provide the information needed to support reviews of plant performance, to be conducted on a quarterly basis, with the results posted on the NRC's Internet site.

The petitioner believes that performance indicators are an essential element of the reactor oversight program and that their omission would degrade the ability of the reactor oversight program to assess nuclear plant performance levels. According to the petitioner, the current NRC staff may be able to compensate for missing performance indicators from one or two nuclear plants by conducting additional inspections. Also, the petitioner states that NRC inspectors could be expected to revert to broader inspection procedures that they used as recently as last spring. However, the petitioner states that as time passes and familiarity with the old ways fades, that capability also diminishes. In addition, the petitioner asserts that it is uncertain that the NRC staff has, or will continue to have, sufficient inspection staff to compensate for the eventuality where an owner operating numerous reactors suddenly decides not to submit the performance indicator information for any plant. The petitioner believes that the suggested amendment would satisfy the objective of maintaining safety by ensuring that the NRC continues to receive the vital information that it needs to assess nuclear plant performance levels.

Enhancing Public Confidence—The petitioner believes that public confidence only can be enhanced by requiring plant owners to submit information that is needed for the NRC to conduct its oversight program. As an analogy, the petitioner offers that, just as the Internal Revenue Service does not rely on the voluntary submission of tax returns by American taxpayers, the NRC should not rely on voluntary submission of vital safety information by nuclear plant owners.

Improving the Effectiveness and Efficiency of NRC Processes—The petitioner indicates that the substantive changes made by the NRC within its reactor oversight program were predicated on the assumption that nuclear plant owners would submit the performance indicator information. For example, the NRC inspection program was scaled back to only confirmatory checks in areas covered by performance indicators. The petitioner believes that any effectiveness and efficiency gains realized from the reactor oversight program would be sacrificed if one or more plant owners opted not to submit performance indicator information and that NRC's effectiveness would be impaired by having to inspect what had been covered by the performance indicator.

Reducing Unnecessary Regulatory Burden—The petitioner states that all nuclear plant owners in the U.S. today must consider the submission of the performance indicator information as a necessary regulatory burden; otherwise they would not have participated in the voluntary program that has been in place since April 2000. The petitioner believes that if the performance indicator information showed that safety levels declined, that plant owners must not have the option of viewing the submission as an unnecessary regulatory burden to avoid NRC scrutiny of the problem areas. The petitioner states that by merely codifying current industry practice, no unnecessary regulatory burden is introduced.

Conclusion

The petitioner believes that the NRC must require performance indicator information from all nuclear power plant owners if the NRC is to meet its stated objectives of maintaining safety, enhancing public confidence, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its processes, and reducing regulatory burden. The petitioner notes that the recent example of the vehicle tire safety issue emphasizes the need for definitive requirements for submission of safety information to Federal regulators. The petitioner states that Congressional hearings revealed that the tire company had information on potential safety problems that it delayed transmitting to the Federal regulator. The petitioner further states that the tire company was not aggressive in responding to requests by the Federal regulator for information. The petitioner concludes that the NRC must revise its regulations to prevent similar abuses.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 27th day of February, 2001.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Annette Vietti-Cook,

Secretary of the Commission.

[FR Doc. 01–5215 Filed 3–2–01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7590–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000–SW–50–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Kaman Aerospace Corporation Model K–1200 Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Kaman Aerospace Corporation (Kaman) Model K–1200 helicopters. The AD would require reducing the life limit of the rotor shaft and teeter pin assembly, and establishing a life limit for the flap clevis. This proposal is prompted by the discovery of cracks in parts that were returned to the manufacturer. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent failure of the rotor shaft, teeter pin assembly, or flap clevis due to fatigue cracks, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before May 4, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000–SW–50–AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137. You may also send comments electronically to the Rules Docket at the following address: 9-asw-adcomments@faa.gov. Comments may be inspected at the Office of the Regional Counsel between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Richard Noll, Aviation Safety Engineer, Boston Aircraft Certification Office, 12 New England Executive Park, Burlington, MA 01803, telephone (781) 238–7160, fax (781) 238–7199.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

Interested persons are invited to participate in the making of the proposed 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 above. All

communications received on or before the closing date for comments, specified above, will be considered before taking action on the proposed rule. The proposals contained in this document may be changed in light of the comments received.

