



Civil Aviation Authority
SAFETY DIRECTIVE
 Number: SD–2015/002



Issued: 14 July 2015

Offshore Helicopter Operations – Vibration Health Monitoring

At Annex 1 to this Safety Directive is an Operational Directive mandating action that is required to retain an acceptable level of safety. The Operational Directive is issued in accordance with Article 15 of the Air Navigation Order 2009.

Recipients must ensure that this Directive is copied to all members of their staff who need to take appropriate action or who may have an interest in the information (including any 'in-house' or contracted maintenance organisation and relevant outside contractors).

Applicability:	
Aerodromes:	Not primarily affected
Air Traffic:	Not primarily affected
Airspace:	Not primarily affected
Airworthiness:	Not primarily affected
Flight Operations:	All AOC Helicopter Operators Conducting Offshore Operations
Licensed Personnel:	Not primarily affected

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Safety Directive (SD) promulgates the Operational Directive (see [Annex 1](#)) issued by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on 14 July 2015 and is applicable to operators conducting offshore Commercial Air Transport (CAT) operations.
- 1.2 'Offshore operation' means a helicopter operation that has a substantial proportion of any flight conducted over open sea areas to or from an offshore location for the purpose of:
 - (i) the support of offshore oil, gas and mineral exploration, production, storage and transport;
 - (ii) sea-pilot transfer; or
 - (iii) the support of offshore wind turbines and other renewable energy sources.

2 Background

- 2.1 Under article 6(4) of the Cover Regulation to [Regulation \(EU\) No. 965/2012](#) (the Air Operations Regulation), States may continue to impose additional national requirements for offshore operations including equipment requirements. Under the ANO articles 37, 115 and Schedule 4, operators of UK registered helicopters with a maximum approved passenger seating configuration of more than nine and operating in a hostile environment have been required to fit a Vibration Health Monitoring (VHM) system. Such systems must also be operated in accordance with procedures approved by the CAA and are particularly relevant to offshore operations. The ANO has been amended so that these requirements do not apply to aircraft operating under Part-CAT of the Air Operations Regulation.

- 2.2 In order to continue to require the fitment and operation of VHM equipment for helicopters conducting CAT offshore operations, pending the implementation of an amendment to the Air Operations Regulation expected in approximately 2018, the annexed Operational Directive has been issued. It directs that, pending the amendment, VHM equipment continues to be required and operated under approved procedures.

3 Queries

- 3.1 Any queries or requests for further guidance from AOC holders as a result of this communication should be addressed to the assigned Flight Operations Inspector in the first instance.
- 3.2 Otherwise, queries should be addressed to the ISPOperationsManagementTeam@caa.co.uk.

4 Cancellation

- 4.1 This Directive will remain in force until revoked by the CAA.

Annex 1 Operational Directive

Applicability and action required

- 1 The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), in exercise of its powers under article 15 of the Air Navigation Order 2009, directs the operator of any helicopter registered in the United Kingdom to ensure that:
 - (a) when flying:
 - (i) for the purpose of commercial air transport;
 - (ii) with a maximum operational passenger seating configuration of more than nine;
 - (iii) on and offshore operation; and
 - (iv) operating in a hostile environment;the helicopter is equipped with a Vibration Health Monitoring (VHM) system capable of monitoring the vibration of critical helicopter rotor and rotor drive system components; and
 - (b) on a flight on which a VHM system is required to be carried by paragraph 1(a) that system is operated in accordance with procedures approved by the CAA.

Reason for issue

- 2 The reason for the issue of this Operational Directive is because the CAA considers that it is in the interests of safe operations that UK registered helicopters conducting offshore operations in a hostile environment continue to be fitted with VHM equipment.

Definitions

- 3 In this Directive:
 - (a) 'Hostile environment' means an environment in which:
 - (i) a safe forced landing cannot be accomplished because the surface is inadequate; or
 - (ii) the helicopter occupants cannot be adequately protected from the elements; or
 - (iii) search and rescue response and capability is not provided consistent with anticipated exposure; or
 - (iv) there is an unacceptable risk of endangering persons or property on the ground;
 - (b) 'Maximum operational passenger seating configuration' means the maximum passenger seating capacity of an individual aircraft, excluding crew seats, established for operational purposes and specified in the operations manual;
 - (c) 'Offshore operation' means a helicopter operation that has a substantial proportion of any flight conducted over open sea areas to or from an offshore location for the purpose of:
 - (i) the support of offshore oil, gas and mineral exploration, production, storage and transport;
 - (ii) sea-pilot transfer; or
 - (iii) the support of offshore wind turbines and other renewable energy sources.
 - (d) 'Offshore location' means a facility intended to be used for helicopter operations on either:

- (i) an offshore installation or a renewable energy installation as defined in the **Civil Aviation Act 1982**; or
- (ii) floating structures or vessels.

Duration

- 5 This Directive comes into force on 14 July 2015 and will remain in force until revoked by the CAA.