

SAFETY REGULATION GROUP

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LETTER TO OWNERS/OPERATORS NO 2197 EUROCOPTER AS350 AND AS355 SERIES HELICOPTERS DGAC ADs 2001-088-082 AND 2001-087-062: REAR BENCH CUSHIONS

The subject Airworthiness Directives simply state "Remove the cushions from the rear benches before you perform a flight with door(s) removed and/or the sliding door(s) in the open position." The reason given for the ADs is that the DGAC is aware of two incidents whereby the rear bench seat cushions have been lost in flight when the helicopters have been flown with doors open. There is a potential for the departing cushions to impact with the main or tail rotors which might result in loss of control of the helicopter. The seats to which the ADs refer are undefined.

The CAA is aware that compliance with the ADs is causing difficulties when flight with doors open needs to be undertaken. Therefore the CAA is prepared to consider individual variations to the ADs on the basis of compensating features being introduced. Specifically the compensating features must demonstrate to the CAA's satisfaction that the cushions for the base and back of the rear seats are positively secured in place and in such a manner that they would not be blown or sucked out of the helicopter when it is flown with doors open. A CAA approved modification may be required to achieve the desired result.

All requests for variations to the subject ADs should in the first instance be made in writing to Mr Leon Winnert, Aircraft Certification Section, Civil Aviation Authority, Gatwick Airport South, West Sussex, RH6 0YR. Fax 01293 573317, e-mail leon.winnert@srg.caa.co.uk. The request should state how the seat cushions are to be firmly retained in place and quote any CAA approved modification (including approval number) that may be relevant.

R J TEW

Applications and Certification Section