FAA
Aviation Safety

EMERGENCY AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVE
www.faa.gov/aircraft/safety/alerts/

DATE: October 2, 2023
AD #: 2023-20-51

Emergency Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2023-20-51 is sent to owners and operators of Airbus Helicopters Model AS332C, AS332C1, AS332L, AS332L1, AS332L2, and SA330J helicopters.

Background

This emergency AD was prompted by a report of three newly supplied main rotor swashplate bushing retaining plates manufacturer part number 330A31-3120-20 with oversized internal diameters. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is the aviation authority for the European Union, has issued EASA Emergency AD 2023-0174-E, dated October 2, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0174-E), to correct an unsafe condition on Airbus Helicopters Model SA 330 J, AS 332 C, AS 332 C1, AS 332 L, AS 332 L1, and AS 332 L2 helicopters. EASA AD 2023-0174-E states that during an overhaul of a main rotor assembly, the retaining bushes were identified as out of tolerance with a diameter of 39 mm (1.535 in.) instead of 31 mm (1.22 in.). EASA AD 2023-0174-E also states that affected retaining bushes may be installed on main rotor rotating and non-rotating swashplates. Accordingly, EASA AD 2023-0174-E requires a one-time inspection to measure the internal diameter of affected retaining bushes and depending on the results, accomplishing an additional inspection, replacing non-conforming retaining bushes, or contacting AH [Airbus Helicopters] for approved repair instructions. EASA AD 2023-0174-E also prohibits installing an affected retaining bush unless it has passed its required inspection.

This emergency AD is intended to detect out of tolerance main rotor swashplate bushing retaining plates. This condition, if not addressed, could result in damage to the main rotor assembly and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Related Service Information

The FAA reviewed EASA AD 2023-0174-E, which requires a one-time inspection to measure the internal diameter of affected retaining bushes and depending on the results, inspecting the scissor attachment ball joint seating or replacing non-conforming retaining bushes. Depending on the results of the scissor attachment ball joint seating inspection, EASA AD 2023-0174-E requires contacting AH [Airbus Helicopters] for approved repair instructions and accomplishing those instructions accordingly. Lastly, EASA AD 2023-0174-E prohibits installing an affected retaining bush unless it has passed its required inspection. Additionally, EASA AD 2023-0174-E refers to a “bushing retaining plate” as a “retaining bush.”

Other Related Service Information

The FAA also reviewed Airbus Helicopters Emergency Alert Service Bulletins AS332-62-00-0001 and SA330-65-00-0003, each Revision 1 and dated September 29, 2023. This service information specifies procedures for measuring the internal diameter of the bush retainings on the rotating and non-rotating swashplates and, if at least one internal diameter of the three bush retainings is more than 33 mm (1.3 in.), contacting Airbus Helicopters, removing and discarding each out of

tolerance bush retaining, and checking the ball joint seating on the support. If the ball joint is not properly seated on the support, this service information specifies contacting Airbus Helicopters to get a repair solution. Lastly, this service information specifies procedures for installing new bush retainings. Additionally, Airbus Helicopters refers to a "bushing retaining plate" as either a "bush retaining," "stop ring," or "retaining bush" in its service information.

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 its emergency AD described above. The FAA is issuing this emergency AD after determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type designs.

Emergency AD Requirements

This emergency AD requires accomplishing the actions specified in EASA AD 2023-0174-E, described previously, as incorporated by reference, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this emergency AD and except as discussed under "Differences Between this Emergency AD and the EASA Emergency AD."

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 2023-0174-E is incorporated by reference in this FAA emergency AD. This emergency AD, therefore, requires compliance with EASA AD 2023-0174-E in its entirety through that incorporation, except for any differences identified as exceptions in the regulatory text of this emergency AD. Using common terms that are the same as the heading of a particular section in EASA AD 2023-0174-E does not mean that operators need comply only with that section. For example, where the emergency AD requirement refers to "all required actions and compliance times," compliance with this emergency AD requirement is not limited to the section titled "Required Action(s) and Compliance Time(s)" in EASA AD 2023-0174-E.

Differences Between this Emergency AD and the EASA Emergency AD

The service information referenced in EASA AD 2023-0174-E specifies contacting Airbus Helicopters to get a repair solution and EASA AD 2023-0174-E requires contacting AH [Airbus Helicopters] for approved repair instructions and accomplishing those instructions accordingly if a scissor attachment ball joint is not properly seated, whereas this emergency AD requires repair done in accordance with a method approved by the FAA, EASA, or Airbus Helicopters' EASA Design Organization Approval.

