

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The world's first upgraded H145 starts as "Christoph 11"** **Helicopter with five-bladed rotor is in operation in Villingen-Schwenningen**

**DRF Luftrettung is putting the world's first upgraded type H145 helicopter into operation at the base in Villingen-Schwenningen, Germany. This particular machine was retroactively modified from four to five main rotor blades. Technicians from DRF Luftrettung, together with the manufacturer Airbus Helicopters, performed this first retrofit of a four-bladed H145 at the Airbus site in Donauwörth.**

As the world's first helicopter operator to do so, DRF Luftrettung has performed the retrofit of a four-bladed H145 onto the new five-bladed version. This helicopter is depolyed to the Villingen-Schwenningen station today. It will replace the H145 with four rotor blades currently in use there. The process involved in the retrofit was developed in cooperation with the manufacturer Airbus Helicopters at their site in Donauwörth, as part of this first conversion. It will now serve as a template process for all other retrofits. "The decision to convert existing type H145 helicopters from our fleet to the five-bladed rotor system enables us to pursue one of our key goals: further improving the options for our crews and consequently also the survival and recovery chances of our patients," said Dr Peter Huber from the Executive Board at DRF Luftrettung. "Helicopter technology is continually developing and we also never stand still in our role to help people in an emergency even faster and even better. This is why we are very pleased, together with Airbus Helicopters, to be able to perform this very first upgrade and to now gather our own experiences as the first operator with the newly installed rotor."

The commissioning in Villingen-Schwenningen means that the new features of the helicopter will now benefit the only night flight station in Baden-Württemberg. The upgraded H145 can fly with a higher capacity at the same performance level in comparison to its predecessor. This enables the crew to better react to spontaneous requirements at the emergency site, among other things, because they can then take extra medical staff with them, for example. In addition, the fifth rotor blade means the helicopter flies more smoothly, making it more comfortable for patients being transported. On top of the rotor blades and the rotor pylon, other helicopter parts will be exchanged or renewed as part of the conversion, leading to additional improvements. These include modifying the main transmission, exchanging batteries and software updates.

All DRF Luftrettung locations which use an H145 will benefit from the advantages these changes provide: within the next three years, the air rescue organisation plans to convert all its helicopters of this type from four to five rotor blades. The technical work this entails will take place in the DRF Luftrettung's own hangar in its Operation Center at Karlsruhe/Baden-Baden Airport. The organisation will also offer the retrofit for the H145 to external clients in future, too.

DRF Luftrettung took over its first type H145 helicopter with a five blade rotor in December 2020 as a new machine from the Airbus Helicopters production. It was the first of its kind to be starting out on air rescue missions in the German-speaking area in the Stuttgart region as from March 2021 as "Christoph 51".

## The Villingen-Schwenningen station

This rescue helicopter, stationed at the Schwarzwald-Baar-Klinikum in Villingen-Schwenningen, is the only one in Baden-Württemberg which is on standby 24/7. As "Christoph 11" it is called by the German Red Cross to missions in the districts of Villingen, Tuttlingen, Ortenau (Offenburg), Waldshut, Freiburg, Freudenstadt, Zollern-Alb (Balingen), Rottweil, Sigmaringen, Konstanz, Reutlingen and Lörrach. The crew carries out over 1,700 missions per year.

The station in Villingen-Schwenningen is operated by DRK Rettungsdienst Schwarzwald-Baar gGmbH. As its partner, DRF Luftrettung has been responsible for flight operations at the station since 1996.

In addition to getting emergency doctors to locations quickly and transporting emergency patients to hospitals, this helicopter is equipped to act as a flying ICU unit and is also used for fast and gentle transport of ICU patients between hospitals.

## Imagery



The first upgraded H145 helicopter is deployed to the DRF Luftrettung station in Villingen-Schwenningen, Germany, today. (Quelle: Airbus Helicopters)

## About DRF Luftrettung

The DRF Group with its headquarters in Filderstadt is one of the largest air rescue organisations in Europe. The crews at 14 of the 35 HEMS bases in Germany, Austria and Liechtenstein are on standby 24/7, and eight HEMS bases provide helicopters with rescue winches. The Austrian ARA Flugrettung with two HEMS bases was integrated into the DRF Group in 2001, and the Northern HeliCopter GmbH (NHC), which provides air and water rescue services, was acquired in 2019. Furthermore, DRF Luftrettung is also a member of the AP<sup>3</sup> Luftrettung network with its HEMS bases in Balzers/Liechtenstein. In addition, DRF Luftrettung also brings back patients from abroad with its own ambulance aircraft.

For the continuous expansion of its vitally important tasks, the non-profit air rescue organisation depends on financial support. Today, DRF e.V. is already supported by well over 400,000 sponsors.

More information online at [www.drf-luftrettung.de](http://www.drf-luftrettung.de)

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