

Continuing Airworthiness Notice – 65-002



MD Helicopters 369 Series - Tail Rotor Gearbox Casing Crack

29 October 2025

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.

Applicability:

All MD 369 series helicopter operators and maintenance providers.

Purpose:

The purpose of this CAN is to notify affected helicopter operators and maintenance providers of a recent occurrence reported to the CAA of finding a significant crack in the tail rotor gearbox on a 369D helicopter.

Background:

During the pre-flight inspection of a 369D, the pilot found a defect in the tail rotor gearbox housing, which was initially thought to be a paint crack.

The aircraft was grounded, and during an inspection by an engineer a significant crack was found.

CAA understands that paint was removed from the casing by the engineer to facilitate the inspection (See Figures 1 and 2 below).

Recommendation:

CAA recommends that operators of 369 series helicopters pay particular attention to exposed gearbox and flight control casings during pre-flight inspections.

Paint defects, or evidence of oil leaks should be thoroughly investigated. If there is any doubt whether a component casing is cracked, or damaged, an engineer should be consulted.

Maintenance providers who are carrying out inspections of 369 tail rotor gearbox casings should consider paint removal if a preliminary inspection identifies a potential crack.

Paint removal and restoration should be carried out in accordance with the relevant aircraft, or component manufacturer instructions.

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

Any questions can be directed to: warren.hadfield@caa.govt.nz

Conclusion:

CAA will liaise with the manufacturer on this safety finding.

This CAN is considered to be an interim action and further CAN, or AD action may follow.



Figure 1 – Tail Rotor Gearbox crack found during the pre-flight inspection. Note the presence of oil residue.



Figure 2 – Crack with paint removed.