Maritime Helicopters

April Quality & Safety Notes

Quality AND Safety

Okay, Quality is back in the title. And there are a few happenings that I'd like to discuss where Quality and Safety nearly run right into each other. This April Safety letter is a little late in distribution of course, I suppose I could have combined it with May's letter, but May will be a pretty specific tasking for everyone. I have an initial draft of a new station checklist for quality AND Safety purposes that I will be sending out this month for your comments. But, I digress…let's move on.

Alyeska Pipeline Service Company Rules

Several weeks ago we had to send one of our mechanics up to Pump Station #4 to assist in some repairs. He drove up to the Pump Station ***without*** contacting Alyeska on the ARTS (Alyeska Radio Telephone System) radio. No issues, right? Well, no issues because he never entered the accountability system within Alyeska. Once ON the pump station, he badged in so he was in Alyeska's oversight. On the way back, he was asked to continue badging in and out of each successive pump station which he didn't do. So we had to answer a customer complaint.

Alyeska's SA-38 Safety Manual States:

Vehicles traveling along TAPS will be monitored as follows:

A. The purpose of monitoring TAPS travel is to reduce risk to travelers by ensuring personnel safely reach their destination and to make certain a prompt response occurs in the event of an incident where personnel cannot make radio/phone contact.

   Vehicle operators are required to check-in from departure location, stop at each pump station or response/maintenance base that falls between travel destinations

Our compliance with this policy, as part of the Alyeska contract is **Quality** based. We signed a contract, so their policies become regulatory. We do it because we said we would. Please, if you are driving the Pipeline, be aware of the Alyeska policies and comply. It takes about 5-10 minutes at the pump stations to drive up to the gate, badge in and badge out and continue on your way.

The **SAFETY** part of this policy is that Alyeska is controlling the rate of travel on the Dalton Highway. The speed limit is 50mph up there (which is more than generous). If you must drive up there, watch the speed! Watch the truckers! Watch the road shoulders!

Summertime Safety!

I was digging through my personal survival bag the other day, and finding what did and didn't need to be there. The Alaska statutes are so minimal in their requirements…The snowshoes can come out of the aircraft as of April 1, (except for Alyeska) and the mosquito gear and rain gear become preferential to the big parkas. Remember that most of the hypothermia cases, even in Alaska, are related to being wet or damp with only moderate temperatures. Whether flying or driving, I would seriously consider having rain gear with me all of the time here in our big WET state. And then fill the pockets of that raingear with lighters, snacks, a knife, and a bottle of water or two, then keep that raingear close at hand.

From the Alaska Statutes…Summer Food for each occupant sufficient to sustain life for two weeks, one axe or hatchet ,one first aid kit, one pistol, revolver, shotgun or rifle and ammunition for same one small gill net and an assortment of tackle such as hooks, flies, lines, sinkers, etc. one knife, two small boxes of matches one mosquito headset for each occupant two small signaling devices such as colored smoke bombs, railroad fuses or very pistol shells, in sealed metal containers.

Obviously the most debate in this list comes from the firearm. Don't assume that you do or don't have to carry a firearm, just talk to Dave Jones or Dave Buzga about the mission you are on, and whether they think a firearm might be a good idea. Alyeska has strict control policies on firearms so before you do any Pipeline work, you need to be aware of those.

My last word on summer Alaska survival? **DEET!!**

Incident Reporting March/April

Warmer Temps!

Along with the summer safety discussion, we have to discuss the weather changes and what it does to the aircraft.

We had a Bell 407 engine over temperature incident this month. The pilot was attempting to cross a portion of the Brooks Range at over 7,000'. The snow baffles are still on up there, and probably will stay on for a few more weeks! So temperature limits would be foremost in all of our 20/20 hindsight as we look at this event. At climb power of 84% torque and 80 knots, the aircraft entered the 5 minute, time limited range (727.1-779 degrees) and stayed there for over the five minutes, recording an exceedance of 28 seconds (5 minute and 28 seconds in the time limited range).

Yes, there are times in Alaska, with our bright, low sun, that the caution panel can seem to disappear, but the check instrument light is only one indicator of a possible impending exceedance. Plan you flying according to the higher ambient temperatures this summer and continue to crosscheck your Engine Temperature, Torque and Gas Producer speed to avoid one or more exceedance.

This aircraft ended up having a crack in the combustion liner which had to be replaced.

Bell 407 FADEC Degrade Cautions

Twice this month, B407, 308MH has had FADEC Degrade cautions come on during the start sequence. The first time, at one of the AT&T hilltop sites, the pilot attempted a start and the FADEC degrade illuminated at ground idle. The pilot contacted Fairbanks maintenance lead and together they went through the process of pulling up the fault, which happened to be a Soft, Start Fault. Still, if that FADEC Degrade light is on, you can't take off. Even if you can get the aircraft started! So, after shutting down all power and attempting a second time, the FADEC light stayed off. With direction from Maintenance AND Operations, the aircraft was flown back to Fairbanks.

Maintenance replace the relay for the auto relight system (1K3)and the aircraft was behaving itself until…While attempting a start a few days later, when the throttle was initially placed to ground idle, the FADEC Degrade came on again.

If you said, "don't fly it" you would be correct here. Once again, several calls to Maintenance in Fairbanks, and calls to Ops, the fault was recorded and cleared (remember that if the Degrade light is on BEFORE the start, that it is from the PREVIOUS flight). Once power was removed and the start attempted again, the aircraft was started normally with no lights and flown home. This time the igniter relay (2K4) was changed and the aircraft seems to be operating normally.

So why do we talk about these subtle faults and their ability to wreck our mission days? FADEC is great, right? Near automatic starts and continuous engine monitoring are fantastic, but as with a lot of automation, FADEC can give indications that may or may not be major issues. The idea here is to NOT second guess them. Go by the book, shutdown the aircraft (or don't start it) if you have issues or concerned with FADEC indications, and contact Maintenance AND Operations!

Please take the time to reread your FADEC Emergency Procedures and discuss these faults or degrades with each other in the field.

May Letter:

As I mentioned at the beginning, I'll be sending out a new station audit checklist this month. The goal is that that we will have a regular (monthly?) ***auditable*** trail to show outside auditors for our Health, Safety, Environmental & Quality inspections. More to follow!

Dennis

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