

# Continuing Airworthiness Notice – 62-005



## MD369 Main rotor blade – Cracking at the root section

19 May 2026

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Issued by the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand (CAA) in the interests of aviation safety. A Continuing Airworthiness Notice (CAN) is intended to alert, educate, and make recommendations to the aviation community. A CAN contains information and guidance about an airworthiness concern that does not meet the criteria for an Airworthiness Directive (AD). The inspections and practices described in this CAN must still be carried out in accordance with the applicable NZCAR Parts 21, 43 and 91.

CAN numbering is by ATA Chapter followed by a sequential number for the next CAN in that ATA Chapter.

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### Applicability:

MD369 helicopter operators and maintenance providers.

### Purpose:

The purpose of this CAN is to notify helicopter operators and maintenance providers of a recent accident in which an MD369E suffered a separation failure of a main rotor blade.

### Background:

CAA are advised that during the approach to land, an MD369E experienced the loss of a main rotor blade. The aircraft subsequently became uncontrollable, suffering significant structural damage prior to its impact with terrain. It is not yet clear if the failed blade was subject to any damage in flight (impact etc) prior to its failure.

The CAA investigation into this accident is on-going, and no conclusion should be drawn as to contributing factors at this stage.

The failed blade is understood to be a Helicopter Technology Company Limited (HTC) manufactured item.

### Recommendation:

CAA recommend that operators of MD369 aircraft pay particular attention to the main rotor blade inspection requirements for continuing airworthiness published by the aircraft, and relevant component manufacturers.

CAA are advised that the identification of cracks at the blade root fitting (often associated with torque events (TE) requires careful examination, including the use of supplemental lighting and optical magnification.

CAR Part 39 requires all operators to ensure compliance with all applicable airworthiness directives. Where there is any doubt as to the means of compliance with an airworthiness directive, operators should consult with an appropriately experienced maintenance engineer.

Fig 1 below shows a previously identified MD blade with a crack (confirmed by paint removal) which was identified during a scheduled maintenance inspection.

Fig 2 shows the retained section of the failed blade from the recent accident. The crack in this case appears to have initiated beneath the retention doubler.

CAA requests that operators and maintenance providers report any findings of corrosion or cracks via the occurrence reporting process: <https://occurrencereporting.services.aviation.govt.nz>

Any questions can be directed to: [warren.hadfield@caa.govt.nz](mailto:warren.hadfield@caa.govt.nz)

### Conclusion:

This CAN is considered to be an interim action pending completion of the current investigation.

