[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2026-4638; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-00794-R]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus 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 certain Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350D, EC130B4, and EC130T2 helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by reports of an incorrectly installed engine flange on the main gear box (MGB) engine coupling. This proposed AD would require inspecting the MGB engine coupling for correct installation and, depending on the results, corrective actions. 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-2026-4638; 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 the EASA material on the EASA website at ad.easa.europa.eu.

• You may view this material at the FAA, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Aryanna Sanchez, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (520) 990-9321; email: aryanna.t.sanchez@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 ADDRESSES. Include "Docket No. FAA-2026-4638; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-00794-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 Aryanna Sanchez, 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 2023-0127, dated June 27, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0127) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition on Airbus Helicopters Model AS 350 B, AS 350 BA, AS 350 BB, AS 350 B1, AS 350 B2, and AS 350 B3 helicopters, manufactured before May 15, 2023; Model AS 350 D helicopters (except helicopters equipped with a Lycoming engine) manufactured before May 15, 2023; and

Model EC 130 B4 and EC 130 T2 helicopters manufactured before February 13, 2023. The MCAI states that on the final assembly line, the engine flange on the MGB engine coupling may have been installed inverted.

The FAA is proposing this AD to detect and correct the inverted installation of the engine flange on the MGB engine coupling. This condition, if not detected and corrected, could result in the loss of power transmission to the MGB and the main rotor and lead to loss of control of the helicopter.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2026-4638.

Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2023-0127, which specifies procedures for a one-time inspection of the MGB engine coupling for correct installation. Depending on the results, EASA AD 2023-0127 specifies installing a correctly assembled engine flange or a new engine flange. EASA AD 2023-0127 also specifies reporting the inspection results to the manufacturer. 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 ADDRESSES.

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 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 2023-0127, 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 Airbus Helicopters Model AS 350 BB helicopter, whereas this proposed AD does not because that model does not have an FAA type certificate.

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 incorporates EASA AD 2023-0127 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2023-0127 in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this proposed AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2023-0127 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 2023-0127. Material required by EASA AD 2023-0127 for compliance will be available at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2026-4638 after the FAA final rule is published.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 4,102 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 MGB engine coupling	1 work-hour x $85 per hour = $85	$0	$85	$348,670

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any corrective actions 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 corrective action:

On-condition costs

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product
Install engine flange	2 work-hours x $85 per hour = $170	Up to $1,935	Up to $2,105

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: Docket No. FAA-2026-4638; Project Identifier MCAI-2023-00794-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 all Airbus Helicopters, certificated in any category, identified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (3) of this AD.

(1) Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, and AS350B3 helicopters, with a helicopter manufacture date before May 15, 2023.

(2) Model AS350D helicopters, with a helicopter manufacture date before May 15, 2023, except helicopters equipped with a Lycoming engine.

(3) Model EC130B4 and EC130T2 helicopters, with a helicopter manufacture date before February 13, 2023.

Note 1 to paragraph (c)(1): Helicopters with AS350B3e designation are Model AS350B3 helicopters.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 6300, Main rotor drive.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by reports of an incorrectly installed engine flange on the main gear box (MGB) engine coupling. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect and correct the inverted installation of the engine flange on the MGB engine coupling. The unsafe condition, if not detected and corrected, could result in the loss of power transmission to the MGB and the main rotor and lead to 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 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 2023-0127, dated June 27, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0127).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2023-0127

(1) Where EASA AD 2023-0127 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where EASA AD 2023-0127 refers to flight hours, this AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(3) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2023-0127 specifies discarding certain parts, this AD requires removing those parts from service.

(4) This AD does not adopt the "Remarks" section of EASA AD 2023-0127.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although EASA AD 2023-0127 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not require that action.

(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 responsible 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 Aryanna Sanchez, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (520) 990-9321; email: aryanna.t.sanchez@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 2023-0127, dated June 27, 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; 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, Airworthiness Products Section, Operational Safety Branch, 10101 Hillwood Parkway, 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 May 12, 2026.

Paul R. Bernado,
Acting Director, Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.
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