



# Maritime Helicopters

## January 2018 Quality & Safety Notes



### Happy New Year

A good year? How do you define a good year in the Quality & Safety Department? No Flight Irregularity Reports? No Ground Occurrence Report? No Audit Findings Whatsoever? No Personal Injuries? No Reports of any kind???

Ahhh, Fantasy Land! What a great place to visit! I'll cut to the chase and tell you that 2017 was a pretty good year in some ways and not such a good year in some others. There is a topic regarding our Safety Management System called "Continuous Improvement". We always have to be seeking ways to make ourselves a safer company in operation and a more quality operation in customer compliance and satisfaction. In 2017, I think our Continuous Improvement was evident. Possibly, because we actually had **more** safety reporting than in 2016.

And that is a good thing. Plain and simple: When we are writing up more reports, we seem to be fixing more things that are wrong. Whether it is audit findings or safety reports, we need to know what is wrong in order to fix it.

Maritime Helicopters had no personal injuries beyond basic first aid in 2017, with no OSHA Recordable Injuries. We had no aircraft accidents and no injuries involving our primary business of moving people around the State of Alaska by helicopter.

### 2018 Flight Irregularity Report Wrap Up

Maritime had a grand total of 38 Flight Irregularity Reports in 2017. That's 14 more reports than in 2014. Which you might think is a bad thing. NOPE! I think we're finally getting to the point where we just might suspect that if we write things up, that we also might get some problems fixed.

We still are having Bell 407 FADEC & Start issues, which account for over a third of our FIRs this year. Within that statistic there are some lessons learned which we should mention. On one aircraft, we had several FIRs for FADEC degrade issues. Several FIRs that is, **before** we had a report that accurately described the details of what was happening. Once one of the pilots actually wrote down some details about the Gas Producer Speeds/Engine Temperatures/Start Times regarding what was leading to the FADEC degrades, then the aircraft was fixed pretty darned quickly.

Another instance in the Engine Start issues was that FIRs were not being filled, even though the Bell 407 in question had numerous start problems through the summer and early fall. Again, once an FIR was filled with specific details on the nature of the "hotter than normal" starts, a new HMU was installed on the engine and the problem was fixed. We can't let ourselves get so jaded in the flying business that Alternate Starts are the norm and we just live with problems which we should be writing up.

In other areas of the FIRs, we only had two specifically flight related, **human factors** incidents this year. Both led to having to perform investigations on the details due to high cost or property loss. One of these, an engine over-speed was the result of the pilot not being fully familiar with a maintenance procedure. (FADEC Manual Check). It still can't be stressed enough that if you are performing procedures with which you are unfamiliar, STOP, get some instruction or technical help, then proceed. Assume the worst will happen if you don't know.

The other human factors incident in 2017 had to do with a poor weather decision leading to the dropping of a sling load. This is Alaska folks. The forecasting will always be a bit lacking. If you encounter unforecast weather, turn around and go back to where the weather is better, or **land!** We probably got lucky on this one.

On to more of the FIR summary: we had only five engine or transmission chips this year. And only one of those on the Bell 412 was of any real consequence. That resulted in the #1 engine and combining gearbox being replaced. Painful in dollars, yes...but it is great that our pilots are performing their emergency procedures correctly and we are fixing and improving our aircraft.

A Bell 206 hydraulic pump failed and caused a customer delay. Great reaction times and fixes on the aircraft there! An ICS/Comm switch failed, an overtemp light came on despite there being no Overtemp. We had one battery fail which was lucky enough to be close to a replacement battery at a remote site to not delay the customer.

A great find on a preflight was an oil cooler fan shaft which was found on a Bell 407 which had to be condemned and a new fan shaft installed. That led to a customer delay, but **did not** lead to a precautionary landing in some remote area with high oil temperatures due to finding the bad shaft on the ground!

## 2018 Ground Occurrence Report Wrap Up

Oddly enough, we had eight ground occurrence reports in 2016 and eight in 2017. I don't have any idea what that means. We did manage to capture enough data on the GORs to correct a few items. The right-hand cowling on the 407s was chaffing the fuel lines, and that was fixed. Through two different GORs, we learned that the float systems on the aircraft **were** a bit more familiar to the Homer mechanics than the Fairbanks crew!

We've now corrected the starter install procedure on the Bell 407 due to a GOR. If you're not aware of that fix, please contact Isaac or Brent.

