

[Federal Register, Volume 90 Number 133 (Tuesday, July 15, 2025)]
[Rules and Regulations]
[Pages 31583-31586]
From the Federal Register Online via the Government Publishing Office [www.gpo.gov]
[FR Doc No: 2025-13214]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Aviation Administration****14 CFR Part 39**

[Docket No. FAA-2025-1359; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00155-R; Amendment 39-23082; AD 2025-14-04]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH 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 Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Model MBB-BK 117 D-3 helicopters. This AD was prompted by a report of over-torqued swashplate bolts on helicopters in service and in production. This AD requires removal of certain swashplate bolts from service and replacement with new (never previously installed on a helicopter) bolts, a one-time inspection for damage on the threads of the bearing ring and control ring of the swashplate and, depending on the results of the inspection, corrective actions. This AD also prohibits the installation of certain swashplates on any helicopter unless certain requirements are met. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES:

This AD is effective July 30, 2025.

The FAA must receive comments on this AD by August 29, 2025.

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-2025-1359; 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 the EASA 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.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Yves Petiotte, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (202) 975-4867; email: yves.petiotte@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 the **ADDRESSES** section. Include “Docket No. FAA-2025-1359; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00155-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 Yves Petiotte, 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 2025-0027, dated February 5, 2025 (EASA AD 2025-0027) (also referred to as the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition on AHD Model MBB-BK117 D-3 and MBB-BK117 D-3m helicopters. The MCAI states that an occurrence of over-torqued swashplate bolts on helicopters both in service and in production has been reported. The MCAI states that over-torquing of the swashplate bolts could lead to damage to the swashplate bolts and to the threads of the bearing ring and control ring of the swashplate and could affect the structural integrity of the swashplate. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect and correct the condition of the swashplate bolts and damage to the bearing ring and control ring of the swashplate, which if not addressed, could result in reduced structural integrity of the swashplate, loss of main rotor control, and consequent loss of control of the helicopter.

You may examine the MCAI in the AD docket at *regulations.gov* under Docket No. FAA-2025-1359.

Material Incorporated by Reference Under [1 CFR Part 51](#)

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2025-0027, which specifies procedures for removal of certain swashplate bolts and replacement with new (never previously installed on a helicopter) swashplate bolts, inspection of the bearing ring and control ring of the swashplate for damage, and, depending on the results of the inspection, corrective actions to include the replacement of the bearing ring or control ring of the swashplate. EASA AD 2025-0027 also prohibits installing an affected swashplate unless it passes the specified inspection and the swashplate bolts have been replaced with new swashplate bolts.

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 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 EASA AD 2025-0027, 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

EASA AD 2025-0027 applies to AHD Model MBB-BK117 D-3m helicopters, whereas this 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 civil aviation authority (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 2025-0027 is incorporated by reference in this AD. This AD requires compliance with EASA AD 2025-0027 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 2025-0027 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

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 the swashplate is a critical component to maintaining controlled flight. Over-torquing of the swashplate bolts could damage the bearing ring and control ring of the swashplate, which could result in reduced structural integrity of the swashplate, loss of main rotor control, and consequent loss of control of the helicopter. This could occur during any phase of flight, without previous indication. For this reason, the initial actions required by this AD must be accomplished within 50 hours time-in-service or 30 days, whichever occurs first, which 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 50 helicopters of U.S. registry. Each swashplate requires 24 swashplate bolts, and the parts cost reflects the cost of replacing 24 swashplate bolts.

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
Replace swashplate bolts	4 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$340	\$216	\$556	\$27,800
Inspect bearing ring and control ring	4 work-hours × \$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 inspection. The agency has no way of determining the number of helicopters that might need these repairs:

On-Condition Costs

Action	Labor cost	Parts cost	Cost per product
Replace bearing ring	2 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$170	\$59,672	\$59,842
Replace control ring	2 work-hours × \$85 per hour = \$170	20,980	21,150

The FAA has included all known costs in its cost estimate. According to the manufacturer, however, some of the costs of this AD may be covered under warranty, thereby reducing the cost impact on affected operators.

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:

2025-14-04 Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH: Amendment 39-23082; Docket No. FAA-2025-1359; Project Identifier MCAI-2025-00155-R.

(a) Effective Date

This airworthiness directive (AD) is effective July 30, 2025.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) 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 over-torqued swashplate bolts on helicopters in service and in production. The FAA is issuing this AD to detect and correct the condition of the swashplate bolts and damage to the bearing ring and control ring of the swashplate due to over-torquing. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in reduced structural integrity of the swashplate, loss of main rotor control, and consequent 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 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 2025-0027, dated February 5, 2025 (EASA AD 2025-0027).

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2025-0027

- (1) Where EASA AD 2025-0027 requires compliance in terms of flight hours, this AD requires using hours time-in-service (TIS).
- (2) Where EASA AD 2025-0027 refers to its effective date, this AD requires using the effective date of this AD.

(3) Where paragraphs (2) and (3) of EASA AD 2025-0027 specify “discrepancy”, this AD requires replacing this text with “damage to the threads”.

(4) Where paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2025-0027 specifies “replace that control ring or bearing ring, respectively”, this AD requires replacing that text with “remove from service and replace that control ring or bearing ring, respectively”.

(5) This AD does not adopt the “Remarks” section of EASA AD 2025-0027.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the material referenced in EASA AD 2025-0027 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 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 Yves Petiote, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (202) 975-4867; email: yves.petiote@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 2025-0027, dated February 5, 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, 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 July 10, 2025.

Steven W. Thompson,

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

[FR Doc. 2025-13214 Filed 7-11-25; 11:15 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-13-P