



## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

### Federal Aviation Administration

#### 14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2025-0007; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-00998-R; Amendment 39-23021; AD 2025-08-08]

RIN 2120-AA64

#### Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

**AGENCY:** Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Model SA341G and SA342J helicopters. This AD was prompted by reports of corrosion on the contact surfaces of the tail rotor inclined and horizontal drive shaft flanges. This AD requires repetitively inspecting the inclined and horizontal drive shaft flanges and, depending on the results, replacing the inclined or horizontal drive shaft. This AD also prohibits installing certain inclined and horizontal drive shafts unless certain requirements are met. These actions are specified in a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**DATES:** This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of a certain publication listed in this AD as of [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

#### **ADDRESSES:**

*AD Docket:* You may examine the AD docket at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket No.FAA-

2025-0007; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this final rule, the mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI), any comments received, and other information. The address for Docket Operations is U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

*Material Incorporated by Reference:*

- For EASA material identified in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: [ADs@easa.europa.eu](mailto:ADs@easa.europa.eu); website: [easa.europa.eu](http://easa.europa.eu). You may find the EASA material on the EASA website at [ad.easa.europa.eu](http://ad.easa.europa.eu).

- You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. It is also available at [regulations.gov](http://regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2025-0007.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Evan Weaver, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (316) 946-4152; email: [Evan.P.Weaver@faa.gov](mailto:Evan.P.Weaver@faa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

The FAA issued a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to amend 14 CFR part 39 by adding an AD that would apply to all Airbus Helicopters Model SA341G and SA342J (Gazelle) helicopters. The NPRM published in the *Federal Register* on January 17, 2025 (90 FR 5748). The NPRM was prompted by AD 2023-0168, dated August 31, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0168) (also referred to as the MCAI), issued by EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union. The MCAI states that

there have been several reports of corrosion on the contact surfaces of the tail rotor inclined and horizontal drive shaft flanges. More detailed non-destructive testing indicated pitting corrosion on the mating faces of several flanges and further investigation revealed various regions of intergranular failure beneath the surface of corrosion pits. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in the failure of the tail rotor drive and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

In the NPRM, the FAA proposed to require repetitively inspecting the inclined and horizontal drive shaft flanges and, depending on the results, replacing the inclined or horizontal drive shaft. In the NPRM, the FAA also proposed to prohibit installing certain inclined and horizontal drive shafts unless certain requirements are met. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2025-0007.

## **Discussion of Final Airworthiness Directive**

### **Comments**

The FAA received two comments from an anonymous commenter and an individual who supported the NPRM without change.

### **Conclusion**

These products have been approved by the aviation authority of another country and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with this State of Design Authority, it has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered the comment received, and determined that air safety requires adopting the AD as proposed. Accordingly, the FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products. Except for minor editorial changes, this AD is adopted as proposed in the NPRM.

## **Material Incorporated by Reference under 1 CFR Part 51**

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2023-0168, which specifies procedures for repetitively inspecting the flanges of certain part-numbered inclined and horizontal drive shafts for corrosion, and if corrosion is found, replacing the affected inclined or horizontal drive shaft. EASA AD 2023-0168 also prohibits installing an affected inclined or horizontal drive shaft on any helicopter unless it is a serviceable part as defined within.

This material is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

## **Differences Between this AD and the MCAI**

The material referenced in the MCAI specifies sending corroded parts to Airbus Helicopters, whereas this AD does not require that action.

## **Costs of Compliance**

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 63 helicopters of U.S. registry. Labor rates are estimated at \$85 per work-hour. Based on these numbers, the FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD.

Visually inspecting the inclined and horizontal drive shaft flanges takes 4 work-hours for an estimated cost of \$340 per helicopter and \$21,420 for the U.S. fleet, per inspection cycle. If required, replacing the inclined or horizontal drive shaft takes 4 work-hours and parts will cost \$17,900 (inclined drive shaft) or \$35,500 (horizontal drive shaft), for an estimated cost of \$18,240 or \$35,840 respectively per helicopter.

## **Authority for this Rulemaking**

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

### **Regulatory Findings**

This AD will not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This AD will not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed above, I certify that this AD:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

### **List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39**

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

### **The Amendment**

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA amends 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

### **PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES**

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

## **§ 39.13 [Amended]**

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

**2025-08-08 Airbus Helicopters:** Amendment 39-23021; Docket No. FAA-2025-0007;  
Project Identifier MCAI-2023-00998-R.

### **(a) Effective Date**

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective [INSERT DATE 35 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

### **(b) Affected ADs**

None.

### **(c) Applicability**

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model SA341G and SA342J helicopters, certificated in any category.

### **(d) Subject**

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 6510, Tail Rotor Drive Shaft.

### **(e) Unsafe Condition**

This AD was prompted by reports of corrosion on the contact surfaces of the tail rotor inclined and horizontal drive shaft flanges. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect and address corrosion on the inclined and horizontal drive shaft flanges. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in the failure of the tail rotor drive and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

### **(f) Compliance**

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

### **(g) Requirements**

Except as specified in paragraphs (h) and (i) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, European Union Aviation Safety Agency AD 2023-0168, dated August 31, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0168).

#### **(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2023-0168**

(1) Where EASA AD 2023-0168 requires compliance in terms of flight hours, this AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(2) Where EASA AD 2023-0168 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(3) Where the material referenced in paragraph (2) of EASA 2023-0168 specifies sending corroded inclined or horizontal drive shaft to Airbus Helicopters, this AD does not require that action.

(4) This AD does not adopt the “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2023-0168.

#### **(i) No Reporting Requirement**

Although the material referenced in EASA AD 2023-0168 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not require that action.

#### **(j) Special Flight Permits**

Special flight permits are prohibited.

#### **(k) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)**

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (1) of this AD and email to: [AMOC@faa.gov](mailto:AMOC@faa.gov).

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

#### **(l) Additional Information**

For more information about this AD, contact Evan Weaver, Aviation Safety

Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (316) 946-4152; email: [Evan.P.Weaver@faa.gov](mailto:Evan.P.Weaver@faa.gov).

**(m) Material Incorporated by Reference**

(1) The Director of the Federal Register approved the incorporation by reference of the material listed in this paragraph under 5 U.S.C. 552(a) and 1 CFR part 51.

(2) You must use this material as applicable to do the actions required by this AD, unless the AD specifies otherwise.

(i) European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2023-0168, dated August 31, 2023.

(ii) [Reserved]

(3) For EASA material identified in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: [ADs@easa.europa.eu](mailto:ADs@easa.europa.eu); website: [easa.europa.eu](http://easa.europa.eu). You may find this EASA material on the EASA website at [ad.easa.europa.eu](http://ad.easa.europa.eu).

(4) You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110.

(5) You may view this material at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). For information on the availability of this material at NARA, visit [www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/ibr-locations) or email [fr.inspection@nara.gov](mailto:fr.inspection@nara.gov).

Issued on April 21, 2025.

Steven W. Thompson,  
Acting Deputy Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division,  
Aircraft Certification Service.  
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