

2009-25-07 Eurocopter France: Amendment 39-16126. Docket No. FAA- 2009-1118; Directorate Identifier 2008-SW-60-AD.

Effective Date

(a) This airworthiness directive (AD) becomes effective on December 28, 2009.

Other Affected ADs

(b) None.

Applicability

(c) This AD applies to Model EC120B helicopters, with an Emergency Floatation Gear Lighting and Ancillary Control Unit "LACU", part number (P/N) 040101AB, installed, certificated in any category.

Reason

(d) The mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) AD states that operators have reported unreliability of the latching push buttons on the LACU including the 'FLOAT ARM' pushbutton used to arm the emergency floatation gear and failure of the lights to illuminate properly. These actions are intended to prohibit flight over water if a functional test indicates that the emergency floatation gear cannot be armed, which would preclude deployment of the floats in an emergency water ditching that could result in helicopter damage or a fatality.

Actions and Compliance

(e) Required as indicated, unless already accomplished.

(1) Before further flight, amend the EC120B Rotorcraft Flight Manual Supplement (RFMS), Document 9-17 for the Emergency Floatation Gear Aerazur, by inserting a copy of this AD into the Limitations section of the RFMS or making pen and ink changes to that section as follows:

"Arm the emergency floatation gear by pressing the LACU 'FLOAT ARM' pushbutton.

--If both lights of the pushbutton remain lit, flight over water is permitted.

--If one or both lights of the pushbutton do not remain lit, FLIGHT OVER WATER IS PROHIBITED."

(2) Before each flight over water, perform a functional check to determine whether flight over water is permitted under the Limitations section in paragraph (e)(1) of this AD. For purposes of this AD, "flight over water" means flight beyond the power-off gliding distance from shore. "Shore" is an area of land adjacent to the water and above the high water mark but does not include land area that is intermittently under water.

(3) If the LACU fails the functional check required by paragraph (e)(2) of this AD, place a placard over the "FLOAT ARM" pushbutton that reads "INOP."

(4) The functional check required by paragraph (e)(2) may be performed by an owner/operator (pilot) holding at least a private pilot certificate because no special tools are required. The check must be entered into the aircraft records showing compliance with paragraph (e)(2) of this AD in accordance with the requirements of 14 CFR sections 43.11 and 91.417(a)(2)(v).

Differences Between This AD and the MCAI AD

(f) We require adding the limitations to the Limitations section of the RFMS not the basic RFM. We also allow inserting a copy of this AD in the RFMS or making pen and ink changes to the language in the RFMS. We changed the wording used to describe the functional check.

Other Information

(g) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs): The Manager, Safety Management Group, ATTN: DOT/FAA Southwest Region, J. R. Holton, Jr., ASW-112, Aviation Safety Engineer, Rotorcraft Directorate, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137, telephone (817) 222-4964, fax (817) 222-5961, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19.

(h) Special flight permits may be issued for a single flight in accordance with sections 14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199 to operate the helicopter to a location where the requirements of this AD can be accomplished provided there are no passengers on board and the helicopter is not flown over water.

Related Information

(i) The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Community, EASA AD No. 2008-0177-E, dated September 19, 2008, and Eurocopter France Emergency Alert Service Bulletin No. 04A007, dated September 18, 2008, contain related information.

Joint Aircraft System/Component (JASC) Tracking Code

(j) JASC Code 2560: Emergency Equipment.