



SAFETY INFORMATION NOTICE

SUBJECT: GENERAL

Operational Conditions - Dangers Associated with Operating a Helicopter on the Ground Without a Qualified Pilot at the Controls

For the attention of	
	

AIRCRAFT CONCERNED	Version(s)	
	Civil	Military
EC120	B	
AS350	B, BA, BB, B1, B2, B3, D	
AS355	E, F, F1, F2, N, NP	
EC130	B4, T2	
SA365 / AS365	C, C1, C2, C3, N, N1, N2, N3	
EC155	B, B1	
SA330	J	
SA341	G	
SA342	J	
ALOUETTE II	313B, 3130, 318B, 318C, 3180	
ALOUETTE III	316B, 316C, 3160, 319B	
LAMA	315B	
EC225	LP	
AS332	C, C1, L, L1, L2	
EC175	B	

This document updates the information provided in Service Letter 1788-62-06. This Service Letter was originally issued in 2006 after several accidents occurred when pilots left their aircraft operating on the ground, unattended, with the rotors turning. Unfortunately, there have been several further accidents since then, and one such accident involved a fatality.

Helicopter certification regulations do not address the situation where an operating helicopter is left unattended on the ground i.e., without a qualified pilot at the controls. This situation is governed rather by rules which can vary greatly depending upon policies and procedures deemed acceptable by the appropriate airworthiness authority. Because it is not the responsibility of Airbus Helicopters to define such policies or procedures, Airbus Helicopters will remove the following wording from all applicable aircraft Flight Manuals: "Unless otherwise specified in applicable operational rules, one pilot should be at the controls as soon as the rotors turn until flight ends and the rotors are fully stopped."

Although this wording will be removed from the applicable aircraft Flight Manuals, Airbus Helicopters continues to believe that leaving a helicopter operating on the ground without a qualified pilot at the controls can be dangerous. This situation can result in damage to the helicopter and/or to other property, serious bodily injury, or death. Consequently, Airbus Helicopters maintains that safety is greatly enhanced if there is always a qualified pilot at the controls of a helicopter whenever it is operating and the rotors are turning.

Because flight safety is the top priority of Airbus Helicopters, we would again like to remind all operators and crewmembers that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has prepared regulations which contain operational instructions stating that helicopter rotors must not be turning under power without a qualified person at the controls. Annex 6, Operation of Aircraft, states in part:

Section II, International Commercial Air Transport, chapter 2 Flight operations:

2.2.4.2 A helicopter rotor shall not be turned under power, for the purpose of flight, without a qualified pilot at the controls.

Section III, International General Aviation, chapter 2 Flight operations:

2.17 Instruction - general

A helicopter rotor shall not be turned under power for the purpose of flight without a qualified pilot at the controls.

Because airworthiness authorities can authorize the operation of helicopters on the ground without a qualified pilot at the controls, we urge all operators to seek guidance from the appropriate authorities before conducting such operations. Airbus Helicopters, however, continues to believe that a qualified pilot should always be at the controls of the helicopter when the rotors start to turn until the flight ends and the rotors are fully stopped.