FAA Airworthiness Directive

97-15-08 MCDONNELL DOUGLAS HELICOPTER SYSTEMS: Amendment 39-10081. Docket No. 97-SW-02-AD.

Applicability: Model 369D, E, F, FF, 500N, AH-6, and MH-6 helicopters, with main rotor transmission, part number (P/N) 369D25100, 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 (d) 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 as indicated, unless accomplished previously.

To prevent failure of the transmission output drive gear (gear), part number P/N 369D25127-11, which could result in loss of main rotor control and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter, accomplish the following:

(a) Within the next 10 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD, determine through an inspection of records, contact with the manufacturer, or using a bright light and viewing through the open liquid level plug port, if the installed gear serial number (S/N) is S/N 005570-0646 through S/N 005570-0765, or S/N 005570-0876 through S/N 005570-0998.

(b) If the gear has an affected S/N, remove the gear and replace it with an airworthy gear, that has a S/N other than the S/N's listed in paragraph (a) of this AD, as follows:

(1) For helicopters equipped with a cargo hook assembly, with a separate, permanently-maintained log of actual hours time-in-service (TIS) of external load operation, remove and replace the gear within the next 25 hours TIS for external load operations, or within the next 400 hours TIS for non-external load operation, whichever comes first.

(2) For helicopters equipped with a cargo hook assembly, with no separate, permanently- maintained log of actual external load operation, remove and replace the gear within the next 25 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD. Owners/operators may begin maintaining a separate permanent log of external load operations and comply with the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) of this AD.

(3) For helicopters without cargo hook assemblies, remove and replace the gear within the next 400 hours TIS after the effective date of this AD.

(c) Replacement of the affected gear with an airworthy gear having a S/N other than those S/N's listed in paragraph (a) of this AD is considered a terminating action for the requirements of this AD.

(d) 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, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office. Operators shall submit their requests through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may concur or comment and then send it to the Manager, Los Angeles 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 Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office.

(e) 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.

(f) This amendment becomes effective on August 4, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Bruce Conze, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Los Angeles Aircraft Certification Office, Propulsion Branch, 3960 Paramount Blvd., Lakewood, California 90712, telephone (562) 627-5261, fax (562) 627-5210.