



SAFETY ALERT 2019-01

Issue 01

Date of Issue: 07th July 2019

SUBJECT:

USE OF SUPPLEMENTAL RESTRAINTS IN HELICOPTER DOORS OPEN/OFF FLIGHT

REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS:

1. <https://ntsb.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/mr20180319.aspx>
2. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-03-15/helicopter-trade-group-has-fought-open-door-tours-for-years>
3. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/03/26/2018-06096/doors-off-and-open-door-flight-prohibition-emergency-restriction-prohibition-order>
4. <https://ad.easa.europa.eu/ad/2018-16>

REASON:

On 11th March 2018, a US Registered Airbus Helicopter was operated on doors off flight where the on-board passengers wore harnesses that facilitate their free movement within the cabin. The Harness System was provided to ensure the Passengers did not fall out of the aircraft.

During the flight, the aircraft experienced a loss of power resulting in the aircraft impacting the river. Subsequently, the aircraft rolled over and all the passengers perished. It is assumed that the supplemental restraints used by the operator may have delayed or prevented a quick release and as a result the passengers could not evacuate the aircraft after landing on water.

While the fatalities on March 11, 2018, involved an aircraft impacting water, passengers could face a similar hazard in other emergency situations, such as an aircraft fire on ground.

Helicopters are certified for Doors-off (or open) flights and, in the UAE, mostly on Aerial Work flights (Photography and Filming).

For the purpose of this Safety Alert, the term passenger means any person carried on board for reward or hire or any other person even if they conduct a specialised task from the cabin.

CAR part IV CAR Ops 3 requires the following:

- Use of Seat Belts under CAR Ops 3.730 – Seats, Seats Safety Belts, Harness and Child Restraint devices
- CAR Ops 3.630 General Introduction requires the use of approved equipment. Which means a Supplemental Restraint system would require an acceptance from the GCAA. Further, the GCAA will not approve use of supplemental restraint systems without a quick release mechanism.
- CAR Ops 3.005 (c) mandates the requirement to operate within the approved limitations contained in the Helicopter Flight Manual and Certificate of Airworthiness.



- Requirement of Operational Procedures concerning use of equipment.
- Requirements of Passenger Briefing and demonstration including Exit Procedures and the use of Equipment required during an Emergency.
- Use of Seat belts in various phases of flights.

In this backdrop, this Safety Alert intends to stress on the importance of reviewing the mitigations in place to control the risks arising from the following events, on Certified UAE Helicopter Operations using UAE registered helicopters for doors off flights:

- Passengers and objects falling out of the Helicopter in flight
- Passenger Evacuation during emergencies
- Impact during landing

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation No. 1:

All Operators conducting Door Open/Off Operations should review the Equipment, Operations Procedures, Training Programmes and Risk Assessment to ensure that they are operating under the prescribed regulations and, in particular, regarding the use of restraint systems which can be released quickly without impeding the egress during an emergency.

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