the State or political subdivision, as defined in part 1 of this chapter, and for which the lending bank has an opinion of counsel or the opinion of that State Attorney General, or other State legal official with authority to opine on the obligation in question, that the loan or extension of credit is a valid and enforceable general obligation of the borrower; and

(ii) A loan or extension of credit, including portions thereof, to the extent guaranteed or secured by a general obligation of a State or political subdivision and for which the lending bank has an opinion of counsel or the opinion of that State Attorney General, or other State legal official with authority to opine on the guarantee or collateral in question, that the guarantee or collateral is a valid and enforceable general obligation of that public body.

* * * * *

Dated: September 15, 2000.

John D. Hawke, Jr.,

Comptroller of the Currency.

[FR Doc. 00–24280 Filed 9–21–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4810–33–P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000–CE–16–AD]

RIN 2120–AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Vulcanair S.p.A. Models P 68 ''OBSERVER'', P68 ''OBSERVER 2'', and P68TC ''OBSERVER'' Airplanes

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) that would apply to certain Vulcanair S.p.A. (Vulcanair) Models P 68 ''OBSERVER'', P68 ''OBSERVER 2'', and P68TC ''OBSERVER'' airplanes. The proposed AD would require you to inspect the nose landing gear (NLG) upper strut for evidence of cracking (cracks or crack beginnings), and replace the NLG upper strut if you find evidence of cracking. The proposed AD is the result of mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI) issued by the airworthiness authority for Italy. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent failure of the NLG upper strut caused by cracking in the area of the seeger retaining ring groove, which could result in loss of control of the airplane.

DATES: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) must receive any comments on this proposed rule on or before October 25, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit comments in triplicate to FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000–CE–16–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, holidays excepted.

Service information that applies to the proposed AD may be obtained from Vulcanair S.p.A., Via G. Poscoli, 7, 80026 Casoria (Naples), Italy; telephone: +39–081–5918111; facsimile: +39–081–5918172. This information also may be examined at the Rules Docket at the address above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Roman 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 the proposed AD? The FAA invites comments on this proposed rule. You may submit whatever written data, views, or arguments you choose. You need to include the rule's docket number and submit your comments in triplicate to the address specified under the caption **ADDRESSES.** The FAA will consider all comments received on or before the closing date. We may amend the proposed rule in light of comments received. Factual information that supports your ideas and suggestions is extremely helpful in evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed AD action and determining whether we need to take additional rulemaking action.

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 suggest a need to modify the rule. You may examine all comments we receive before and after the closing date of the rule in the Rules Docket. We will file a report in the Rules Docket that summarizes each FAA contact with the public that concerns the substantive parts of the proposed AD.

We are re-examining 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 whether the style of this document is clearer, 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.plainlanguage.gov.*

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. 2000–CE–16–AD.'' We will date stamp and mail the postcard back to you.

Discussion

What events have caused this proposed AD? The Ente Nazionale per l'Aviazione Civile (ENAC), which is the airworthiness authority for Italy, recently notified FAA that an unsafe condition may exist on certain Vulcanair Models P 68 ''OBSERVER'', P68 ''OBSERVER 2'', and P68TC ''OBSERVER'' airplanes. The ENAC reports three instances of cracking of the nose landing gear (NLG) upper strut, part number 4.4173–1, in the area of the seeger retaining ring groove. Investigation of these instances reveals a work defect found during surface finishing within the groove. The groove is then susceptible to cracks after a hard landing.

What are the consequences if the condition is not corrected? Such cracking, if not detected and corrected, could result in failure of the NLG upper strut, which could result in loss of control of the airplane.

Is there service information that applies to this subject? Vulcanair has issued Service Bulletin No. 98, dated July 31, 1999.

What are the provisions of this service bulletin? The service bulletin:

- Includes procedures for inspecting the NLG upper strut in the area of the seeger retaining ring groove for evidence of cracking (cracks or crack beginnings); and
- Specifies replacing the upper strut if evidence of cracking is found.

What action did the ENAC take? The ENAC classified this service bulletin as mandatory and issued Italian AD No. 2000–004, dated January 10, 2000, in order to assure the continued airworthiness of these airplanes in Italy.

Was this in accordance with the bilateral airworthiness agreement? These airplane models are

manufactured in Italy and are type certificated for operation in the United States under the provisions of section 21.29 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.29) and the applicable bilateral airworthiness agreement. Pursuant to this bilateral airworthiness agreement, the ENAC has kept FAA informed of the situation described above.

The FAA's Determination and an Explanation of the Provisions of the Proposed AD

What has FAA decided? The FAA has examined the findings of the ENAC; reviewed all available information, including the service information referenced above; and determined that:

- The unsafe condition referenced in this document exists or could develop on other Vulcanair Models P 68 ''OBSERVER'', P68 ''OBSERVER 2'', and P68TC ''OBSERVER'' airplanes of the same type design;
- The actions specified in the previously-referenced service information should be accomplished on the affected airplanes; and
- AD action should be taken in order to correct this unsafe condition.

What does the proposed AD require? This proposed AD would require you to inspect the NLG upper strut for evidence of cracking (cracks or crack beginnings), and replace the NLG upper strut if you find evidence of cracking. You would accomplish the proposed action in accordance with the previously referenced service bulletin.

Cost Impact

How many airplanes does the proposed AD impact? We estimate that the proposed AD affects 15 airplanes in the U.S. registry.

