[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2025-2540; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00158-R]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Model MBB-BK 117 D-3 helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by a report of excessive vibrations in-flight due to an incorrect installation of the angular ball bearing of the control ring assembly. This proposed AD would require a one-time inspection of the affected swashplates and, depending on the results of the inspection, corrective actions. This AD would prohibit the installation of an affected swashplate on a helicopter, unless certain requirements are met. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this NPRM by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

• Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to regulations.gov. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

• Fax: (202) 493-2251.

• Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

• Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address above between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

AD Docket: You may examine the AD docket at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-

2025-2540; 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 NPRM, the mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI), any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

Material Incorporated by Reference:

• For European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) material identified in this proposed AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; phone: +49 221 8999 000; email: ADs@easa.europa.eu; website: easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at 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 under Docket No. FAA-2025-2540.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Zain Jamal, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (847) 294-7264; email: zain.jamal@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments using a method listed under the ADDRESSES section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2025-2540; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00158-R” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to regulations.gov, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as "PROPIN." The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Zain Jamal, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2025-0029, dated February 7, 2025 (EASA AD 2025-0029) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition on Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Model MBB-BK117 D-3 and MBB-BK117 D-3m helicopters. The MCAI states that an occurrence of excessive vibrations in-flight was reported. The MCAI further states that subsequent investigations revealed an incorrect installation of the angular ball bearing of the control ring assembly caused wear of the axial bearing seat. This condition, if not addressed, could result in axial play between the swashplate bearing ring assembly and the control ring assembly and consequent reduced control of the helicopter.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2025-2540.

Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2025-0029, which specifies procedures for a one-time inspection of swashplates having part number D623M2050102 and a serial number up to 0487 inclusive and, depending on the inspection results, accomplishing corrective

actions and contacting Airbus Helicopters for approved repair instructions. Corrective actions include inspecting the control ring assembly and, depending on the results, repair or replacement of the control ring assembly or repair of the surface protection of the control ring assembly. The MCAI also allows the accomplishment of corrective actions using the instructions of the applicable Aircraft Maintenance Manual (AMM) 62-32-00, 6-7. Corrective actions specified in the applicable AMM include the examination of bolts, single row ball bearings, bushings, and washers and, depending on the results, repair or replacement of these parts, as applicable.

Additionally, the MCAI allows the installation of an affected swashplate on a helicopter if it is inspected before it is installed, and if any corrective actions are completed in accordance with the instructions of the service material.

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.

FAA's Determination

These products have been approved by the civil aviation authority (CAA) 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 is issuing this NPRM after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM

This proposed AD would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2025-0029, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. See "Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI" for a discussion of the general differences included in this proposed AD.

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI

The MCAI applies to Model MBB-BK117 D-3m helicopters, whereas this proposed AD would not because that model does not have an FAA type certificate. The

MCAI requires reporting inspection results to the manufacturer, whereas this proposed AD would not. The MCAI does not apply to helicopters where it cannot be determined that a swashplate has been inspected, whereas this AD would apply to those helicopters.

Explanation of Required Compliance Information

In the FAA's ongoing efforts to improve the efficiency of the AD process, the FAA developed a process to use some CAA ADs as the primary source of information for compliance with requirements for corresponding FAA ADs. The FAA has been coordinating this process with manufacturers and CAAs. As a result, the FAA proposes to incorporate EASA AD 2025-0029 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2025-0029 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0029 for compliance will be available at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2025-2540 after the FAA final rule is published.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 50 helicopters of U.S. registry. The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD.

Estimated costs

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspect swashplate	4 work-hours x $85 per hour = $340	$0	$340	$17,000

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any necessary replacements that would be required based on the results of the proposed inspection. The agency has no way of determining the number of helicopters that might need this replacement.

On-condition costs

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product
Inspect control ring assembly	4 work-hours x $85 per hour = $340	4 work-hours x $85 per hour = $340	$340
Repair or replace control ring assembly	Up to 64 work-hours x $85 per hour = $5,440	Up to $3,300	Up to $8,740

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

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would 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 this proposed regulation:

(1) Is not a "significant regulatory action" under Executive Order 12866,

(2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and

(3) Would 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 Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 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:

Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH: Docket No. FAA-2025-2540; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00158-R.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH Model MBB-BK 117 D-3 helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 6230, Main Rotor Mast/Swashplate.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by a report of an occurrence of excessive vibrations in-flight due to an incorrect installation of the angular ball bearing of the control ring assembly. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect and correct incorrect installation of the angular ball bearing. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in axial play between the swashplate bearing ring assembly and the control ring assembly and consequent reduced 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 (EASA) AD 2025-0029, dated February 7, 2025 (EASA AD 2025-0029).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2025-0029

(1) Where EASA AD 2025-0029 requires compliance in terms of flight hours, this AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(2) Where EASA AD 2025-0029 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(3) Where EASA AD 2025-0029 defines "Affected part", this AD adds "including those where it cannot be determined if the 'Supplementary Inspection - 4000 FH' has been accomplished on the swashplate" to the end of that definition.

(4) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0029 specifies "check", this AD requires replacing that text with "inspect".

(5) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0029 specifies "Tightening torque inspection of the hexagonal head bolts of the inner ring and outer ring", this AD requires replacing that text with "Tightening torque inspection of the hexagonal head bolts of the inner ring".

(6) Where paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2025-0029 specifies "in case of finding any discrepancy during the inspection of the control ring assembly, to accomplish the applicable corrective actions before next flight, or to contact AH [Airbus Helicopters] for approved repair instructions and, before next flight, to accomplish those instructions accordingly", this AD requires replacing that text with "in case of finding any discrepancy during the inspection of the control ring assembly, before further flight, accomplish the instructions or corrective actions in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus Helicopters'

EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature".

(7) This AD does not adopt the "Remarks" section of EASA AD 2025-0029.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0029 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 responsible Flight Standards 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 (l) of this AD and email to: AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the responsible Flight Standards Office.

(l) Additional Information

For more information about this AD, contact Zain Jamal, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (847) 294-7264; email: zain.jamal@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 2025-0029, dated February 7, 2025.

(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; website: easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at 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 or email fr.inspection@nara.gov.

Issued on September 9, 2025.

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

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