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Safety recommendation: AIC 22-R08 / 22-1001

Addressed to: Niugini Aviation Services Limited

Date issued: 10 October 2022

Investigation link: AIC 22-1001

Action status: Issued

Introduction

On 18 January 2022 at 11:20 local time (01:20 UTC), the AIC was notified by NiuSky Pacific Limited via email, of an accident involving a PAC 750XL aircraft, registered P2-BWE, owned and operated by Niugini Aviation Services Limited at Tekin Airstrip, Sandaun Province. The AIC immediately commenced an investigation.

Occurrence

On 18 January 2022, at 09:26 local time (23:26 UTC), a PAC 750XL aircraft, registered P2-BWE owned and operated by Niugini Aviation Services Limited (NASL), was conducting a single pilot VFR¹ charter flight from Kiunga Airport, Western Province to Tekin Airstrip, Sandaun Province, when during the landing roll at Tekin, the aircraft sustained a Main Landing Gear (MLG) collapse and subsequent runway excursion.

There were 8 persons on board the aircraft, one pilot and seven passengers. No injuries were reported. The aircraft sustained substantial.

Safety deficiency description

Training and Competency Manual, section 6.1 (A) (1) (2) requires each pilot acting as pilot-in-command to within the immediately preceding 12 months, pass a check of route and aerodrome proficiency that is administered by a flight examiner and that.

- (i) *consists of at least one flight over one route segment and one or more landings at aerodromes representative of the operations to be flown; and*
- (ii) *establishes that the pilot can satisfactorily perform the duties and responsibilities of a pilot-in-command in air operations appropriate to this Part.*

This Section is in compliance to PNG CAR Part 135.607(a)(1)(i), *Flight Crew Competency Checks* which states;

- a) A holder of an air operator certificate must ensure that —*
 - (1) for each pilot acting as pilot-in-command has, within the immediately preceding 12 months, passed a check of route and aerodrome proficiency that is administered by a flight examiner and that*

¹ Visual Flight Rules

(i) consists of at least one flight over one route segment and one or more landings at aerodromes representative of the operations to be flown; and

According to the Training and Competency Manual, section 5.3.3 'Training at Special Characteristics Aerodromes', a Special Characteristics Aerodrome is identified with the following features;

- 1. One-way landing strip*
- 2. One-way take-off strip*
- 3. Longitudinal surface gradient of more than 1:50 (2.0 %)*
- 4. Uneven longitudinal surface gradient*
- 5. Is subject to wind conditions conducive to the formation of subsidence or wind shear*
- 6. Is subject to excessive cross wind conditions for the aeroplane type in use*
- 7. Is subject to excessive tail wind conditions for the aeroplane type in use.*
- 8. Special knowledge required to execute a baulked approach*

For the Special Characteristics Aerodrome, a pilot is required to demonstrate to a Check Captain or Line Training Captain the ability to land and take off an aeroplane with an operating weight equivalent to the maximum permissible weight for an aerodrome.

The investigation identified that Tekin Airstrip falls under a Special Characteristic Aerodrome.

There is a variation to the route and aerodrome qualification training as stated in section 5.3.5 (3) of the Operator's Training and Competency Manual.

At the discretion of the Flight Operations Manager, the training for route and aerodrome qualification may be reduced when;

- 1. the pilot requiring qualification has in excess of 500 Hours experience of flying in Papua New Guinea;*
- 2. the aerodrome concerned is not one that would come under the description of having special characteristics;*
- 3. the aerodrome is listed in the Route Intelligence Manual and the pilot has studied the details relevant to it and in AIP AGA.*

Therefore, the pilot had to be checked into the Aerodrome before operating into Tekin Airstrip, however, during the interview, the Operator informed the investigation that the Flight Operations Manager used his discretion to allow the pilot not to undergo the aerodrome check into Tekin Airstrip. The Operator also informed the investigation that the FOM's decision was based on the pilot's previous flying experience.

Recommendation number AIC 22-R08/22-1001 to Niugini Aviation Services Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Niugini Aviation Services Limited, should ensure that all flight crew undergo and complete Route and Aerodrome checks to comply with the Operators Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and PNG CAR Part 135.607(a)(1)(i).

Action Requested

The AIC requests that Niugini Air Services Limited note recommendation AIC 22-R08/22-1001 and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date and explain (including with evidence) how NASL has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.


Capt. Aria Bouraga, MBE
Acting Chief Commissioner

Niugini Aviation Services Limited response to Safety Recommendation AIC 22-R08/22-1001

The AIC did not receive a response from Niugini Aviation Service Limited (NASL) within the provided 90 days period.

The AIC made a courtesy follow up on the recommendation, on 2 May 2023. On 3 May 2023, NASL provided a response to the *Safety Recommendation AIC 22-R08/22-1001*, stating that Niugini Aviation Training is covered comprehensively in the *NASL Training & Competency Manual Section 6.1 (A)(i-ii)*. NASL also stated that ‘these processes are covered and documented on the respective flight crew training forms.’

In their response, NASL also provided copies of the following forms:

- *NA216 Initial Training & Record Form,*
- *NA226 Flight Crew Competency Check Form (Initial and recurrent-CAR 135.607) /Base Check (CAR 61.39),*
- *NA222 PAC750/C206 Line Competency Form, and*
- *NA224 Route & Aerodrome Proficiency Check (Line check) (Initial and recurrent – CR 135.607)*

On Friday 11 May 2023, NASL provided completed and signed copies of pilot check forms. However, they did not fully address the recommendation. Specifically, that NASL should ensure that all flight crew undergo and complete *Route and Aerodrome* checks to comply with the *NASL Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* and *PNG CAR Part 135.607(a)(1)(i)*. The *NASL SOPs* require pilots to be checked into airstrips having special characteristics including one-way airstrips. None of the evidence supplied on the completed forms constituted compliance with the *SOP* with respect to *Special Characteristic* airstrips.

PNG Accident Investigation Commission assessment

The AIC reviewed the Niugini Aviation Service Limited (NASL) response to address the deficiencies identified in *Safety Recommendation AIC 22-R08/22-1001* and notes that the NASL response has not addressed the specific safety deficiencies identified in *Safety Recommendation AIC 22-R08/22-1001*.

The AIC assigned this response as **unsatisfactory** rating and the safety deficiency risk remains.

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



Capt. Aria Bouraga, MBE
Acting Chief Commissioner

12 May 2023