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[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2026-7231; Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00112-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 supersede Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2022-01-01, which applies to all Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350D, AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, AS355NP, AS 365 N2, AS 365 N3, EC130B4, EC130T2, SA 365 C1, SA 365 C2, SA 365 N, and SA 365 N1 helicopters. AD 2022-01-01 requires the application of alignment markings on, and repetitive inspections of, the main rotor (MR) pitch rod upper links and, depending on findings, the accomplishment of applicable corrective actions. Since the FAA issued AD 2022-01-01, the manufacturer designed a new pitch rod lever axis attachment screw and issued applicable modification material as an alternative option. This proposed AD would retain all the actions of AD 2022-01-01 and would allow the modification as a terminating action to the repetitive inspections and corrective actions. This proposed AD would also prohibit installing a certain affected pitch rod lever axis attachment screws 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-2026-7231; 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: Olivia Rasmussen, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (847)

294-7117; email: olivia.e.rasmussen@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-2026-7231; Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00112-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 the 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 Olivia Rasmussen, 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

The FAA issued AD 2022-01-01, Amendment 39-21889 (87 FR 4800, January 31, 2022) (AD 2022-01-01), for all Airbus Helicopters Model AS350B, AS350BA, AS350B1, AS350B2, AS350B3, AS350D, AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, AS355NP, AS 365 N2, AS 365 N3, EC130B4, EC130T2, SA 365 C1, SA 365 C2, SA 365 N, and SA 365 N1, helicopters. AD 2022-01-01 was prompted by an MCAI originated by EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union. EASA issued EASA AD 2021-0048, dated February 16, 2021 (EASA AD 2021-0048) to correct an unsafe condition identified as an increased vibration during flight.

AD 2022-01-01 requires the application of alignment markings on, and repetitive inspections of, the MR pitch rod upper links and, depending on findings, the accomplishment of applicable corrective actions. The FAA issued AD 2022-01-01 to address loss of tightening torque of the screws connecting the MR pitch rods to the horns of the upper links, which if not addressed, could result in loss of one or more MR pitch rod upper links and result in loss of control of the helicopter.

Actions Since AD 2022-01-01 was Issued

Since the FAA issued AD 2022-01-01, EASA superseded EASA AD 2021-0048 and issued EASA AD 2023-0064, dated March 20, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0064) (also referred to as the MCAI). The MCAI states the manufacturer designed a new pitch rod lever axis attachment screw and has issued applicable modification instructions, for in-service embodiment. The MCAI further states that this modification is optional and constitutes a terminating action for the corrective actions and the repetitive marking inspections.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2026-7231.

Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2023-0064, which specifies procedures for the application of alignment markings on the screw, washer, nut, and horn on both sides of each MR pitch rod upper link, and repetitive visual inspections of the two alignment markings to determine if the markings are aligned on both sides. If, during any inspection the markings on one or both sides of an MR pitch rod upper link are found misaligned, EASA AD 2023-0064 requires additional actions and corrective actions, which include but are not limited to, measuring torque, further inspections, replacing and installing new parts, and applying primer and paint. EASA AD 2023-0064 also specifies that accomplishing the modification in accordance with the applicable modification material is an alternative to the corrective actions and the modification also is a terminating action for the repetitive marking inspections. Additionally, EASA AD 2023-0064 prohibits installing an affected pitch rod lever axis attachment screw part number (P/N) 350A31-1873-20 on any helicopter unless certain requirements are met.

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 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 retain all of the requirements of AD 2022-01-01 and would require accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2023-0064, 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 AS350BB and SA 365 C3 helicopters, whereas this proposed AD would not because those models do not have an FAA type certificate.

Where the MCAI specifies to repetitively inspect the two alignment markings on each MR pitch rod upper link in accordance with the instructions of the applicable material, for this proposed AD, the owner/operator (pilot) holding at least a private pilot certificate may inspect the two alignment markings on each MR pitch rod upper link and must enter compliance with this proposed AD in the helicopter maintenance records in accordance with 14 CFR 43.9(a) and 91.417(a)(2)(v). The pilot may perform this action because it only involves visually inspecting the two markings. This action can be performed equally well by a pilot or a mechanic. This action is an exception to the FAA's standard maintenance regulations.