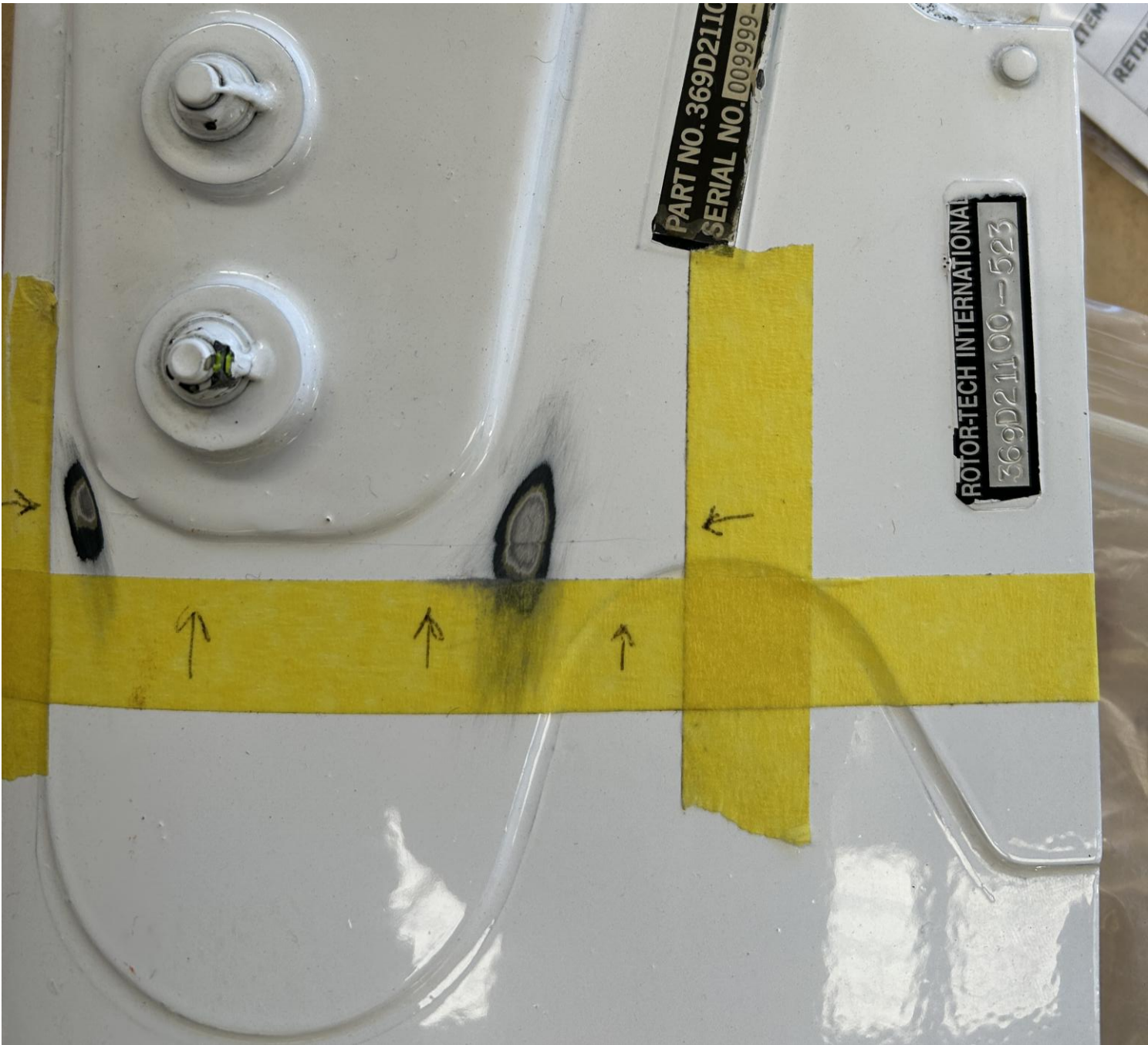
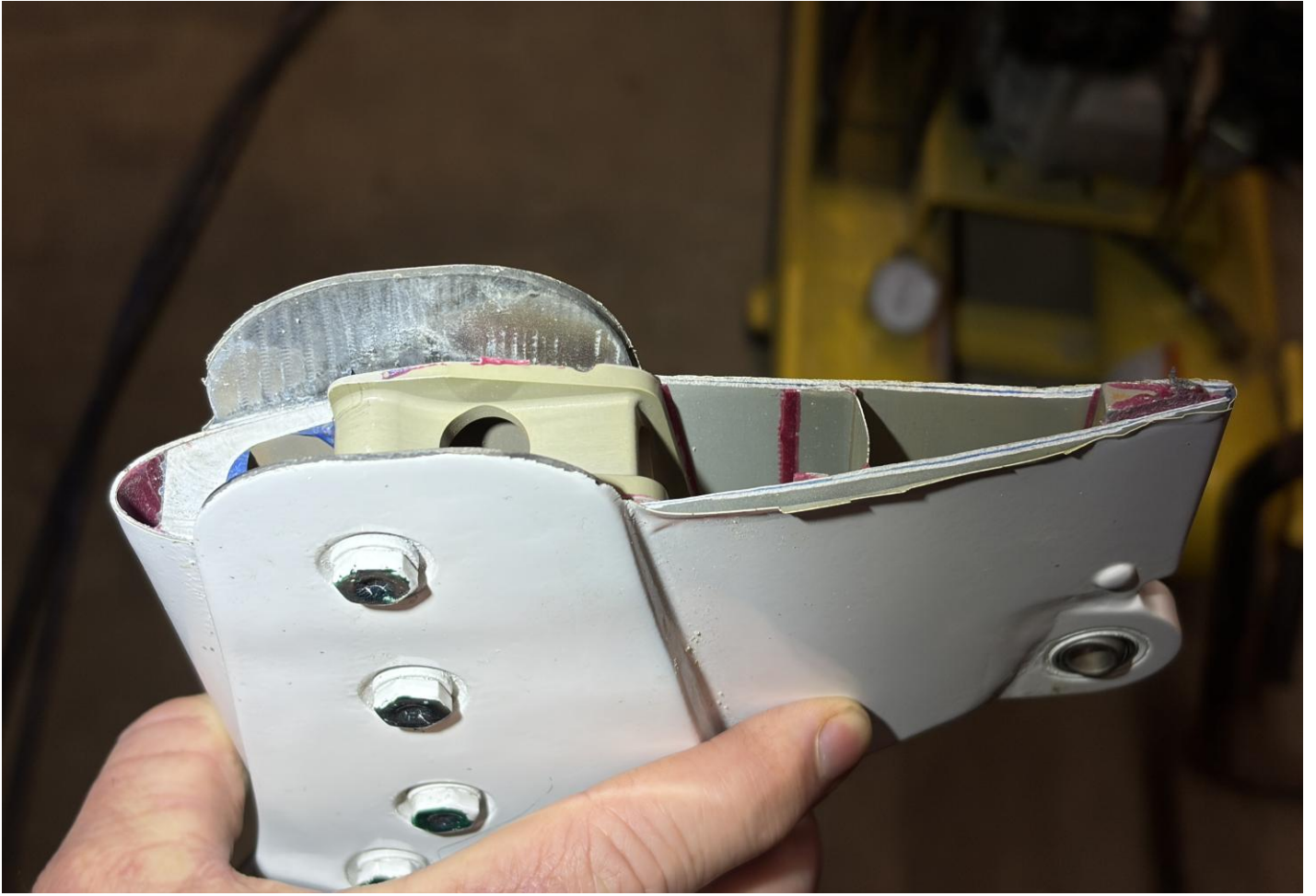


Figure 1 – MD manufactured blade showing crack indication at the root fitting, confirmed by paint removal.



**Figure 2 – Complete failure of main rotor blade at root fitting (HTC Manufactured Blade).**