



SUBJ: Fuel System

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) notifies all registered helicopter owners and operators of an available list of helicopters that are fully compliant with the crash resistant fuel system (CRFS) safety standards of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) § 27.952 or 14 CFR § 29.952. Operating a non-CRFS compliant helicopter is not an airworthiness concern that would warrant airworthiness directive (AD) action under 14 CFR part 39. However, operating a CRFS compliant helicopter may reduce the risk of post-crash fires and improve occupant survivability in an accident.

Background

On November 2, 1994, helicopter fuel system crash resistance became a regulatory requirement in Section 27.952 of 14 CFR Part 27 and in Section 29.952 of 14 CFR Part 29. The regulations apply only to newly type-certificated rotorcraft. Since the regulations were not retroactive, there was no requirement to incorporate them into the existing fleet.

The design features required by §§ 27.952 and 29.952 increase the level of safety in the event of a survivable crash by either decreasing the likelihood or delaying the onset of post-crash fire. The features minimize crash-induced fuel leaks and their contact with potential fuel ignition sources both during and after the crash, and increase the time occupants have available to egress before a post-crash fire could become critical.

The FAA and industry continue to cooperate to improve post-crash fire protection. In November 2015, the FAA published a Notice in the Federal Register tasking the aviation rulemaking advisory committee (ARAC) to provide recommendations for improving occupant protection in rotorcraft. The tasking included post-crash fire protection improvements for both newly manufactured rotorcraft and the existing fleet. In January 2017, the FAA tasked the ARAC with the next phase to provide recommendations on implementing existing post-crash fire protection standards on newly manufactured rotorcraft and on the existing fleet of rotorcraft. The ARAC will provide their recommendations for newly manufactured rotorcraft in January 2018. The final ARAC report that will include recommendations for the existing rotorcraft fleet is due in July 2018.

Recommendations

The FAA recommends that all owners and operators be aware of the fuel system crash resistance capability of helicopters they operate. A list of helicopters that are compliant with the CRFS safety standards of 14 CFR § 27.952 and 14 CFR § 29.952 is available on the FAA's website at https://www.faa.gov/aircraft/air_cert/design_approvals/rotorcraft/media/rot_CRFS_Compliant_List.pdf.

For Further Information, Contact

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