

PART 27-AIRWORTHINESS STANDARDS: NORMAL CATEGORY ROTORCRAFT

1. The authority citation for part 27 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701–44702, 44704

2. Add a new § 27.573 to read as follows:

§ 27.573 Damage Tolerance and Fatigue Evaluation of Composite Rotorcraft Structures.

(a) Each applicant must evaluate the composite rotorcraft structure under the damage tolerance standards of paragraph (d) of this section unless the applicant establishes that a damage tolerance evaluation is impractical within the limits of geometry, inspectability, and good design practice. If an applicant establishes that it is impractical within the limits of geometry, inspectability, and good design practice, the applicant must do a fatigue evaluation in accordance with paragraph (e) of this section.

(b) The methodology used to establish compliance with this section must be submitted to and approved by the Administrator.

(c) Definitions:

(1) Catastrophic failure is an event that could prevent continued safe flight and landing.

(2) Principal Structural Elements (PSEs) are structural elements that contribute significantly to the carrying of flight or ground loads, the failure of which could result in catastrophic failure of the rotorcraft.

(3) Threat Assessment is an assessment that specifies the locations, types, and sizes of damage, considering fatigue, environmental effects, intrinsic and discrete flaws, and impact or other accidental damage (including the discrete source of the accidental

damage) that may occur during manufacture or operation.

(d) Damage Tolerance Evaluation:

(1) Each applicant must show that catastrophic failure due to static and fatigue loads, considering the intrinsic or discrete manufacturing defects or accidental damage, is avoided throughout the operational life or prescribed inspection intervals of the rotorcraft by performing damage tolerance evaluations of the strength of composite PSEs and other parts, detail design points, and fabrication techniques. Each applicant must account for the effects of material and process variability along with environmental conditions in the strength and fatigue evaluations. Each applicant must evaluate parts that include PSEs of the airframe, main and tail rotor drive systems, main and tail rotor blades and hubs, rotor controls, fixed and movable control surfaces, engine and transmission mountings, landing gear, other parts, detail design points, and fabrication techniques deemed critical by the FAA. Each damage tolerance evaluation must include:

(i) The identification of all PSEs;

(ii) In-flight and ground measurements for determining the loads or stresses for all PSEs for all critical conditions throughout the range of limits in § 27.309 (including altitude effects), except that maneuvering load factors need not exceed the maximum values expected in service;

(iii) The loading spectra as severe as those expected in service based on loads or stresses determined under paragraph (d)(1)(ii) of this section, including external load operations, if applicable, and other operations including high-torque events;

(iv) A threat assessment for all PSEs that specifies the locations, types, and sizes of damage, considering fatigue, environmental effects, intrinsic and discrete flaws, and

impact or other accidental damage (including the discrete source of the accidental damage) that may occur during manufacture or operation; and

(v) An assessment of the residual strength and fatigue characteristics of all PSEs that supports the replacement times and inspection intervals established under paragraph (d)(2) of this section.

(2) Each applicant must establish replacement times, inspections, or other procedures for all PSEs to require the repair or replacement of damaged parts before a catastrophic failure. These replacement times, inspections, or other procedures must be included in the Airworthiness Limitations Section of the Instructions for Continued Airworthiness required by § 27.1529.

(i) Replacement times for PSEs must be determined by tests, or by analysis supported by tests, and must show that the structure is able to withstand the repeated loads of variable magnitude expected in-service. In establishing these replacement times, the following items must be considered:

(A) Damage identified in the threat assessment required by paragraph (d)(1)(iv) of this section;

(B) Maximum acceptable manufacturing defects and in-service damage (i.e., those that do not lower the residual strength below ultimate design loads and those that can be repaired to restore ultimate strength); and

(C) Ultimate load strength capability after applying repeated loads.

(ii) Inspection intervals for PSEs must be established to reveal any damage identified in the threat assessment required by paragraph (d)(1)(iv) of this section that may occur from fatigue or other in-service causes before such damage has grown to the

extent that the component cannot sustain the required residual strength capability. In establishing these inspection intervals, the following items must be considered:

(A) The growth rate, including no-growth, of the damage under the repeated loads expected in-service determined by tests or analysis supported by tests;

(B) The required residual strength for the assumed damage established after considering the damage type, inspection interval, detectability of damage, and the techniques adopted for damage detection. The minimum required residual strength is limit load; and

(C) Whether the inspection will detect the damage growth before the minimum residual strength is reached and restored to ultimate load capability, or whether the component will require replacement.

(3) Each applicant must consider the effects of damage on stiffness, dynamic behavior, loads, and functional performance on all PSEs when substantiating the maximum assumed damage size and inspection interval.

(e) Fatigue Evaluation: If an applicant establishes that the damage tolerance evaluation described in paragraph (d) of this section is impractical within the limits of geometry, inspectability, or good design practice, the applicant must do a fatigue evaluation of the particular composite rotorcraft structure and:

(1) Identify all PSEs considered in the fatigue evaluation;

(2) Identify the types of damage for all PSEs considered in the fatigue evaluation;

(3) Establish supplemental procedures to minimize the risk of catastrophic failure associated with the damages identified in paragraph (d) of this section; and

(4) Include these supplemental procedures in the Airworthiness Limitations

section of the Instructions for Continued Airworthiness required by § 27.1529.

Appendix A to Part 27 [Amended]

3. Amend the second sentence of section A.27.4 of Appendix A to Part 27 by removing the phrase “approved under § 27.571” and adding the phrase “required for type certification” in its place.