DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 98–SW–70–AD; Amendment 39–11608; AD 2000–04–25]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron Canada (BHTC) Model 407 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to BHTC Model 407 helicopters, that requires modifying the door latch assemblies on all four crew and passenger doors. This amendment is prompted by an incident that occurred during a manufacturer's flight test, in which a door latch assembly broke, preventing occupants in the helicopter from opening the door. The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent a door latch rod assembly from disengaging from the door handle and preventing helicopter occupants from opening the door.

DATES: Effective April 12, 2000.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the **Federal Register** as of April 12, 2000.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Bell Helicopter Textron Canada, 12,800 Rue de l'Avenir, Mirabel, Quebec JON1LO, telephone (800) 463–3036, fax (514) 433–0272. This information may be examined at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 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: Sharon Miles, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, Fort Worth, Texas 76193–0110, telephone (817) 222–5122, fax (817) 222–5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an AD that is applicable to BHTC Model 407 helicopters was published in the **Federal Register** on December 16, 1999 (64 FR 70201). That action proposed to require modifying the door latch assemblies on all four crew and passenger doors.

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.

The FAA estimates that 146 helicopters of U.S. registry will be affected by this AD, that it will take approximately 6 work hours per helicopter to accomplish the modification, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Required parts will cost approximately $210. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $83,220.

The regulations adopted herein will not have a substantial direct effect 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, it is determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

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 location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES.**

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, 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 2000–04–25 Bell Helicopter Textron Canada: Amendment 39–11068. Docket No. 98–SW–70–AD.

Applicability: Model 407 helicopters, serial numbers 53000 through 53228, with door latch assemblies, part number (P/N) 20898–401, −402, −405, and −406, 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 within 100 hours time-in-service, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent a door latch rod assembly from disengaging from the door handle and preventing helicopter occupants from opening the door, accomplish the following:

(a) Modify each door latch assembly, P/N 20898–401, –402, –405, and –406, in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions in Bell Helicopter Textron Alert Service Bulletin No. 407–98–18, dated May 27, 1998.

(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, Regulations Group, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Regulations Group.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Regulations Group.

(c) 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.

(d) The modification shall be done in accordance with Bell Helicopter Textron Alert Service Bulletin No. 407–98–18, dated May 27, 1998. This incorporation by reference was approved by the Director of the Federal Register in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51. Copies may be obtained from Bell Helicopter Textron Canada, 12,800 Rue de l'Avenir, Mirabel, Quebec JON1LO, telephone (800) 463–3036, fax (514) 433–0272. Copies may be inspected at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel,

Southwest Region, 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.

(e) This amendment becomes effective on April 12, 2000.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Transport Canada (Canada) AD No. CF–98–19, dated July 28, 1998.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 24, 2000.

Henry A. Armstrong,

Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 00–5008 Filed 3–7–00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99–CE–70–AD; Amendment 39–11609; AD 2000–04–26]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Model ASW–27 Sailplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD) that applies to certain Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. (Alexander Schleicher) Model ASW–27 sailplanes. This AD requires inspecting the elevator control circuit clearance inside the fuselage tail boom to the fin intersection to assure a clearance of at least 2.5 millimeters (mm) (1/10-inch wide), and adjusting any clearance that does not meet the criteria. This AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for Germany. The actions specified by this AD are intended to detect interference in the elevator control circuit, which, if not corrected, could result in the elevator control jamming with possible loss of control of the sailplane.

DATES: Effective April 25, 2000.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of April 25, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Service information that applies to this AD may be obtained from Alexander Schleicher GmbH & Co. Segelflugzeugbau, D–36163 Poppenhausen, Federal Republic of Germany; telephone: ++ 49 6658 89–0; facsimile: ++ 49 6658 89–40. This information may also be examined at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99–CE–70–AD, 901 Locust, Room 506, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; or at the Office of the Federal Register, 800 North Capitol Street, NW, suite 700, Washington, DC.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Mike Kiesov, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone: (816) 426–6934; facsimile: (816) 426–2169.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Events Leading to the Issuance of This AD

A proposal to amend part 39 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR part 39) to include an AD that would apply to certain Alexander Schleicher Model ASW–27 sailplanes was published in the **Federal Register** as a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) on December 28, 1999 (64 FR 72584). The NPRM proposed to require inspecting the elevator control circuit clearance inside the fuselage tail boom to the fin intersection to assure a clearance of at least 2.5 mm (1/10-inch wide), and adjusting any clearance that does not meet the criteria. Accomplishment of the proposed action as specified in the NPRM would be required in accordance with Alexander Schleicher Technical Note No. 5, dated July 16, 1999.

The NPRM was the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for Germany.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. No comments were received on the proposed rule or the FAA's determination of the cost to the public.

The FAA's Determination

After careful review of all available information related to the subject presented above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed except for minor editorial corrections. The FAA has determined that these minor corrections will not change the meaning of the AD and will not add any additional burden upon the public than was already proposed.

Cost Impact

The FAA estimates that 30 sailplanes in the U.S. registry will be affected by the inspection, that it will take approximately 1 workhour per sailplane to accomplish the inspection, and that the average labor rate is approximately $60 an hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the inspection on U.S. operators is estimated to be $1,800, or $60 per sailplane.

The FAA estimates that it will take approximately 2 workhours per sailplane to accomplish the adjustment, if necessary, and that the average labor rate is approximately $60 an hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the adjustment on U.S. operators is estimated to be $3,600, or $120 per sailplane.

Compliance Time of This AD

The compliance time of this AD is presented in calendar time instead of hours time-in-service (TIS). When proper clearance is not provided inside the fuselage tail boom to the fin intersection, the 90-degree lever of the elevator controls rubs against the cut-out of the lower fin rib. Although the consequential jamming of the elevator controls is a result of sailplane operation, improper clearance will be prevalent at the time of manufacture. Sailplane operation varies among operators. For example, one operator may utilize the sailplane 50 hours TIS in 3 months while it may take another 12 months or more to accumulate 50 hours TIS. In order to assure that improper clearance is detected and corrected in a timely manner, the compliance time is required ''within the next 90 calendar days after the effective date of this AD.''

Regulatory Impact

These regulations will not have a substantial direct effect 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, the FAA has determined that this final rule does not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

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 copy of the final evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the