

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. 97-SW-63-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 notice and prior public comment are unnecessary in promulgating this regulation and therefore, it can be issued immediately to correct an unsafe condition in aircraft since none of these model helicopters are registered in the United States, 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, 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 98-07-10 Agusta S.p.A.: Amendment 39-10430. Docket No. 97-SW-63-AD.

Applicability: Agusta Model AB 412 helicopters with tail rotor blades, part number (P/N) 212-010-750-105, serial number (S/N) A5-(all numbers), 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 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 use the authority provided in paragraph (b) to request approval from the FAA. This approval may address either no action, if the current configuration eliminates the unsafe condition, or different actions necessary to address the unsafe condition described in this AD. Such a request should include an assessment of the effect of the changed configuration on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD. In no case does the presence of any modification, alteration, or repair remove any helicopter from the applicability of this AD.

Compliance: Required within 10 hours time-in-service, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent increased vibration levels, damage to the tail rotor drive system or tail rotor assembly, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Inspect tail rotor blades for debond voids in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions of Agusta Bollettino Tecnico (Technical Bulletin) No. 412-66, dated June 27, 1997 (hereafter referred to as "Technical Bulletin").

(1) If a debond void is detected which does not exceed the limits prescribed in paragraph 3 of the Technical Bulletin, repair the tail rotor blade (blade) or replace it with an airworthy blade.

(2) If a debond void exceeds the limits prescribed in paragraph 3 of the Technical Bulletin, replace the blade with an airworthy blade.

(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, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, 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, Rotorcraft Standards Staff.

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

(c) Special flight permits will not be issued.

(d) The inspection shall be done in accordance with Agusta Technical Bulletin No. 412-66, dated June 27, 1997. 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 Agusta S.p.A., 21017 Cascina Costa di Samarate (VA), Via Giovanni Agusta 520, telephone (0331) 229111, fax (0331) 229605-222595. 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 16, 1998.

Note 3: The subject of this AD is addressed in Registro Aeronautico Italiano (Italy) AD 97-194, dated July 9, 1997.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 24, 1998.

Eric Bries,

Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 98-8464 Filed 3-31-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 96-SW-28-AD; Amendment 39-10429; AD 98-07-09]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. Model 47B, 47B-3, 47D, 47D-1, 47G, 47G-2, 47G-2A, 47G-2A-1, 47G-3, 47G-3B, 47G-3B-1, 47G-3B-2, 47G-3B-2A, 47G-4, 47G-4A, 47G-5, 47G-5A, 47H-1, 47J, 47J-2, 47J-2A, and 47K Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. (BHTI) Model 47B, 47B-3, 47D, 47D-1, 47G, 47G-2, 47G-2A, 47G-2A-1, 47G-3, 47G-3B, 47G-3B-1, 47G-3B-2, 47G-3B-2A, 47G-4, 47G-4A, 47G-5, 47G-5A, 47H-1, 47J, 47J-2, 47J-2A, and 47K helicopters, that requires installing a safety washer kit designed to preclude separation of the stabilizer bar damper link (damper link) if the damper link rod end bushing (bushing) loosens and exits the damper link rod end. This amendment is prompted by two reported incidents in which the bushings loosened and exited the damper link rod ends, allowing the damper link to slide over the retention bolt and separate from the stabilizer bar (in the first incident), and from the hydraulic damper (in the second incident). The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent failure of the damper link assembly, which can result in degraded control response and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective May 6, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of May 6, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc., P.O. Box 482, Fort Worth, Texas 76101. This information may be examined 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Jurgen E. Priester, Aerospace Engineer, Rotorcraft Certification Office, Rotorcraft Directorate, FAA, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas 76137; telephone (817) 222-5159, fax (817) 222-5783.

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 BHTI Model 47B, 47B-3, 47D, 47D-1, 47G, 47G-2, 47G-2A, 47G-2A-1, 47G-3, 47G-3B, 47G-3B-1, 47G-3B-2, 47G-3B-2A, 47G-4, 47G-4A, 47G-5, 47G-5A, 47H-1, 47J, 47J-2, 47J-2A, and 47K helicopters was published in the **Federal Register** on May 20, 1997 (62 FR 27554). That action proposed to require installing a safety washer kit designed to preclude separation of the damper link if the

bushing loosens and exits the damper link rod end.

Interested persons have been afforded an opportunity to participate in the making of this amendment. Due consideration has been given to the one comment received.

The commenter states that the helicopters are controllable with one damper link disconnected. The commenter also states that a standard AN970-3 safety washer drilled out to 0.250-inch and coned should be allowed to be used as an alternate part to the BHTI safety washer kit. The commenter states that the modified AN970-3 safety washer is the same configuration as the BHTI safety washers used on the lateral cyclic torque tube and only costs pennies.

The FAA does not concur with the comment. The commenter did not provide any support for his statement that the helicopters are controllable with one damper link disconnected. The commenter indicates that he has been installing a modified safety washer on BHTI Model 47 series helicopters for decades. Although the commenter may believe that his modified safety washer is as airworthy as BHTI's safety washer, he has provided no engineering design data that support his assertion or show that his modified safety washer is of the same configuration or of the same material quality as BHTI's safety washer. Without such supporting data, the FAA cannot approve the use of the commenter's modified safety washer.