Comments are specifically invited on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed 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 summarizing each FAA-public contact concerned with the substance of this proposal will be filed in the Rules Docket.

Commenters wishing the FAA to acknowledge receipt of their mailed comments submitted in response to this proposal must submit a self-addressed, stamped postcard on which the following statement is made: ''Comments to Docket No. 2000–SW–50–AD.'' The postcard will be date stamped and returned to the commenter.

Availability of NPRMs

Any person may obtain a copy of this NPRM by submitting a request to the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000–SW–50–AD, 2601 Meacham Blvd., Room 663, Fort Worth, Texas 76137.

Discussion

This document proposes the adoption of a new airworthiness directive (AD) for Kaman Model K–1200 helicopters. The AD would require:

- Reducing the life limit for the rotor shaft from 10,000 hours time-in-service (TIS) to 3,750 TIS;
- Reducing the life limit of the teeter pin assembly from 10,000 hours TIS to 550 hours TIS; and
- Establishing a life limit of the flap clevis of 640 hours TIS.

This proposal is prompted by the discovery of cracks in parts that were returned to the manufacturer. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent failure of the rotor shaft, teeter pin assembly, or flap clevis due to fatigue cracks, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Since an unsafe condition has been identified that is likely to exist or develop on other Kaman Model K–1200 helicopters of the same type design, the proposed AD would require:

- Reducing the life limit of the rotor shaft, part number (P/N) K974112–001, –003, –005, –007, –009, or –101, from 10,000 hours TIS to 3,750 hours TIS;
- Reducing the life limit of the teeter pin assembly, P/N K910005–007 or –009, from 10,000 hours to 550 hours TIS; and
- Establishing a life limit of the flap clevis, P/N K911049–011, –017, –019, or –021, of 640 hours TIS.

The FAA estimates that 9 helicopters of U.S. registry would be affected by this proposed AD, that it would take 0.25 hour per helicopter to accomplish the proposed changes to the Limitations section of the applicable maintenance manual, and that the average labor rate is $60 per work hour. Based on these figures, the total cost impact of the proposed AD on U.S. operators is estimated to be $135, plus an increase in hourly operating costs of approximately $13 for each affected helicopter.

The regulations proposed herein would 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 proposal would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed regulation (1) is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a ''significant rule'' under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979); and (3) if promulgated, 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 draft regulatory evaluation prepared for this action is contained in the Rules Docket. A copy of it may be obtained by contacting the Rules Docket at the location provided under the caption **ADDRESSES**.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, pursuant to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the Federal Aviation Administration proposes to amend 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:

Kaman Aerospace Corporation: Docket No. 2000–SW–50–AD.

Applicability: Model K–1200 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 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: Required within 25 hours time-in-service, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent failure of the rotor shaft, teeter pin assembly, or flap clevis due to fatigue cracks, and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Remove any rotor shaft, part number (P/N) K974112–001, –003, –005, –007, –009, or –101, that has 3,750 or more hours time-in-service (TIS) and replace it with an airworthy rotor shaft. Remove any teeter pin assembly, P/N K910005–007 or –009, that has 550 or more hours TIS and replace it with an airworthy teeter pin assembly. Remove any flap clevis, P/N K911049–011, –017, –019, or –021, that has 640 or more hours TIS and replace it with an airworthy flap clevis.

(b) This AD revises the Limitations section of the maintenance manual by reducing the life limit of the rotor shaft, P/N K974112–001, 003, –005, –007, –009, and –001, to 3,740 hours TIS; reducing the life limit of the teeter pin assembly, P/N K910005–007 and –009, to 550 hours TIS; and establishing a life limit for the flap clevis, P/N K911049–011, –017, –019, and –021, of 640 hours TIS.

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

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 21, 2001.

Eric Bries,

Acting Manager, Rotorcraft Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 01–5170 Filed 3–2–01; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 99–CE–82–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Pilatus Aircraft LTD Models PC–12 and PC–12/45 Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes to supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 99–17–08, which currently requires modifying the generator 2 excitation by removing certain diodes and installing a new 5-amp circuit breaker and suppression filter found on certain Pilatus Aircraft Ltd. (Pilatus) Models PC–12 and PC–12/45 airplanes. The Federal Aviation Administration has determined that the A250 voltage spike suppression filter in the modification kit can cause the circuit breaker 235 to trip because of overload. In extreme circumstances, this can lead to overheating of wiring. The proposed AD would require modifying the generator 2 excitation by removing certain diodes, installing a new 5-amp circuit breaker and new suppression filter requirement in accordance with revised procedures. The proposed AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for Switzerland. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent damage to electrical components if generator 2 is not switched off before engine shutdown and it overheats. This could result in loss of electrical power to certain critical airplane components.

