



SUBJ: Robinson Helicopter Company Model R22, R44, and R66 Helicopters; **SAIB:** AIR-22-03
Emergency Locator Transmitter Retention **Date:** March 3, 2022

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) alerts owners and operators of Robinson Helicopter Company Model R22-series, R44-series, and R66 helicopters equipped with an optional Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) that the ELT may come loose from its mounting bracket. The affected ELT installation is for the Kannad Integra AF Model S1851501-02 ELT manufactured by Orolia S.A.S (formerly Kannad) based in France.

At this time, the airworthiness concern is not an unsafe condition that would warrant airworthiness directive (AD) action under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 39.

Background

A field report was received that an operator of a Robinson Model R44 helicopter made an immediate precautionary landing after hearing banging sounds coming from the helicopter's gearbox compartment. Upon landing, the pilot discovered the ELT out of its mounting bracket and loose in the compartment. The hook and loop retention strap supplied with the ELT had torn allowing the ELT to come loose. Newer Robinson installations incorporate a secondary strap, but in this case that strap was also loose and did not retain the ELT after the failure of the primary hook and loop strap. The hook and loop strap and ELT both contacted the drive train, and the ELT was destroyed. This was the source of the noise heard by the pilot. The drive train sustained only cosmetic damage. The hook and loop retention strap had failed at the fusion weld where the strap folds back on itself to capture the metal buckle.

On May 23, 2012, in response to instances of ELTs breaking loose during accidents, the FAA published SAIB-HQ-12-32 with recommendations that ELT manufacturers ensure their Instructions for Continued Airworthiness (ICA) include appropriate installation procedures, inspection procedures, and replacement intervals for installations with hook and loop straps. In addition, TSO-C126 for ELTs was updated to disallow the use of hook and loop retention for newer designs.

On June 30, 2021 Robinson issued Service Letters SL-92, SL-81, and SL-39 for R22-series, R44-series, and R66 helicopters respectively, providing periodic inspection procedures for the ELT installation and instructions to ensure that older installations are upgraded to include a properly installed secondary strap.

Recommendations

We recommend owners/operators of Robinson Model R22-series, R44-series, and R66 helicopters with an optional Kannad ELT comply with recommendations made in accordance with FAA SAIB HQ-12-32 for any maintenance performed on the ELT.

We also recommend owners/operators of Robinson Model R22-series, R44-series and R66 helicopters with an optional Kannad ELT installed comply with R22 Service Letter SL-92, R44 Service Letter SL-81, and R66 Service Letter SL-39, dated June 30, 2021.

For Further Information Contact

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For Related Service Information Contact

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