



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2026-2288; Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00079-R; Amendment
39-23281; AD 2026-05-08]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Final rule; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Airbus Helicopters Model H160-B helicopters. This AD was prompted by a report of the main rotor pitch rod rupturing during flight. This AD requires inspecting the upper and lower pitch rod end bearings on the pitch rods of the main rotor and depending on the results, corrective actions. This AD also requires reporting the results of the inspection. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: This AD is effective [INSERT DATE 15 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 15 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

The FAA must receive comments on this AD 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](https://www.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](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2026-2288; 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 street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

Material Incorporated by Reference:

- For European Union Aviation Safety Agency (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.

- 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](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2026-2288.

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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written data, views, or arguments about this final rule. Send your comments using a method listed under ADDRESSES. Include “Docket No. FAA-2026-2288; Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00079-R” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the final rule, 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 final rule 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 final rule.

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 AD 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 AD, 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 AD. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Evan Weaver, 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 2026-0020, dated January 27, 2026 (EASA AD 2026-0020) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition on all Airbus Helicopters (AH) Model H160-B helicopters. The MCAI states that pilots reported significant vibrations during flight and a subsequent investigation revealed a rupture of a main rotor pitch rod and a permanent plastic deformation of the pitch rod in the failure area. EASA issued Emergency AD 2026-001-E, dated January 8, 2026; corrected January 9, 2026 (EASA EAD 2026-001-E) (which corresponds to FAA AD 2026-01-51) as an interim action to repetitively replace the affected parts: main rotor lower pitch rod end bearing part number (P/N) U623A30T1002 and U623A30T1006 (manufacturer P/N 12-14043P and 12-14631P), and main rotor upper pitch rod end bearing P/N U623A30T1001 and U623A30T1005 (manufacturer P/N 12-14042P and 12-14630P). The MCAI is a supplementary measure to perform a one-time inspection of the affected parts; EASA EAD 2026-001-E is not superseded. EASA considers the MCAI an interim action.

The FAA is issuing this AD to address the structural failure of the main rotor lower and upper pitch rod end bearings. This condition, if not addressed, could result in structural failure of the main rotor pitch rod with consequent loss of control of the helicopter.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) under Docket No. FAA-2026-2288.

Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2026-0020, which specifies procedures for a one-time inspection of the upper and lower pitch rod end bearings on the pitch rods of the

main rotor. Depending on the results, EASA AD 2026-0020 requires contacting AH for approved corrective actions. EASA AD 2026-0020 also requires the inspection results to be reported to AH. 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, that authority has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA is issuing this AD after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

AD Requirements

This AD requires accomplishing the actions specified in the EASA AD 2026-0020, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this AD. See "Differences Between this AD and the MCAI" for a discussion of the general differences included in this AD.

Differences Between this AD and the MCAI

The MCAI specifies reporting the results of the inspection within 7 days, whereas this AD requires reporting the results within 10 days.

Interim Action

The FAA considers that this AD is an interim action. If final action is later identified, the FAA might consider additional rulemaking.

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, EASA AD 2026-0020 is incorporated by reference in this AD. This AD requires compliance with EASA AD 2026-0020 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2026-0020 does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the AD requirement refers to “all required actions and compliance times,” compliance with this AD requirement is not limited to the section titled “Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)” in EASA AD 2026-0020. Material required by EASA AD 2026-0020 for compliance will be available at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2026-2288 after this AD is published.

Justification for Immediate Adoption and Determination of the Effective Date

Section 553(b) of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 551 *et seq.*) authorizes agencies to dispense with notice and comment procedures for rules when the agency, for “good cause,” finds that those procedures are “impracticable, unnecessary, or contrary to the public interest.” Under this section, an agency, upon finding good cause, may issue a final rule without providing notice and seeking comment prior to issuance. Further, section 553(d) of the APA authorizes agencies to make rules effective in less than thirty days, upon a finding of good cause.

An unsafe condition exists that requires the immediate adoption of this AD without providing an opportunity for public comments prior to adoption. The FAA has found that the risk to the flying public justifies forgoing notice and comment prior to adoption of this rule because there is a significant risk of structural failure in the lower or upper main rotor pitch rod end bearings of helicopters and the inspection must be accomplished within 5 hours time-in-service. The compliance time in this AD is shorter

than the time necessary for the public to comment and for publication of the final rule. Accordingly, notice and opportunity for prior public comment are impracticable and contrary to the public interest pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b).

In addition, the FAA finds that good cause exists pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(d) for making this amendment effective in less than 30 days, for the same reasons the FAA found good cause to forgo notice and comment.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) do not apply when an agency finds good cause pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 to adopt a rule without prior notice and comment. Because the FAA has determined that it has good cause to adopt this rule without prior notice and comment, RFA analysis is not required.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD affects 13 helicopters of U.S. registry.

The FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this AD:

Estimated costs

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product	Cost on U.S. operators
Inspect the upper and lower pitch rod end bearings (ten total)	1 work-hour x \$85 per hour = \$85	\$0	\$85	\$1,105
Reporting inspection result	1 work-hour x \$85 per hour = \$85	\$0	\$85	\$1,105

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

On-condition costs

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product
Replace the upper and lower pitch rod end bearings	8 work-hours x \$85 per hour = \$680	Up to \$134,570	Up to \$135,250

Paperwork Reduction Act

A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB Control Number. The OMB Control Number for this information collection is 2120-0056. Public reporting for this collection of information is estimated to take approximately 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. All responses to this collection of information are mandatory. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Information Collection Clearance Officer, Federal Aviation Administration, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177-1524.

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, and
- (2) Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska.

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:

2026-05-08 Airbus Helicopters: Amendment 39-23281; Docket No. FAA-2026-2288; Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00079-R.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective [INSERT DATE 15 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Airbus Helicopters Model H160-B helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 6200, Main Rotor System.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by a report of the main rotor pitch rod rupturing during flight. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the structural failure of the main rotor lower and upper pitch rod end bearings. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in structural failure of the main rotor pitch rod with consequent loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Required Actions

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD 2026-0020, dated January 27, 2026 (EASA AD 2026-0020).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2026-0020

(1) Where EASA AD 2026-0020 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where EASA AD 2026-0020 requires compliance in terms of flight hours, this AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(3) Where paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2026-0020 specifies to “before further flight, contact AH [Airbus helicopters] for the approved corrective actions(s) instructions, and within the compliance time specified therein”, this AD requires replacing that text with “before further flight, repair any discrepancy using 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”.

(4) Where paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2026-0020 specifies to “Within 7 days”, this AD requires replacing that text with “Within 10 days”.

(5) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2026-0020 specifies “check”, this AD requires replacing that text with “inspection”.

(6) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2026-0020 specifies if a minimum of one out of roundness value is equal to or more than 0.3 mm (.012 in) “contact Airbus Helicopters for further instructions before resuming flights”, this AD requires replacing that text with “before further flight, perform corrective actions using a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus Helicopters' EASA 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 2026-0020.

(i) Special Flight Permits

Special flight permits are prohibited.

(j) 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 (k) 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 local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(k) 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.

(l) 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 2026-0020, dated January 27, 2026.

(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 the EASA 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 February 27, 2026.

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