What is the cost impact of the proposed AD on owners/operators of the affected airplanes? We estimate the following costs to accomplish the proposed inspection:

Labor cost	Parts cost	Total cost per airplane	Total cost on U.S. airplane operators
10 workhours × $60 per hour = $600	No parts required for inspection	$600	$9,000

We estimate the following costs to accomplish any necessary replacements that would be required based on the results of the proposed inspection. We have no way of determining the number of airplanes that may need such replacement:

Labor cost	Parts cost	Total cost per airplane
10 workhours × $60 per hour = $600	$600	$1,200

Regulatory Impact

Does this proposed AD impact various entities? 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 proposed rule would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132.

Does this proposed AD involve a significant rule or regulatory action? For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this proposed action (1) is not a ''significant regulatory action'' under Executive Order 12866; (2) is not a ''significant rule'' under 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 has been placed 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 (AD) to read as follows:

Vulcanair S.P.A. (Partenavia Costruzioni Aeronauticas S.p.A previously held Type Certificate A31EU): Docket No. 2000–CE–16–AD

(a) *What airplanes are affected by this AD?* This AD affects Models P 68 ''OBSERVER'', P68 ''OBSERVER 2'', and P68TC ''OBSERVER'' airplanes, all serial numbers up to and including 400, that are certificated in any category.

(b) *Who must comply with this AD?* Anyone who wishes to operate any of the above airplanes on the U.S. Register must comply with this AD.

(c) *What problem does this AD address?* The actions specified by this AD are intended to prevent failure of the nose landing gear (NLG) upper strut caused by cracking in the area of the seeger retaining ring groove, which could result in loss of control of the airplane.

(d) *What actions must I accomplish to address this problem?* To address this problem, you must accomplish the following:

Action	Compliance time	Procedures
(1) Inspect, using magnetic particle methods, the NLG upper strut, part number 4.4173–1 (or FAA-approved equivalent part number), for evidence of cracking (cracks or crack beginnings).	Within the next 200 hours time-in-service (TIS) after the effective date of this AD.	Do this inspection in accordance with the ACCOMPLISHMENT INSTRUCTIONS section of Vulcanair Service Bulletin No. 98, dated July 31, 1999.
(2) If there is evidence of cracking, replace the NLG upper strut with a new NLG upper strut, part number 4.4173–1 (or FAA-approved equivalent part number).	Prior to further flight after the inspection where evidence of cracking is found.	Use the procedures in the maintenance manual.
(3) Do not install any NLG upper strut, part number 4.4173–1, unless it is new from the factory, or has been inspected as required in paragraph (d)(1) of this AD and is found to not have any evidence of cracking.	As of the effective date of this AD	Not Applicable.

(e) *Can I comply with this AD in any other way?* You may use an alternative method of compliance or adjust the compliance time if:

(1) Your alternative method of compliance provides an equivalent level of safety; and

(2) The Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, approves your alternative. Submit your request through an FAA Principal Maintenance Inspector, who may add comments and then send it to the Manager, Small Airplane Directorate.

Note 1: This AD applies to each airplane identified in paragraph (a) of this AD, regardless of whether it has been modified, altered, or repaired in the area subject to the requirements of this AD. For airplanes 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 (e) 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 you have not eliminated the unsafe condition, specific actions you propose to address it.

(f) Where can I get information about any already-approved alternative methods of compliance? Contact Roman Gabrys, Aerospace Engineer, FAA, Small Airplane Directorate, 901 Locust, Room 301, Kansas City, Missouri 64106; telephone: (816) 329–4141; facsimile: (816) 329–4090.

(g) What if I need to fly the airplane to another location to comply with this AD? The FAA can issue a special flight permit under sections 21.197 and 21.199 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199) to operate your airplane to a location where you can accomplish the requirements of this AD.

(h) *How do I get copies of the documents referenced in this AD?* You may obtain copies of the documents referenced in this AD from Vulcanair S.p.A., Via G. Poscoli, 7, 80026 Casoria (Naples), Italy. You may examine these documents at FAA, Central Region, Office of the Regional Counsel, 901 Locust, Room 506, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Note 2: The subject of this AD is addressed in Italian AD 2000–004, dated January 10, 2000.

Issued in Kansas City, Missouri, on September 13, 2000.

Larry E. Werth,

Acting Manager, Small Airplane Directorate, Aircraft Certification Service.

[FR Doc. 00–24370 Filed 9–21–00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910–13–U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. 2000–SW–07–AD]

Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. (Agusta) Model A109E Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: This document proposes the supersedure of an existing airworthiness directive (AD), applicable to Agusta Model A109E helicopters, that currently requires inspections of the exhaust ejector locking system, clamp, and dampers for each engine. The existing AD also requires verifying the torque of the metallic clamps and installing safety wire on the metallic clamps; inspecting and modifying the ejector saddles and the locking metallic clamps; and inspecting the metallic clamps, locking mechanisms, and dampers. This action would require modifying the engine exhaust ejectors. This proposal is prompted by the development of a kit to modify the engine exhaust ejectors to provide terminating action from the requirements of the current AD. The actions specified by the proposed AD are intended to prevent loss of the metallic clamp or the engine exhaust ejector, damage to the main or tail rotor system and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before November 6, 2000.

ADDRESSES: Submit mailed comments in triplicate to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, Attention: Rules Docket No. 2000–SW–07–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. You may inspect comments at the Office of the Regional Attorney between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul Madej, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, Rotorcraft Directorate, Rotorcraft Standards Staff, Fort Worth, Texas 76193–0110, telephone (817) 222–5125, fax (817) 222–5961.

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 notice may