An analysis has shown that the debonding starts at the inboard end of the abrasion strip. This condition, if not corrected, could result in loss of the abrasion strip, separation of a tail rotor blade, separation of the tail rotor gearbox, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. Therefore, installation of stainless steel abrasion tape over the inboard end of the abrasion strips within 25 hours time-in-service (TIS) or 90 calendar days, whichever occurs first, and thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 100 hours TIS, is necessary to prevent debonding of the abrasion strip from the tail rotor and to ensure the integrity of the helicopter. However, owners and operators must install abrasion strip rivets as required by AD 94-18-08 prior to installing the stainless steel abrasion tape. Additionally, within 1,000 hours TIS, installation of a tail rotor blade with a new-design abrasion strip is required.

The FAA has reviewed McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems Service Information Notice HN-238, DN-187, EN-80, FN-66, dated October 26, 1994, which describes procedures for inspection of the abrasion strips for separation or voids and replacement if separation or voids are evident; installation of 304 stainless steel abrasion tape (.0027-inch thick) over the inboard end of the abrasion strips; and replacement of existing tail rotor blades with tail rotor blades equipped with new-design abrasion strips.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems and Hughes Helicopters, Inc. Model 369, OH-6A, and YO-6A series helicopters of the same type design, this AD is being issued to prevent loss of the abrasion strip, separation of a tail rotor blade, separation of the tail rotor gearbox, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. This AD requires initial and repetitive inspections of the abrasion strip, installation of stainless steel abrasion tape over the inboard end of the abrasion strip, and as a terminating action, installation of a tail rotor blade with a new-design abrasion strip. Due to the criticality of the abrasion strip and maintaining a balanced tail rotor system, and the short compliance time for installation of the stainless steel abrasion tape, this rule must be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition. The actions are required to be accomplished in accordance with the service bulletin described previously.

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 arguments as they may desire. Communications should identify the Rules Docket number and be submitted in triplicate to the address specified under the caption **ADDRESSES**. All communications received on or before the closing date for comments will be considered, and this rule may be amended in light of the comments received. Factual information that supports the commenter's ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the AD action and determining whether additional rulemaking action would be needed.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the rule that might suggest a need to modify the 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 that summarizes each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this AD will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their comments submitted in response to this rule must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: "Comments to Docket No. 94-SW-21-AD." The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

The regulations adopted herein will not have substantial direct effects 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. Therefore, in accordance with Executive Order 12612, it is determined that this final rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment.

The FAA has determined that this regulation is an emergency regulation that must be issued immediately to