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 2023-0064 by reference in the FAA final rule. This proposed AD

would, therefore, require compliance with EASA AD 2023-0064 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 2023-0064 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 2023-0064. Material required by EASA AD 2023-0064 for compliance will be available at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2026-7231 after the FAA final rule is published.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 1,302 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
Inspection	1 work-hour x $85 = $85 per hour	$0	$85	$110,670

The FAA has determined that application of alignment markings would take a minimal amount of time at a nominal cost.

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any proposed 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 these replacements:

On-condition costs

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product
Screw, Washer, Nut, and Split Pin Replacement	1 work-hour × $85 per hour = $85	$40	$125

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product
Spherical Bearing Replacement	4 work-hours × $85 per hour = $340	$500	$840
Pitch Rod Replacement	4 work-hours × $85 per hour = $340	$3,000	$3,340
Pitch Horn Replacement	16 work hours × $85 per hour = $1360	$4,000	$5,360

Estimated costs for optional actions

Action	Labor Cost	Parts Cost	Cost per product
Screw modification (including hardware)	4 work-hour × $85 per hour = $340	Up to $506	Up to $846

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 that the 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:

a. Removing Airworthiness Directive 2022-01-01, Amendment 39-21889 (87 FR 4800, January 31, 2022); and

b. Adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Airbus Helicopters: Docket No. FAA-2026-7231; Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00112-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

This AD replaces AD 2022-01-01, Amendment 39-21889 (87 FR 4800, January 31, 2022) (AD 2022-01-01).

(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, AS350B3, AS350D, EC130B4, and EC130T2 helicopters.

(2) Model AS355E, AS355F, AS355F1, AS355F2, AS355N, and AS355NP helicopters.

(3) Model AS 365 N2, AS 365 N3, SA 365 C1, SA 365 C2, SA 365 N, and SA 365 N1 helicopters.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 6200, Main rotor drive system.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by a report of increased vibration during flight on an Airbus Helicopters Model AS 365 helicopter. Subsequent investigation found a total loss of tightening torque of one screw connecting the main rotor (MR) pitch rod to the horn of its upper link, which led to abnormal wear of the screw and consequently increased the vibrations coming from the MR control chain to the pilot's flight controls. The FAA is issuing this AD to address loss of tightening torque of the screws connecting the MR pitch rods to the horns of the upper links. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in loss of one or more MR pitch rod upper links and result in 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 (EASA) AD 2023-0064, dated March 20, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0064).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2023-0064

(1) Where EASA AD 2023-0064 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where EASA AD 2023-0064 refers to March 2, 2021 (the effective date of EASA AD 2021-0048), this AD requires using March 7, 2022 (the effective date of AD 2022-01-01).

(3) Where paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2023-0064 specifies "accomplish a visual inspection of the two alignment markings on each MR pitch rod upper link in accordance with the instructions of Section 3.B.2.b of the ASB," this AD requires replacing that text with "accomplish a visual inspection of the two alignment markings on each MR pitch rod upper link by ensuring that the two red lines of the pitch rod upper link are aligned. The owner/operator (pilot) holding at least a private pilot certificate may inspect the two alignment markings on each MR pitch rod upper link and must enter compliance with paragraph (g) of this AD in the helicopter maintenance records in accordance with 14 CFR 43.9(a) and 91.417(a)(2)(v). The record must be maintained as required by 14 CFR 91.417, 121.380, or 135.43".

(4) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2023-0064 specifies discarding parts, this AD requires removing those parts from service.

(5) Where the material referenced in EASA AD 2023-0064 specifies returning a part to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

(6) For Model AS 365 helicopters: For the visual inspection of the pitch horn,

where the material referenced in EASA AD 2023-0064 specifies to do a dye penetrant inspection "if in doubt," this AD requires doing a fluorescent penetrant inspection.

(7) For Model EC130 helicopters: where the material referenced in EASA AD 2023-0064 refers to "the pitch change lever," for this AD, that term is equivalent to "pitch horn."

(8) This AD does not adopt the "Remarks" section of EASA AD 2023-0064.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the material referenced in EASA AD 2023-0064 specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this AD does not include that requirement.

(j) Special Flight Permits

Special flight permits, as described in 14 CFR 21.197 and 21.199, are not allowed.

(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 (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 local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(l) Additional Information

For more information about this AD, contact Olivia Rasmussen, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (847) 294-7117; email: olivia.e.rasmussen@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 2023-0064, dated March 20, 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 July 24, 2026.

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

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