After careful review of the available data, including the comments noted above, the FAA has determined that air safety and the public interest require the adoption of the rule as proposed.

The FAA estimates that 1,868 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. Required parts will cost approximately \$188 per helicopter. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be \$463,264.

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 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 98-07-09 Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc.:
Amendment 39-10429. Docket No. 98-SW-28-AD.

Applicability: Model 47B, 47B-3, 47D, 47D-1, 47G, 47G-2, 47G-2A, 47G-2A-1, 47G-3, 47G-3B, 47G-3B-1, 47G-3B-2, 47G-3B-2A, 47G-4, 47G-4A, 47G-5, 47G-5A, 47H-1, 47J, 47J-2, 47J-2A, and 47K helicopters, certificated in any category.

Note 1: This AD applies to each helicopter identified in the preceding applicability provision, regardless of whether it has been 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 use the authority provided in paragraph (b) to request approval from the FAA. This approval may address either no action, if the current configuration eliminates the unsafe condition, or different actions necessary to address the unsafe condition described in this AD. Such a request should include an assessment of the effect of the changed configuration on the unsafe condition addressed by this AD. In no case does the presence of any modification, alteration, or repair remove any helicopter from the applicability of this AD.

Compliance: Required within the next 100 hours time-in-service or within the next 120

calendar days, whichever occurs first, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent failure of the stabilizer bar damper link assembly, which can result in degraded control response and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Remove the stabilizer bar damper link assemblies from the helicopter, install a safety washer kit, part number (P/N) CA-047-96-022-1, and reinstall the stabilizer bar damper link assemblies onto the helicopter in accordance with the Accomplishment Instructions contained in Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. Alert Service Bulletin No. 47-96-22, dated August 16, 1996.

(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, Rotorcraft Certification Office, 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, Rotorcraft Certification Office.

Note 2: Information concerning the existence of approved alternative methods of compliance with this AD, if any, may be obtained from the Rotorcraft 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) The installation shall be done in accordance with Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. Alert Service Bulletin No. 47-96-22, dated August 16, 1996. 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, Inc., P.O. Box 482, Fort Worth, Texas 76101. 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 May 6, 1998.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on March 24, 1998.

Eric Bries,

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

[FR Doc. 98-8466 Filed 3-31-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 97-SW-28-AD; Amendment 39-10431; AD 98-07-11]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; GKN Westland Helicopters Limited WG-30 Series 100 and 100-60 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: This amendment adopts a new airworthiness directive

(AD) that is applicable to GKN Westland Helicopters Limited (Westland) WG-30 series 100 and 100-60 helicopters. This action requires an initial visual inspection and replacement, if necessary, of all main rotor head tie-bars. Thereafter, this AD requires, at intervals not to exceed 220 hours time-in-service (TIS), replacing each main rotor head tie-bar (tie-bar) with an airworthy tie-bar. This amendment is prompted by an accident on a similar model military helicopter in which a tie-bar failed; it is suspected that the military helicopter involved in the accident exceeded the power-off transient rotor speed limitation. This condition, if not corrected, could result in failure of a tie-bar, loss of a main rotor blade, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Effective April 16, 1998.

The incorporation by reference of certain publications listed in the regulations is approved by the Director of the Federal Register as of April 16, 1998.

Comments for inclusion in the Rules Docket must be received on or before June 1, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 97-SW-28-AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

The service information referenced in this AD may be obtained from GKN Westland Helicopters Limited, Customer Support Division, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2YB, England, telephone (01935) 703884, fax (01935) 703905. This information may be examined 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Shep Blackman, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, ASW-111, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Fort Worth, Texas, 76137, telephone (817) 222-5296, fax (817) 222-5961.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Civil Aviation Administration (CAA), which is the airworthiness authority for the United Kingdom (UK), recently notified the FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on Westland WG-30 series 100 and 100-60 helicopters. The CAA advises that when water gets into the blade sleeve it can cause bulging or swelling of a tie-bar that could result in failure of a tie-bar, loss of a main rotor blade, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Westland has issued Westland Helicopters Service Bulletin (SB) No. W30-62-34 and W30-62-35, both dated November 29, 1995, which specify procedures for conditional, dimensional, and radiographic inspections and replacement, if necessary, of the tie-bars. The actions specified in these service bulletins are intended to prevent loss of a main rotor blade due to bulging or swelling of a tie-bar, tie-bar failure, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. The CAA classified these service bulletins as mandatory and issued CAA ADs 010-11-95 and 011-11-95, both dated January 31, 1996, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these helicopters in the UK.

These helicopter models are manufactured in the UK and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of § 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the CAA has kept the FAA informed of the situation described above. The FAA has examined the findings of the CAA, reviewed all available information, and determined that AD action is necessary for products of this type design 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 Westland WG-30 series 100 and 100-60 helicopters of the same type design eligible for registration in the United States, this AD is being issued to prevent loss of a main rotor blade due to failure of a tie-bar which could result in subsequent loss of control of the helicopter. This AD requires an initial visual inspection and replacement, if necessary, of the tie-bars