AD #: 2026-08-51

Emergency Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2026-08-51 is sent to owners and operators of Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Helicopters Model MBB-BK 117 D-3 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 2026-0078-E, dated April 13, 2026 (EASA Emergency AD 2026-0078-E) (also referred to as the mandatory continuing airworthiness information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition on all AHD Model MBB-BK 117 D-3 and D-3m helicopters. The MCAI states a report of a crack on the affected part was detected after the crew reported an increased vibration of the helicopter. The MCAI defines the affected part as a rotor hub-shaft manufacturer part number D623M1501203 and D623M1501204. The FAA is issuing this emergency AD to address cracking of the rotor hub-shaft, which could lead to failure of the main rotor transmission and consequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Related Material

The FAA reviewed EASA Emergency AD 2026-0078-E, which specifies procedures for inspecting the rotor hub-shaft and depending on the results of the inspection, replacing any rotor hub-shaft that has cracks or suspicion of cracks and reporting the results of the inspection to Airbus Helicopters. EASA Emergency AD 2026-0078-E also prohibits installing any affected rotor hub-shaft that has not passed an inspection on any helicopter.

FAA's Determination

This product has been approved by the aviation authority of another country and is 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 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 2026-0078-E, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this emergency AD.

Differences Between this Emergency AD and the MCAI

The MCAI applies to MBB-BK117 D-3m helicopters, whereas this emergency AD does not because that model does not have an FAA type certificate.

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 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 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 a number of helicopters that have the affected part installed require immediate action. 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(f), 40113, and 44701 according to the authority delegated to me by the Administrator.

2026-08-51 Airbus Helicopters Deutschland GmbH (AHD): Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00403-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 Deutschland GmbH (AHD) Model MBB-BK 117 D-3 helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

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

(e) Unsafe Condition

This emergency AD was prompted by a report of a crack on the affected part, which was detected after the crew reported increased vibration of the helicopter. The mandatory continuing airworthiness information defines the affected part as a rotor hub-shaft manufacturer part number D623M1501203 and D623M1501204. The FAA is issuing this emergency AD to address cracking of the rotor hub-shaft, which could lead to failure of the main rotor transmission and 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 2026-0078-E, dated April 13, 2026 (EASA Emergency AD 2026-0078-E).

(h) Exceptions to EASA Emergency AD 2026-0078-E

(1) Where EASA Emergency AD 2026-0078-E refers to its effective date, this emergency AD requires using the date of receipt of this emergency AD.

(2) Where EASA Emergency AD 2026-0078-E requires compliance in terms of flight hours, this emergency AD requires using hours time-in-service.

(3) This emergency AD does not adopt the “Remarks” section of EASA Emergency AD 2026-0078-E.

(i) Special Flight Permits

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

(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 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 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 David Enns, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (316) 946-4147; email: david.enns@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 April 16, 2026.

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