

AWB 53-1 Issue 2, Schweizer (Hughes) 269 Pre-flight inspections on aft cluster fittings

Schweizer (Hughes) 269 Pre-flight inspections on aft cluster fittings

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Effectivity

All Schweizer (Hughes) 269 series helicopters.

Purpose

This bulletin has two main purposes

1. To urgently advise operators and aircraft maintenance organisations that a crack has been detected in an aft cluster fitting which is included in the helicopter serial number applicability and part number range identified in Schweizer SIN N-217, N-220, and SIN N221, as listed in AD/HU/269/92, and,
2. To provide advance warning that CASA is considering adopting FAA AD/2001-25-52 which requires a dye penetrant inspection to be carried out on certain aft cluster fittings every 50 hours TIS.

Background

In order to prevent possible loss of the tail boom support structure, which could result in the loss of the helicopter, the manufacturer has issued instructions to conduct visual pre-flight inspections and dye penetrant inspections, in order to detect cracks at the earliest stage of formation in a specific range of aft cluster fittings.

In addition to the fatal Schweizer (Hughes) 269 accident in Australia, which was caused by the failure of an aft cluster fitting, another Schweizer (Hughes) 269 has also been lost in the U.K due to an in-flight failure of an aft cluster fitting. This has prompted the FAA to issue AD AD/2001-25-52 which requires a dye penetrant inspection to be carried out on the aft cluster fitting every 50 hours TIS.

Recommendation

CASA recommends that operators include in the pre-flight check, an inspection of all aft cluster fittings installed on all Schweizer (Hughes) 269 series helicopters, not just those currently identified in the

manufacturers' SIN data referred to in the FAA and CASA Airworthiness Directives.

This pre-flight inspection of the aft cluster fittings should be identified in the aircraft Maintenance Release as an additional inspection included in the pre-flight check to ensure pilots are made aware of the operators' requirement.

As part of their obligations under CAR 214, operators should approach their maintenance organisations to provide pilots with adequate training on how to perform the visual pre-flight inspection on these fittings.

Comment

It is CASA's intention to continue to direct operators and aircraft maintenance organisations to refer to the requirements issued by the manufacturer and country of certification rather than raise or amend a CASA Airworthiness Directive.