

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 (e) 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: Before further flight, unless accomplished previously.

To reduce the published Category "A" maximum takeoff and landing gross weights and single-engine forward climb performance limitations of the Rotorcraft Flight Manual (RFM), when an AC generator interlock system is not installed, accomplish the following:

- (a) Insert Sikorsky Model S-76A RFM Supplement (RFMS) No. 29B, Temporary Revision 1, dated April 9, 1999, into RFMS No. 29B, dated December 21, 1993, or
- (b) Determine if the AC generator interlock relays are installed by conducting the following inspection:
 - (1) Uncover the No. 2 Relay Panel, located in the right side of the cockpit overhead. This panel is also referred to as the right-hand panel.
 - (2) Inspect for the presence of the AC generator interlock relays identified as K43 and K44 (two relays) or K46, K47, and K48 (three relays).

Note 2: For S-76A helicopters, serial numbers (S/N's) 760001 through 760237, the AC generator interlock relays are wired through splice groups to the K31, K32, K11, and K13 relays. For S-76A helicopters, S/N's 760238 and higher, the AC generator interlock relays are wired through splice groups to the K11 and K13 relays. Depending on how and when each helicopter was modified, the labels on these relays could be K43 and K44 (two relays) or K46, K47, and K48 (three relays).

Note 3: Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation Alert Service Bulletin 76-77-4A, Revision A, dated May 5, 1999, pertains to the subject of this AD.

(3) If the AC generator interlock relays are installed, no further action is required by this AD.

(4) If the AC generator interlock relays are not installed, insert Sikorsky S-76A RFMS No. 29B, Temporary Revision 1, dated April 9, 1999, into RFMS No. 29B, dated December 21, 1993.

(c) This AD revises the Limitations Section of the RFM for helicopters on which the AC generator interlock relays are not installed by inserting a new RFMS revision limiting Category "A" gross weight and reducing published climb performance.

(d) Remove Sikorsky Model S-76A RFMS No. 29B, Temporary Revision 1, dated April 9, 1999, inserted into RFMS No. 29B, dated December 21, 1993, from the RFM upon installation of one of the following, as applicable:

- (1) For Model S-76A helicopters, S/N's 760001 through 760237, AC generator interlock kit (kit), part number (P/N) 33776-84790-012.

- (2) For Model S-76A helicopters, S/N's 760238 and higher, kit, P/N 33776-84790-011.

(e) 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, Boston Aircraft Certification Office, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Boston Aircraft Certification Office.

Note 4: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Boston Aircraft Certification Office.

(f) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 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.

(g) This amendment becomes effective on July 9, 1999, to all persons except those persons to whom it was made immediately effective by Priority Letter AD 99-11-04, issued May 13, 1999, which contained the requirements of this amendment.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on June 15, 1999.

Henry A. Armstrong,

Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-15901 Filed 6-23-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

RIN 2120-AA64

[Docket No. 98-SW-71-AD; Amendment 39-11204; AD 99-13-11]

Airworthiness Directives; Robinson Helicopter Company (Robinson) Model R44 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to Robinson Model R44 helicopters, that requires installing a shutoff clamp on the auxiliary fuel tank sump drain tube (drain tube) and a placard decal to alert operators as to the proper use of the auxiliary fuel tank drain. This amendment is prompted by a report of fuel leaking from a drain tube opening in the area of the horizontal and vertical firewalls. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent fuel leaks from the drain tube that could cause a fire and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 29, 1999.

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

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an airworthiness directive (AD) that is applicable to Robinson Model R44 helicopters was published in the **Federal Register** on March 22, 1999 (64 FR 13732). That action proposed to require installation of a shutoff clamp on the drain tube to prevent fuel leakage and a placard decal to alert operators as to the proper use of the auxiliary fuel tank drain.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. No comments were received on the proposal or the FAA's determination of the cost to the public. The FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed with only minor editorial changes that will neither increase the economic burden on any operator nor increase the scope of the AD.

The FAA estimates that 200 helicopters of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 1 work hour per helicopter to accomplish the required actions, and that the average labor rate is \$60 per work hour. The manufacturer has indicated that each operator will be provided parts at no cost. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$12,000.

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.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this action (1) is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a "significant rule" under DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); 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. A final evaluation has been prepared for this action and it is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained from the Rules Docket at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

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 99-13-11 Robinson Helicopter

Company: Amendment 39-11204.

Docket No. 98-SW-71-AD.

Applicability: Model R44 helicopters, Serial Numbers 0002 through 0529 except 0440, 0485, 0512, 0515, 0519, 0526, 0527, and 0528, 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 (c) 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: Within 100 hours time-in-service or 3 calendar months, whichever occurs first.

To prevent fuel leaks from the auxiliary fuel tank sump drain, which could cause a fire and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Install a shutoff clamp, part number (P/N) D663-1, by sliding it onto the auxiliary fuel tank sump drain tube, P/N A729-7, as shown in Figure 1.

(b) Install placard decal, P/N A654-93, as shown in Figure 1.