Justification for Immediate Adoption and Determination of the Effective Date

Section 553(b)(3)(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 helicopters. The FAA has found that the risk to the flying public justifies foregoing notice and comment prior to adoption of this rule because the affected components are part of an assembly that is critical to the control of a helicopter. As the FAA has no information pertaining to the quantity of non-conforming components that may currently exist in the U.S. fleet or how quickly the condition may propagate to failure, the actions required by this AD must be accomplished within two days. Accordingly, notice and opportunity for prior public comment are impracticable and contrary to the public interest pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(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 forego notice and comment.

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.

2023-20-51 **AIRBUS HELICOPTERS:** Project Identifier MCAI-2023-01045-R.

(a) Effective Date

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

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This emergency AD applies to Airbus Helicopters Model AS332C, AS332C1, AS332L, AS332L1, AS332L2, and SA330J helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 6230, Main Rotor Mast/Swashplate.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This emergency AD was prompted by a report of three newly supplied main rotor swashplate bushing retaining plates with oversized internal diameters. The FAA is issuing this emergency AD to

detect out of tolerance main rotor swashplate bushing retaining plates. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in damage to the main rotor assembly and subsequent loss of control of the helicopter.

Note 1 to paragraph (e): European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Emergency AD 2023-0174-E, dated October 2, 2023 (EASA AD 2023-0174-E), refers to a "bushing retaining plate" as a "retaining bush." The service information referenced in EASA AD 2023-0174-E refers to a "bushing retaining plate" as either a "bush retaining," "stop ring," or "retaining bush."

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Requirements

Except as specified in paragraphs (h) and (i) of this emergency AD: Comply with all required actions and compliance times specified in, and in accordance with, EASA AD 2023-0174-E.

(h) Exceptions to EASA AD 2023-0174-E

(1) Where EASA AD 2023-0174-E refers to its effective date, this emergency AD requires using the effective date of this emergency AD.

(2) Where paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2023-0174-E states, "before next flight," for this emergency AD, replace that text with, "within two calendar days."

(3) Where paragraph (2) of EASA AD 2023-0174-E specifies inspecting the scissor attachment ball joint seating without a compliance time, this emergency AD requires that action before further flight.

(4) Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2023-0174-E specifies discarding parts, this emergency AD requires removing those parts from service.

(5) Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2023-0174-E specifies contacting Airbus Helicopters if at least one internal diameter of the three bushing retaining plates is more than 33 mm (1.3 in), this emergency AD does not require that action.

(6) Where the service information referenced in EASA AD 2023-0174-E specifies contacting Airbus Helicopters to get a repair solution and paragraph (4) of EASA AD 2023-0174-E requires contacting AH [Airbus Helicopters] for approved repair instructions and accomplishing those instructions accordingly if a scissor attachment ball joint is not properly seated, this emergency AD requires repair done in accordance with a method approved by the Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA; or EASA; or Airbus Helicopters' EASA Design Organization Approval (DOA). If approved by the DOA, the approval must include the DOA-authorized signature.

(7) This emergency AD does not adopt the "Remarks" section of EASA AD 2023-0174-E.

(i) No Reporting Requirement

Although the service information referenced in EASA AD 2023-0174-E specifies to submit certain information to the manufacturer, this emergency AD does not include that requirement.

(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 emergency AD, if requested using the procedures found in § 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)(1) of this emergency AD or email to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov. If mailing information, also submit information by email.

(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

(1) For more information about this emergency AD, contact Dan McCully, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone (404) 474-5548; email william.mccully@faa.gov.

(2) For Airbus Helicopters service information identified in this emergency AD, contact Airbus Helicopters, 2701 North Forum Drive, Grand Prairie, TX 75052; phone (972) 641-0000 or (800) 232-0323; fax (972) 641-3775; or at airbus.com/en/products-services/helicopters/hcare-services/airbusworld. You may view this referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110.

(3) The subject of this emergency AD is addressed in EASA Emergency AD 2023-0174-E, dated October 2, 2023. For this EASA material, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA material on the EASA website at ad.easa.europa.eu. You may also view this EASA material at the FAA address identified in paragraph (l)(2) of this emergency AD.

Issued on October 2, 2023.

Ross Landes, Deputy Director for Regulatory Operations,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.