DATES: The FAA must receive any comments on this proposed rule by April 12, 2001.

ADDRESSES: Send three copies of comments to FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 99–CE–82–AD, 901 Locust, Room 506, Kansas City, Missouri 64106. Comments may be inspected at this location between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

You may get service information that applies to the proposed AD from Pilatus Aircraft Ltd., Customer Liaison Manager, CH–6371 Stans, Switzerland; telephone: +41 41 619 65 09; facsimile: +41 41 610 33 51. You may also read this information at the Rules Docket at the address above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Roman T. Gabrys, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone: (816) 329–4141; facsimile: (816) 329–4090.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

How do I comment on this proposed AD? We invite your comments on the proposed rule. You may send whatever written data, views, or arguments you choose. You need to include the rule's docket number and send your comments in triplicate to the address mentioned under the caption **ADDRESSES.** We will consider all comments received by the closing date mentioned above, before acting on the proposed rule. We may change the proposals contained in this notice because of the comments received.

Are there any specific portions of the proposed AD I should pay attention to? The FAA specifically invites comments on the overall regulatory, economic, environmental, and energy aspects of the proposed rule that might call for a need to change the proposed rule. You may read all comments we receive. We will file a report in the Rules Docket that summarizes each FAA contact with the public that concerns the substantive parts of this proposal.

The FAA is reexamining the writing style we currently use in regulatory documents, in response to the Presidential memorandum of June 1, 1998. That memorandum requires federal agencies to communicate more clearly with the public. We are interested in your comments on the ease of understanding this document, and any other suggestions you might have to improve the clarity of FAA communications that affect you. You can get more information about the Presidential memorandum and the plain language initiative at *http://www.faa.gov/language/.*

How can I be sure FAA receives my comment? If you want us to acknowledge the receipt of your comments, you must include a self-addressed, stamped postcard. On the postcard, write ''Comments to Docket No. 99–CE–82–AD.'' We will date stamp and mail the postcard back to you.

Discussion

Has FAA taken any action to this point? The FAA issued AD 99–17–08, Amendment 39–11256 (64 FR 45149, August 19, 1999), against Pilatus models PC–12 and PC–12/45 airplanes, to prevent damage to electrical components if generator 2 is not switched off before engine shutdown and it overheats. This could result in loss of electrical power to certain critical airplane components of Pilatus Models PC–12 and PC–12/45 airplanes.

AD 99–17–08 requires that you do the following on the affected airplanes:

—modify the generator 2 excitation by removing certain diodes; and

—install a new 5-amp circuit breaker and suppression filter.

AD 99–17–08 was the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for Switzerland.

What has happened since AD 99–17–08 to begin this action? The Federal Office for Civil Aviation (FOCA), which is the airworthiness authority for Switzerland, recently notified FAA of the need to change AD 99–17–08. The FOCA reports that after installation of Pilatus Service Bulletin SB 21–012 and turning on electrical power on one of the affected airplanes, the circuit breaker CB 235 tripped.

Investigation revealed that the suppression filter (A250) (part number 524.52.12.358) was shorted. The suppression diode, installed in the filter was shorted and the wrong type. The manufacturer's A250 voltage spike suppression filter is inadequate and must be replaced with a new A250 voltage spike suppression filter.

Is there service information that applies to this subject? Pilatus issued:

—Service Bulletin No 24–012, dated February 19, 1999; and

—Service Bulletin No 24–014, dated October 27, 1999.

What are the provisions of these service bulletins? These service bulletins include procedures for:

—modifying the generator 2 excitation by removing certain diodes and installing a new 5-amp circuit breaker and suppression filter;

—removing the A250 voltage spike suppression filter; and

—installing the new A250 voltage spike suppression filter.

What action did the FOCA take? The FOCA classified both service bulletins as mandatory and issued Swiss AD HB 99–143, dated February 19, 1999, and AD HB 99–542, dated October 29, 1999, to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in Switzerland.