It seems that most of the GORs had to do with procedural errors...some because of training, some because of incomplete procedures. There was actually only two strictly human error issues in our ground occurrences this year. One, a FOD issue with a plastic cap found in a fuel system which caused no damage. The other had to do with and improper torque-ing of a Bell 206 Tail Rotor Driveshaft which was found by one of our senior mechanics on a daily inspection. (It's always good to have more than one set of eyes in aircraft maintenance when you can!)

While we continue to improve our procedures through our ground occurrence lessons learned, it is good to remember that the GOR program is not just for aircraft related corrective actions! Our shops, driving, and even our offices are never completely safe without constant oversight. Please continue to use the GOR as your method of correcting any of our procedures which need improvement!

## Human Factors & Aviation

We did have a great success in reducing our human factors incidents by more than 50% in 2017. Kudos to all!

## New, New, New Station Checklist.

We've had a lot of discussion about the station checklist and the fact that it is still pretty broad in scope and has many items that are not applicable to different remote sites. For example, the Akutan fuel is provided locally but the truck hasn't been inspected as often as we would inspect our own property and that has led to some problems.

I am modifying the station checklist once more and will include some items like a better review of the monthly Fuel Quality Assurance form. For sites like Akutan that will mean a monthly record of the fuel filter type and change dates. Please go ahead and include that information on the current form at all sites until I get the new form distributed.

If you have items of particular concern that you would want added to the station checklist, please email me at [safety@maritimehelicopters.com](mailto:safety@maritimehelicopters.com)

## Mechanic Toolbox Talks

In order to facilitate a lot of the OSHA/FAA & Maintenance subjects, we're going to again do a "top-of-the-year" refresh to our commitment to the Monday "Toolbox Talks". The frontline supervisors will be working on a list of topics for the 5-10 minute mini-classes to be discussed when laying out the work priorities for the week on Monday morning. Please get with Brent and Isaac if you have subjects that you'd like covered or would like to teach! (Pilots can attend these too!)



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### Incident Reporting for January

#### **FIR: 201801, 1/4/2018/1448: Bell 407, N407RH Unforecast Weather**

Livengood

While returning to Fairbanks, Pilot encountered low ceilings & visibility. Trying the East and West weather routes from Livengood, aircraft experienced icing. PIC returned to RGV65 (Remote Gate Valve) next to Livengood (heat/electric/shelter available). Mechanic was dispatched with vehicle from Fairbanks (with cords, covers, exhaust plugs)

Customer (guard) was returned to Fairbanks with security and pilot returned with mechanic. The following morning, pilot and mechanic returned to the aircraft with a battery cart and pilot returned aircraft to MTF.

#### **FIR: 201802, 1/4/2018-1500: Bell 206L3, 307MH Unforecast Weather**

OP27 to Blair Lakes

Aircraft and two JPARC customers were returning from OP27 when Pilot experienced unforecast weather (last observation was 600' and 10 miles visibility at PAFA) When 20 miles south of Fairbanks, airport went IFR and announced 1/2 mile, freezing fog and indefinite ceiling at 400'. Aircraft diverted to Blair Lakes Range. After phoning Chief Pilot, one more attempt was made when visibility was reported greater than one mile. However, PIC determined that the weather was unsafe and returned to Blair Lakes to R.O.N. Aircraft was returned to Metro Field the next morning.

Both of these FIRs show that the Weather Guessers up here in Alaska can be dead wrong. The 7-8 inches of snow that Fairbanks received on the 15<sup>th</sup> was completely unexpected. I thought the Channel 11 NewsCaster was going to sob on live TV. But just make sure when you hit unforecast weather, that you are making good choices.



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**MARITIME HELICOPTERS  
PUBLICATIONS  
ROUTING MEMORANDUM**

**DATE: 01/18/18**

**TO: All Employees**

**FROM: Quality and safety memo**

**SUBJECT: January Safety memo**

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***Please complete the verification of receipt below and return this form to the Records Department in Fairbanks via email to [faiadmin@maritimehelicopters.com](mailto:faiadmin@maritimehelicopters.com) or by fax to (907)452-4539***

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**BY SIGNING THIS FORM I ACKNOWLEDGE** I have reviewed and will comply with the memo listed above

**EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE**

**DATE**

*Steve Slade*

**01/18/2018**

