

## Follow-up Action on Occurrence Report

*ACCIDENT TO EC225 LP SUPER PUMA, G-REDU, AT NORTH SEA CENTRAL AREA ON 18 FEBRUARY 2009*

**CAA FACTOR NUMBER** : F9/2009  
**FACTOR PUBLICATION DATE** : 12 August 2009  
**OPERATOR** : Bond Offshore Helicopters  
**CAA OCCURRENCE NUMBER** : 2009/01483  
**AAIB REPORT** : S4/2009

### SYNOPSIS

From AAIB Report:

The helicopter was approaching its destination, the ETAP oil platform located 132nm east of Aberdeen, at night, when it was seen by observers on the platform to strike the surface of the sea. The helicopter remained afloat, all the occupants escaped into two life rafts and all were subsequently rescued. Although the accident was observed from the ETAP platform and a Search and Rescue (SAR) operation was initiated immediately, it was some time before the passengers and crew were located.

Following the arrival of the first SAR helicopter in the vicinity of the ETAP platform, 27 minutes elapsed before the occupied life rafts were identified approximately 400m from the platform. The search was hampered by the darkness, fog and the weakness / absence of homing signals on the emergency frequencies 121.5MHz and 243.0MHz, although survival equipment designed to transmit on both these frequencies had been activated by the crew. The life rafts were finally located by a combination of aircraft weather radar, visual guidance from personnel on the ETAP platform and a weak signal on 121.5MHz.

The initial details of this accident were described in AAIB Special Bulletin S3/2009.

### FOLLOW UP ACTION

The four Safety Recommendations made by the AAIB following their investigation are reproduced below together with the CAA's responses.

#### Recommendation 2009-064

It is recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority review the carriage and use in commercial air transport helicopters of any radio location devices which do not form part of the aircraft's certificated equipment.

#### CAA Response

The CAA accepts this Recommendation. The CAA has reviewed the carriage and use of radio location devices, such as Personal Locator Beacons (PLB), in commercial air transport helicopters which do not form part of the aircraft's required equipment. The review has led to the development of CAA guidance material, already circulated

to industry under cover of AIRCOM 2009/08, that enables operators to determine whether specific devices are acceptable for carriage.

Acceptance of these devices is predicated on establishing a low risk of their inadvertent activation or by on-aircraft testing to show that transmissions from such devices do not cause interference with the aircraft or its systems.

These radio location devices are not intended for use on board the aircraft, being part of the offshore industry's overall safety strategy, and CAA's responsibilities are limited to the determination that the carriage and use of such devices does not cause interference with the aircraft or its systems. However, the CAA recognises that such devices may be used as a locating device for search and rescue purposes and has therefore issued guidance to operators to help ensure that transmissions from these devices do not compromise the operation of any Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs) required by the relevant aviation operating rules.

In addition, the CAA has issued a Flight Operations Communication (FODCOM 22/2009) which highlights the need for training in the use of emergency equipment such as ELT/PLB devices.

**CAA Status - Closed**

### **Recommendation 2009-065**

It is recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority advise the European Aviation Safety Agency of the outcome of the review on the carriage and use in commercial air transport helicopters of any radio location devices which do not form part of the aircraft's certificated equipment.

#### **CAA Response**

The CAA accepts this Recommendation and has written to EASA on the subject of PLBs and provided a copy of both the AIRCOM and the FODCOM.

**CAA Status - Closed**

### **Recommendation 2009-066**

It is recommended that European Aviation Safety Agency require manufacturers of Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs)/Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) units to add details, where absent, of the correct use of the antenna to the instructions annotated on the body of such beacons.

#### **CAA Response**

This Recommendation is not addressed to the CAA.

**CAA Status - Closed**

### **Recommendation 2009-067**

It is recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority ensure that all aspects of Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs)/Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) operation, particularly correct deployment of the antenna, are included and given appropriate emphasis in initial and recurrent commercial air transport flight crew training, as applicable.

#### **CAA Response**

The CAA accepts this Recommendation and has reminded operators that it is their responsibility to provide training to aircraft crews which should include relevant aspects of ELT/PLB use. The CAA has published FODCOM 22/2009 which highlights the pertinent circumstances of this accident and reminds operators to ensure that appropriate aspects of ELT/PLB operation are included and given due emphasis in initial and recurrent crew training. This includes specific guidance for flight crew training. The text of the FODCOM will eventually be included in CAP 768.

**CAA Status - Closed**