



SUBJ: Fuel System

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This revised Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) advises registered owners and operators of certain Airbus Helicopters of FAA-approved Supplemental Type Certificates (STC) that install crash-resistant fuel systems that comply with the latest safety standards. These helicopters and STCs are:

- Model AS350B3 helicopters with an Arriel 2D engine (marketed as a Model AS350B3e helicopter) with STC SR03931NY, and
- Model AS350D, AS350B, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350BA, AS350B3, and EC130B4 helicopters with Vector Aerospace Helicopter Services USA, Inc. STC SR02492AK.

Installation of these STCs is not required to correct an unsafe condition, but installation will reduce the risk of post-crash fires and improve occupant survivability in an accident.

Background

The FAA previously issued SAIB SW-17-23 on August 24, 2017. That SAIB recommended that all owners and operators of Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B3 helicopters with an Arriel 2D engine (marketed as a Model AS350B3e helicopter) incorporate STC SR09391NY. Since SAIB SW-17-23 was issued, we have issued STC SR02492AK for additional helicopters models.

On November 2, 1994 fuel system crash resistance became a regulatory requirement in Section 27.952 of 14 CFR part 27. The regulation applied only to newly type-certificated Part 27 rotorcraft, however, and the Airbus Model AS350B3, AS350D, AS350B, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350BA, AS350B3, and EC130B4 helicopters were not required to meet these standards.

The design features of STCs SR03931NY and SR02492AK 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 of Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B3 helicopters with an Arriel 2D engine incorporate STC SR09391NY. We also recommend that all owners and operators of Airbus Helicopters Models AS350D, AS350B, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350BA, AS350B3, and EC130B4 incorporate STC SR02492AK.

For Further Information, Contact

Stephen Barbini, Manager, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, Texas, 76177; phone: (817) 222-5110; fax: (817) 222-5961; e-mail: stephen.barbini@faa.gov.