

SPECIAL PILOT CAUTION

Some sprags in overrunning clutches have been found cracked in service. A broken sprag could conceivably prevent the clutch from overrunning when entering autorotation. Until the clutch in this aircraft has been replaced, *do not* enter practice autorotations by rapidly closing or "chopping" the throttle. "Chopping" the throttle could result in a sudden loss of rotor RPM if the clutch failed to disengage.

Enter autorotation by first lowering collective and then rolling off just enough throttle to produce a small visible split between the rotor and engine tachometer needles. If the clutch fails to disengage, immediately complete a power recovery. Perform hovering autos only after checking the function of the overrunning sprag clutch prior to lift-off, then smoothly rolling off the throttle from a low hover with the skids no more than two feet above the ground.

Be sure to perform the sprag clutch check (split tach needles) before every flight, not just the first flight of the day.

(b) An alternative method of compliance or adjustment of the compliance time that provides an acceptable level of safety may be used if approved by the Manager, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through a FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office.

(c) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with §§ 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate the helicopter to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished.

(d) This amendment becomes effective on April 28, 1999 to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by Priority Letter AD 99-07-18, issued March 26, 1999, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 5, 1999.

Eric Bries,

*Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.*

[FR Doc. 99-9132 Filed 4-12-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-SW-24-AD; Amendment 39-11126; AD 99-07-17]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Robinson Helicopter Company Model R22 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This document publishes in the **Federal Register** an amendment adopting Airworthiness Directive (AD) 99-07-17 which was sent previously to all known U.S. owners and operators of

Robinson Helicopter Company (RHC) Model R22 helicopters by individual letters. This AD requires, before further flight, inserting a Special Pilot Caution into the Normal Procedures section of the Rotorcraft Flight Manual (RFM). This amendment is prompted by several reports of sprag clutch assemblies with cracked or fractured sprag ends. The sprag clutch failures, determined to be due to a change in the manufacturing process, could result in loss of main rotor revolutions-per-minute (RPM) during autorotations. The intent of this AD is to alert pilots of the potential for the sprag clutch failing to overrun during autorotation, loss of main rotor RPM, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective April 28, 1999, to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by Priority Letter AD 99-07-17, issued on March 26, 1999, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before June 14, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99-SW-24-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Elizabeth Bumann, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, Propulsion Branch, 3960 Paramount Blvd., Lakewood, California 90712, telephone (562) 627-5265, fax (562) 627-5210.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On March 26, 1999, the FAA issued Priority Letter AD 99-07-17, applicable to RHC Model R22 helicopters, which requires, before further flight, inserting a Special Pilot Caution into the Normal Procedures section of the RFM. That action was prompted by several reports of sprag clutch assemblies, including one from wreckage of an accident that occurred within the past year, with cracked or fractured sprag ends. The sprag clutch failures, determined to be due to a change in the manufacturing process,

could result in loss of main rotor RPM during autorotations. The intent of that priority letter AD is to alert pilots of the potential for the sprag clutch failing to overrun during autorotation, loss of main rotor RPM, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

The FAA has reviewed Robinson Helicopter Company R22 Service Bulletin SB-85, dated March 22, 1999, which describes procedures for checking whether sprag clutches with certain serial numbers are installed and replacing certain serial numbered sprag clutches, and inserting a Special Pilot Caution in the Normal Procedures section of the RFM.

Since the unsafe condition described is likely to exist or develop on other RHC Model R22 helicopters of the same type design, the FAA issued Priority Letter AD 99-07-17 to alert pilots of the potential for the sprag clutch failing to overrun during autorotation due to the failure of the sprags within the sprag clutch assembly, and loss of main rotor RPM. The AD requires, before further flight, inserting a Special Pilot Caution into the Normal Procedures section of the RFM which primarily addresses autorotation maneuvers and a before every flight sprag clutch (split tach needles) check for proper function of the sprag clutch. Inserting the Special Pilot caution is an interim action. The FAA will issue an AD to supersede this AD and require replacing the clutch assembly when parts become available from the manufacturer. The short compliance time involved is required because the previously described critical unsafe condition can adversely affect the structural integrity of the helicopter. Therefore, inserting a Special Pilot Caution into the Normal Procedures section of the RFM is required before further flight, and this AD must be issued immediately.

Since it was found that immediate corrective action was required, notice and opportunity for prior public comment thereon were impracticable and contrary to the public interest, and good cause existed to make the AD effective immediately by individual letters issued on March 26, 1999, to all

known U.S. owners and operators of RHC Model R22 helicopters. These conditions still exist, and the AD is hereby published in the **Federal Register** as an amendment to section 39.13 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 39.13) to make it effective to all persons.

The FAA estimates that 880 helicopters of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 0.5 work hour per helicopter to insert the caution into the RFM, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$26,400.

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. 99-SW-24-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 correct an unsafe condition in aircraft, and that it is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866. It has been determined further that this action involves an emergency regulation under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979). If it is determined that this emergency regulation otherwise would be significant under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures, a final regulatory evaluation will be prepared and placed in the Rules Docket. A copy of it, if filed, may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

Adoption of the Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration amends part 39 of the

Federal Aviation Regulations (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. Section 39.13 is amended by adding a new airworthiness directive to read as follows:

AD 99-07-17 Robinson Helicopter

Company: Amendment 39-11126.

