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[4910-13-P]

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Aviation Administration**

**14 CFR Part 39**

**[Docket No. FAA-2026-3869; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00429-R; Amendment 39-23427; AD 2026-15-15]**

**RIN 2120-AA64**

**Airworthiness Directives; Leonardo S.p.a. Helicopters**

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

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** The FAA is adopting a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Leonardo S.p.a. Model AW189 helicopters. This AD was prompted by reports of cracking on the ejector ducts. This AD requires repetitively inspecting the left-hand (LH) side and right-hand (RH) side ejector ducts, including the exhaust bracket reinforcements and reinforcement plates, and, depending on the results, replacing any affected ejector duct. 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 under Docket No. FAA-2026-3869; 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 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, 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. It is also available at regulations.gov under Docket No. FAA-2026-3869.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** David Enns, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (316) 946-4147; email: david.enns@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 Leonardo S.p.a. Model AW189 helicopters. The NPRM was published in the *Federal Register* on April 29, 2026 (91 FR 23031). The NPRM was prompted by EASA AD 2025-0064, dated March 25, 2025 (EASA AD 2025-0064) (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 reports of cracking on ejector duct part number (P/N) 8G7810P00131 (LH side) and P/N 8G7810P00231 (RH side) of the rear sliding cowling, where the engine exhaust ducts are installed. The MCAI also states that investigation of the cracks, which developed around

the engine exhaust duct boundary reinforcement plate, is ongoing to identify the root cause of the occurrences, and the inspection area needs to be extended to the area of the exhaust bracket reinforcements.

Additionally, the MCAI states that, due to reasons still under investigation, any Leonardo S.p.a. Model AW189 helicopter having manufacturer serial number 49018, 49019, 49025, or 49028 is subject to shorter compliance times due to higher likelihood of cracking. This condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to detachment of a part of the ejector duct, which could impact the helicopter tailplane or the tail rotor with consequent loss of control of the helicopter.

In the NPRM, the FAA proposed to require repetitively inspecting the LH side and RH side ejector ducts, including the exhaust bracket reinforcements and reinforcement plates, and, depending on the results, replacing any affected ejector duct. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

**Discussion of Final Airworthiness Directive**

**Comments**

The FAA received no comments on the NPRM or on the determination of the costs.

**Conclusion**

These products have been approved by the civil 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, that authority has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI referenced above. The FAA reviewed the relevant data, considered any comments received, and determined that air safety requires adopting this 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. None of the changes will increase the economic burden on any operator.

**Material Incorporated by Reference Under 1 CFR Part 51**

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2025-0064, which specifies procedures for repetitively inspecting the LH and RH ejector ducts P/N 8G7810P00131 (LH side) and P/N 8G7810P00231 (RH side) and the exhaust bracket reinforcements and reinforcement plates. Depending on the results of the inspection, EASA AD 2025-0064 specifies procedures for replacing the ejector duct and reporting inspection results to Leonardo if any discrepancy is detected as a result of the inspection.

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.

**Interim Action**

The FAA considers that this AD is an interim action. The manufacturer is still investigating the root cause of the unsafe condition identified in this AD. If final action is later identified, the FAA might consider further rulemaking.

**Costs of Compliance**

The FAA estimates that this AD affects four 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 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Visually inspect each ejector duct including the exhaust bracket reinforcements and reinforcement plates | 2 work-hours x $85 per hour = $170 per inspection | $0 | $170 per inspection | $680 per inspection |

The FAA estimates the following costs to do any replacements or corrections 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 or corrections.

**On-condition costs**

| Action | Labor Cost | Parts Cost | Cost per product |
|---|---|---|---|
| Replace an ejector duct | 2 work-hours x $85 per hour = $170 | $32,007 | $32,177 |

**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:

**2026-15-15 Leonardo S.p.a.**: Amendment 39-23427; Docket No. FAA-2026-3869; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00429-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 all Leonardo S.p.a. Model AW189 helicopters, certificated in any category.

**(d) Subject**

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 7800, Engine exhaust system.

**(e) Unsafe Condition**

This AD was prompted by reports of cracking on the ejector duct. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect and address cracking around the engine exhaust duct boundary reinforcement plate. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could lead to detachment of a part of the ejector duct, which could impact the helicopter tailplane or the tail rotor 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 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 2025-0064, dated March 25, 2025 (EASA AD 2025-0064).

**(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2025-0064**

(1) Where EASA AD 2025-0064 refers to its effective date, or July 26, 2023 [the effective date of EASA AD 2023-0149], this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(2) Where EASA AD 2025-0064 requires compliance in terms of flight hours, this AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(3) This AD does not adopt the "Remarks" section of EASA AD 2025-0064.

**(i) No Reporting or Returning of Parts Requirement**

Although EASA AD 2025-0064 and the material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0064 specifies reporting certain information or to return any parts to the manufacturer, this AD does not require those actions.

**(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 David Enns, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (316) 946-4147; email: david.enns@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 2025-0064, dated March 25, 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 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.
[FR Doc. 2026-15370 Filed: 7/29/2026 8:45 am; Publication Date: 7/30/2026]