

UNAPPROVED PARTS NOTIFICATION

NO. 97-030
May 5, 1997

AFFECTED AIRCRAFT: Installed on, but not limited to, Robinson R-22 Helicopters

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this notification is to advise all owners, operators, and maintenance entities of Robinson R-22 helicopters that certain rotor blades were improperly repaired.

BACKGROUND:

During the course of an accident investigation involving two fatalities, it was revealed the tail rotor blade assembly, part number A029-1, for the Robinson R-22 helicopter had been improperly repaired by Cherry Air Specialties, also known as CAS International, previously located in Torrance, CA and presently in Buckeye, AZ. The investigation determined that there was strong reason to believe that Cherry Air Specialties/CAS International improperly repaired at least three sets of tail rotor blades. Those blades may have been identified as tail rotor assemblies, part number A008-2. No serial numbers are available for the blade or rotor assemblies. The whereabouts of these parts is unknown.

A subsequent suspected unapproved parts investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Department of Transportation Office of Inspector General indicated that Cherry Air Specialties/CAS International may also have altered the total time-since-new information in the component life historical records and serviceable tags of the above tail rotor blade assembly and other main rotor blade assemblies along with their associated drive components.

It is important to note that examination of other documents, as well as a signed statement from the individual under investigation, have revealed possible evidence of additional improper maintenance practices on other helicopter makes and models.

RECOMMENDATION:

Regulations require that type certificated products conform to their type design.

Robinson R-22 helicopter owners, operators and maintenance entities should inspect all in-stock and installed main rotor blades, tail rotor blades and associated drive components to determine if any were received from Cherry Air Specialties or CAS International. If so, those items should be checked for evidence of unapproved repairs or alterations and should include a review of the component's life historical record to substantiate its authenticity. If irregularities are indicated, appropriate action should be taken.

Other helicopter makes and models having main rotor blades, tail rotor blades, and components overhauled or repaired by Cherry Air Specialties or CAS International should be inspected for compliance with FAA approved data.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Further information may be obtained from the Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) referenced below. The FAA would appreciate any information concerning the discovery of the above referenced unapproved parts from any source, the means used to identify the source, and the actions taken to remove them from aircraft and/or stock.

This notice originated from the Long Beach FSDO, 5001 Airport Plaza Drive, Suite 100, Long Beach, CA 90815, phone (562) 420-1755, fax (562) 420-6765, and was published through the Suspected Unapproved Parts Program Office, AVR-20, phone (703) 661-0581, fax (703) 661-0113.