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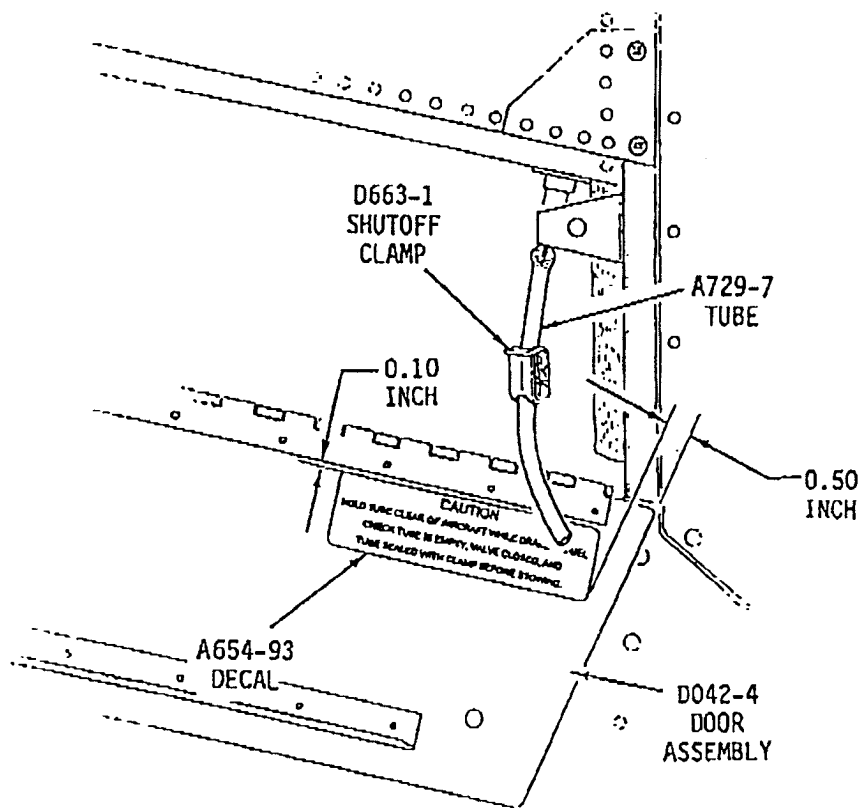


Figure 1

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(c) 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.

Operators shall submit their requests through an 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.

(d) Special flight permits may be issued in accordance with sections 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.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on July 29, 1999.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on June 15, 1999.

Henry A. Armstrong,

Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 99-15903 Filed 6-23-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99-SW-23-AD; Amendment 39-11207; AD 99-13-12]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada Model 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, and 206L-4 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment supersedes an existing priority letter airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to Bell Helicopter Textron Canada (BHTC) Model 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, and 206L-4 helicopters, that currently requires visual inspections and visual checks at specified time intervals, and a fluorescent-penetrant inspection (FPI) for any cracks in the tailboom skins around the horizontal stabilizer openings. Inserting a copy of the priority letter AD into the Rotorcraft Flight Manual (RFM) is also required. This amendment revises the inspection procedures and specified time intervals mandated by the priority letter AD. This amendment is prompted by crack growth analysis that indicates the need to detect cracks before they propagate from underneath the horizontal stabilizer supports. The actions specified by this AD are intended to detect a crack in the tailboom skin that could result in separation of the tailboom from the helicopter and

subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective July 9, 1999.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before August 23, 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-23-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Kohner, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Certification Office, ASW-170, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222-5447, fax (817) 222-5783.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On January 6, 1999, the FAA issued Priority Letter AD 99-02-01, applicable to BHTC Model 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, and 206L-4 helicopters, to require visual inspections and visual checks at specified time intervals, and a FPI for any cracks in the tailboom skins around the horizontal stabilizer openings. Inserting a copy of the priority letter AD into the RFM is also required. That action was prompted by 7 reports of fatigue cracks that propagated from the edges of the horizontal stabilizer openings in the tailboom skins. That condition, if not corrected, could result in separation of the tailboom and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Since the issuance of that priority letter AD, further review of crack growth rates has shown that cracks need to be detected before they propagate from underneath the horizontal stabilizer supports. Therefore, this superseding AD requires, at specified time intervals, not just visually inspecting and checking the tailboom skins in the area of the horizontal stabilizer supports, but also removing the horizontal stabilizer supports and visually inspecting the edges of the tailboom skins around the horizontal stabilizer openings for cracks. Removing the horizontal stabilizer supports will allow the detection of cracks at an earlier stage.

Transport Canada, which is the airworthiness authority for Canada, has notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on BHTC Model 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, and 206L-4 helicopters. Transport Canada advises that cracks were found on the tailboom skins in the area of the horizontal stabilizer.

Bell Helicopter Textron has issued BHTC Alert Service Bulletin No. 206L-98-114, dated November 25, 1998,

which specifies a pilot preflight check for cracks in the horizontal stabilizer area before the first flight of each day. Transport Canada classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued AD No. CF-98-42R1, dated February 16, 1999, which states that a review of crack growth rates indicates the need to detect cracks earlier. In addition to the preflight check for cracks introduced by the service bulletin, the Transport Canada AD requires removing the horizontal stabilizer supports and visually inspecting the tailboom skin underneath the horizontal stabilizer supports at specified time intervals.

These helicopter models are manufactured in Canada and are 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, Transport Canada has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of Transport Canada, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of these type designs 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 BHTC Model 206L, 206L-1, 206L-3, and 206L-4 helicopters of the same type designs, this AD supersedes Priority Letter AD 99-02-01 to require:

- Prior to further flight, and thereafter, at intervals not to exceed 10 hours time-in-service (TIS) until a one-time FPI is accomplished, a visual inspection for any crack in the tailboom skins around the horizontal stabilizer supports;
- At intervals not to exceed 5 hours TIS, a visual preflight pilot check for any crack in the tailboom skins around the horizontal stabilizer supports;
- Within 50 hours TIS, a one-time FPI for any crack in the edge of the tailboom skins around the left and right horizontal stabilizer openings on the tailboom; and
- After completion of the one-time FPI, at intervals not to exceed 100 hours TIS, a visual inspection of the entire edge of the horizontal stabilizer opening on both sides of the tailboom for any crack.

The visual check that is required at intervals not to exceed 5 hours TIS may be performed by an owner/operator (pilot), and must be entered into the aircraft records showing compliance with paragraph (b) of this AD in accordance with sections 43.11 and