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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR OFFICE OF AIRCRAFT SERVICES

AVIATION ACCIDENT PREVENTION BULLETIN

No. 03-01

October 16, 2002

Subject: AS 350 Series Collective Locking Mechanism

Area of Concern: Helicopter Operations

Distribution: All DOI Aviation Operations

Discussion: A recent accident identified a potential problem with the collective pitch lever locking mechanism. Preliminary indications are that the hold-down stud, (Part # 350A-273455-20) was worn significantly on the top portion and the locking device (Part # 350A-273107-26) disengaged while the pilot was performing the cyclic hydraulic accumulator test, which imparts feedback forces to the collective. The helicopter became airborne with little or no hydraulic assist to the flight controls. The pilot was unable to maintain stable flight and the aircraft rotor system impacted the ground. The aircraft came to rest on its right side approximately 50 feet from where it started.

Recommendations:

1. Advise all AS 350 Series helicopter pilots and operators of the potential for the collective pitch lever lock to become unlocked during the hydraulic test procedure due to cyclic feedback to the collective.
2. That all contractors ensure that the pitch lock is operating properly.

/s/ Robert Galloway
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