Docket No. 99-SW-24-AD.

Applicability: Model R22 helicopters, serial numbers (S/N) 0002 through 2862, with sprag clutch, part number (P/N) A188-2, S/N's 3708 through 3757, 3808 through 3893, and 3908 through 4207, installed, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each helicopter identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been otherwise modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For helicopters that have been modified, altered, or repaired so that the performance of the requirements of this AD is affected, the owner/operator must request approval for an alternative method of compliance in accordance with paragraph (b) of this AD. The request should include an assessment of the effect of the modification, alteration, or repair on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD; and, if the unsafe condition has not been eliminated, the request should include specific proposed actions to address it.

Compliance: Required before further flight, unless accomplished previously.

To alert pilots of the potential for the sprag clutch failing to overrun during autorotation due to failure of the sprags within the sprag clutch assembly, and loss of main rotor revolutions-per-minute, accomplish the following:

(a) Insert either the Special Pilot Caution, revised March 22, 1999, which is contained in Robinson Helicopter Company R22 Service Bulletin SB-85, dated March 22, 1999, or the following Special Pilot Caution paragraphs, into the Normal Procedures section of the Rotorcraft Flight Manual, between pages P.4-8 and P.4-9:

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Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on April 5, 1999.

Eric Bries,

*Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate,
Aircraft Certification Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Bureau of Export Administration

15 CFR Parts 738, 740, 742, 748, 762, and 774

[Docket No. 981222316-8316-01]

RIN 0694-AB68

Exports of Firearms

AGENCY: Bureau of Export Administration, Commerce.

ACTION: Interim rule with request for comments.

SUMMARY: On April 18, 1998, President Clinton announced at the Santiago Summit in Chile that the United States would promulgate regulations based on the Organization of American States (OAS) Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition (referred to as the "OAS Model Regulations"). The Bureau of Export Administration (BXA) is revising the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) to implement export control measures agreed to by members of the OAS and set forth in the OAS Model Regulations. The OAS Model Regulations were developed to assist OAS member countries in implementing

the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (Firearms Convention). OAS member countries agreed to impose an import and export license requirement to effectively combat the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials. Though the Firearms Convention has yet to enter into force, most OAS member countries, including the United States, are taking actions in advance of the Convention's entry into force based on the OAS agreed Model Regulations to control the flow of firearms items because of their links to such activities as drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime, and mercenary and other criminal activities.

DATES: *Effective Date:* This rule is effective April 13, 1999.

Grace Period: A 90-day grace period will apply to the requirement to obtain the Firearms Import Certificate or equivalent official document. During the grace period, applications will be accepted whether or not supported by the Firearms Import Certificate.

COMMENTS: Comments on this rule must be received on or before May 28, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on this rule should be sent to Patricia Muldonian, Regulatory Policy Division, Bureau of Export Administration, Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 273, Washington, DC 20044.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joan Roberts, Director, Foreign Policy Division, Bureau of Export Administration, Telephone: (202) 482-0171.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On November 14, 1997, twenty-nine members of the Organization of American States (OAS), including the United States, signed the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (Firearms Convention). Subsequently, the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago signed the Treaty bringing the number of signatories to thirty-one. The Firearms Convention requires all OAS Member States to establish a program to issue authorizations for the import and export of firearms. The Firearms Convention will enter into force after the deposit of instruments of ratification by two Signatory States. To date, only one Convention Signatory, Belize, has ratified the Treaty.

The Firearms Convention constitutes the first multilateral treaty of its kind in the world, and it is expected to enhance multilateral cooperation among the governments of the Americas in the battle against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, ammunition, explosives, and other related materials. The problem of illicit transnational trade in firearms is of particular concern to the governments of North and South America due to the violence it breeds and the links it often has with organized criminal activity, such as drug trafficking and terrorism.

The OAS member countries include: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

OAS members also approved, in November 1997, the Model Regulations for the Control of the International Movement of Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition (OAS Model Regulations) to promote harmonized procedures for import and export controls over the legal international movement of firearms. The OAS Model Regulations do not address explosives and related materials.

On April 18, 1998, at the Santiago Summit held in Chile, President Clinton announced that the United States would issue regulations based on the OAS Model Regulations and that the Firearms Convention would be sent to the Senate for its advice and consent for ratification. President Clinton stated that these measures will further multilateral cooperation to prevent and combat illicit transnational traffic in firearms and ammunition, while establishing and strengthening systems to enhance the tracing of firearms used in criminal activities.

The OAS Model Regulations affect most firearms items on the Commerce Control List (CCL) classified under the following Export Control Classification Numbers (ECCNs): (1) 0A984, Shotguns with a barrel length 18 inches or over and related parts, and buckshot shotgun shells; (2) 0A986, Shotgun shells, and related parts; and (3) 0A987, Optical sighting devices. Following the President's directive, BXA is imposing a new license requirement for exports to Canada of all items controlled by ECCN 0A984, 0A986, or 0A987. A license is already required for crime control