AD #: 2026-05-51

Emergency Airworthiness Directive (AD) 2026-05-51 is sent to owners and operators of Bell Textron Canada Limited (Bell) Model 505 helicopters.

Background

Transport Canada, which is the aviation authority for Canada, has issued Transport Canada Emergency AD CF-2026-12, dated March 3, 2026 (Transport Canada Emergency AD CF-2026-12) (also referred to as the mandatory continuing airworthiness information (MCAI)), to correct an unsafe condition on Bell Model 505 helicopters, serial numbers 65011 and subsequent, with ballast box assembly part number (P/N) SLS-706-201-207 or P/N SLS-706-201-207FM installed. The MCAI states that Bell has discovered possible plastic deformation and improper pin engagement in the knuckles of the door hinge on the aft movable ballast box assembly. Bell stated there was a failure of the current hinge assembly P/N SLS-706-201-169, which was found during a post flight inspection. Ballast weights escaping the ballast box have a high potential of striking the tail rotor assembly. This emergency AD is intended to prevent damage to and/or departure of tail rotor blades, loss of tail rotor thrust, and severe vibrations. Any of these conditions, if not addressed, will lead to loss of control of the 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 revising the Limitations section of the existing rotorcraft flight manual (RFM) for the helicopter to prohibit the use of the ballast weights within the aft movable ballast box assembly P/N SLS-706-201-207 or SLS-706-201-207FM. The owner/operator (pilot) holding at least a private pilot certificate may revise the existing RFM and must enter compliance into the helicopter maintenance records in accordance with 14 CFR 43.9(a) and 91.417(a)(2)(v). The pilot may perform this action because it only involves revising the RFM, which could be performed equally well by a pilot or a mechanic. This is an exception to the FAA's standard maintenance regulations.

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 airplanes. The FAA has found that the risk to the flying public justifies forgoing notice and comment prior to adoption of this rule because ballast weights escaping the ballast box have a high potential of striking the tail rotor assembly, which could result in damage to and/or departure of tail rotor blades, loss of tail rotor thrust, and severe vibrations; these conditions could result in loss of control of the helicopter. In addition, this AD requires revising the existing RFM for the helicopter before further flight. 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.

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.

2026-05-51 Bell Textron Canada Limited: Project Identifier MCAI-2026-00217-R.

(a) Effective Date

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

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This emergency AD applies to Bell Textron Canada Limited Model 505 helicopters, certificated in any category, serial numbers 65011 and subsequent, with ballast box assembly part number (P/N) SLS-706-201-207 or P/N SLS-706-201-207FM installed.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft System Component (JASC) Code 2500, Equipment/furnishings.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This emergency AD was prompted by a failure of the hinge assembly on the aft movable ballast box assembly, which could allow the ballast weights to escape the ballast box and strike the tail rotor assembly. The FAA is issuing this emergency AD to prevent damage to and/or departure of tail rotor blades, loss of tail rotor thrust, and severe vibrations. The unsafe condition, if not addressed, could result in loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

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

(g) Requirements

Before further flight, revise the Limitations section of the existing rotorcraft flight manual (RFM) for the helicopter by inserting the following text: "the use of the ballast weights within the aft movable ballast box assembly P/N SLS-706-201-207 or SLS-706-201-207FM, is prohibited."

(1) Inserting a copy of this AD into the Limitations section of the RFM satisfies the requirements of paragraph (g)of this AD

(2) For this AD, the owner/operator (pilot) holding at least a private pilot certificate may revise the existing rotorcraft flight manual (RFM) for the helicopter and must enter compliance into the helicopter maintenance records in accordance with 14 CFR 43.9(a) and 91.417(a)(2)(v). The record must be maintained as required by 14 CFR 91.417, 121.380, or 135.439.

(h) Special Flight Permits

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

(i) 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 (j) 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 responsible Flight Standards Office.

(j) Additional Information

For more information about this emergency AD, contact Kurt Landendorf, Aviation Safety Engineer, FAA, 1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 410, Westbury, NY 11590; phone: (817) 222-5254; email: kurt.d.ladendorf@faa.gov.

Issued on March 6, 2026.

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