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Safety recommendation: AIC 20-R08/19-1001

Addressed to: Niugini Helicopters

Date issued: 12 August 2020

Investigation link: AIC 19-1001

Action status: Active

Introduction

On 11 August 2019, the PNG AIC was informed by Papua New Guinea Air Services Limited (ASL) of an accident involving a Bell 427 helicopter, registered P2-HSG, owned and operated by Niugini Helicopters.

On the same day, PNG instituted an investigation into the occurrence by initially authorising the commencement of the investigation, and the appointment of an Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) in accordance with PNG Legislation, Civil Aviation Act (as amended 2016) and ICAO Annex 13 standards.

Occurrence

On 11 August 2019, at about 11:25 local time (01:25 UTC), a Bell 427 helicopter, registered P2-HSG, owned and operated by Niugini Helicopters, was conducting a VFR flight from Kokopo, East New Britain Province to Kimbe, West New Britain Province, when it impacted the water, over a reef, about 3.1 nm North West of Baluma township.

The pilot, the sole occupant of the helicopter sustained minor injuries and egressed the aircraft. He was reported to have been rescued about 40 minutes after the accident.

Safety deficiency description

The investigation found that the maintenance procedure carried out on the helicopter was not fully complied in accordance with *PNG CAR Part 43*.

After the maintenance, helicopter was released to service under Part 43 section 43.105 paragraph (a) which signifies that all maintenance procedures were satisfactorily met. However, the helicopter required a verification flight to confirm the adjustment yield the target RPM and procedure to release to service for operational flight test as required by section 43.103 was not complied.

Part 43.105 Certifying release-to-service after maintenance

(a) Except as required in paragraph (b), a person who certifies an aircraft or component for release to service after maintenance must record the following information in the appropriate maintenance logbook or worksheet, and the technical log as may be necessary, immediately adjacent to the details of the maintenance that is required to be recorded under rule 43.68—

(1) the person's name; and

(2) the person's signature except if the maintenance logbook or worksheet is in electronic format; and

(3) the person's licence number, certificate number, or authorisation number issued by a Part 145 maintenance organisation; and

(4) the date of entry; and

(5) the following statement of release-to-service if the maintenance logbook, worksheet, or technical log, as the case maybe, does not include a preformatted equivalent statement: "The maintenance recorded has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Papua New Guinea Civil Aviation Rule Part 43 and in respect of that maintenance the (aircraft) (component)* is released to service". *delete as applicable*

Part 43.103 Requirements for certifying release-to-service

(a) A person must not certify an aircraft or aircraft component for release to service after maintenance unless-

(4) if the aircraft has undergone maintenance that may have appreciably affected the flight characteristics or operation of the aircraft, -

(i) a satisfactory operational flight check has been carried out in accordance with rule 91.613 and the completion of the flight check is recorded in the aircraft maintenance logbook or worksheet, and the technical log; or

(ii) ground tests, inspections, or both, show conclusively that the maintenance has not appreciably changed the flight characteristics or substantially affected the flight operation of the aircraft and details of the ground tests and inspections, as the case may be, have been recorded in the aircraft maintenance logbook or worksheet; or

(iii) the release-to-service is for the purpose of performing the operational flight check required under paragraph(a)(4)(i).


After the reviewing the Maintenance Organisation Exposition, Part 5 section 5.8.4 *Maintenance Process* shows that they have a procedure to do test flight after a maintenance is carried out. However, in the section 5.11 *Aircraft Technical Record Control and Release to Service to Procedure* does not have a procedure in place for the certification of lease to service for the operational flight check as stated in the *CAR 43.103 (c)* .

Recommendation number AIC 20-R08/19-1001 to Niugini Helicopters

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Niugini Helicopters should ensure that a procedure is developed and implemented to ensure that aircraft are not released to service until all requirements under their respective manuals and CAR Part 43 are met.

Action requested

The AIC requests that Niugini Helicopters note recommendation *AIC 20-R08/19-1001*, and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date but no later than 10 November 2020, and explain (including with evidence) how Niugini Helicopters has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation. **STATUS: ACTIVE.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hubert Namani', with a large circular flourish at the beginning.

Hubert Namani, LLB

Chief Commissioner

12 August 2020

Niugini Helicopters Limited response

The AIC made a courtesy follow up with Niugini Helicopters Limited (NHL) on the recommendation, on 12 July 2022. However, the AIC has not received a response from NHL to date.

AIC assessment

The AIC notes that NHL has not provided any update for the safety recommendation for the past 12 months.

The AIC has assigned NHL's lack of response to the safety recommendation as *unsatisfactory* rating.

The AIC notes that the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation remains.

The AIC has recorded the **Status of the Recommendation: CLOSED.**



Captain Aria Bouraga, MBE
Acting Chief Commissioner

22 July 2022