AD #: 2026-01-51

Emergency Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2026-01-51 is sent to owners and operators of Airbus Helicopters Model H160-B helicopters.

Background

The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E, dated January 8, 2026, and corrected January 9, 2026 (EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E) (also referred to as the mandatory continuing airworthiness information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition on Airbus Helicopters 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. This emergency AD is intended to address the failure of the 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). EASA considers the MCAI an interim action. This condition, if not addressed, could result in structural failure of the main rotor pitch rod with consequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Related Material

The FAA reviewed EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E, which specifies procedures for replacing the upper and lower pitch rod end bearings on the pitch rods of the main rotor with new pitch rod end bearings. EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E also prohibits installing any affected main rotor lower and upper pitch rod end bearings that are not new parts on any helicopter.

FAA's Determination

These products have been approved by the 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, it has notified the FAA of the unsafe condition described in the MCAI described above. The FAA is issuing this emergency AD after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop in other products of the same type design.

Emergency AD Requirements

This emergency AD requires accomplishing the actions specified in EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this emergency AD.

Interim Action

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

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 forego 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 emergency AD to all known U.S. owners and operators of these aircraft. 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 that have exceeded 160 hours time-in-service (TIS) on the affected parts. Given the urgency, the FAA permits only one additional flight of maximum duration of 5 hours TIS before the mandatory replacement of these parts. This compliance time is shorter than the time necessary for the public to comment and for the 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.

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 current 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.

Presentation of the Actual Emergency Airworthiness Directive

The FAA is issuing this emergency airworthiness directive under 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, and 44701 according to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator.

2026-01-51 Airbus Helicopters: Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00008-R.

(a) Effective Date

This emergency airworthiness directive (AD) is effective upon receipt.

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

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

(d) Subject

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

(e) Unsafe Condition

This emergency AD was prompted by a report of the main rotor pitch rod rupturing during flight. The FAA is issuing this emergency 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.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Required Actions

Except as specified in paragraph (h) of this emergency AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with European Union Aviation Safety Agency Emergency AD 2026-0001-E, dated January 8, 2026, and corrected January 9, 2026 (EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E).

(h) Exceptions to EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E

(1) Where EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E refers to its effective date, this emergency AD requires using the date of receipt of this emergency AD.

(2) Where EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E requires compliance in terms of flight hours, this emergency AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(3) Where the material referenced in EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E specifies “check”, this emergency AD requires replacing that text with “inspect”.

(4) This emergency AD does not adopt the "Remarks" section of EASA Emergency AD 2026-0001-E.

(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 emergency 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)(1) of this emergency 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

(1) For more information about this emergency 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.

(2) For EASA material identified in this emergency 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.

Issued on January 12, 2026.

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