

Follow-up Action on Occurrence Report

SERIOUS INCIDENT TO SIKORSKY S-76C, G-WIWI, AT PRIVATE LANDING SITE,
PEASMARSH, EAST SUSSEX ON 03 MAY 2012

**FACTOR F1/2015 has been reissued to reflect the CAA's revised response to
Safety Recommendation 2014-035**

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AAIB REPORT : Bulletin 12/2014

SYNOPSIS

From AAIB Report

The descent from above the minimum safe altitude was conducted into an area with limited visual references, and which was affected by reduced visibility and low cloud. The helicopter was therefore brought close to terrain in an environment in which situational awareness could easily become degraded. The decision to execute an orbit around the landing site, in the circumstances pertaining, further increased the chances of situational awareness becoming degraded, whilst the helicopter was at low height above unlit and undulating terrain. In the course of the orbit, the commander became spatially disorientated and the helicopter descended towards the tops of trees.

The investigation identified the following contributory factors: 1. Although the operator had identified that night-time approaches to private landing sites were a significant safety concern, action had not been taken to eliminate or mitigate the risks involved. 2. Although the EGPWS issued warnings that the helicopter was approaching contact with the ground, the flight crew were not aware of these warnings.

FOLLOW UP ACTION

Recommendation 2014-035

It is recommended that the Civil Aviation Authority review the regulations that permit a helicopter engaged in public transport operations to descend below MSA for the purpose of landing, when flying in instrument meteorological conditions but not on a published approach procedure.

CAA Response

The CAA accepts this recommendation and has reviewed the regulations associated with public transport helicopter operations that permit descent below MSA for the purpose of landing when in instrument meteorological conditions. The CAA intends to liaise with industry by March 2015 and develop amendments to the Rules of the Air that address the minimum heights for aircraft flying under the Instrument Flight Rules. As these regulations are now covered by the Standardised European Rules of the Air (SERA), the CAA will make any proposals to EASA for consideration of change under their rule making process. When the amendments have been developed, the CAA will consider issuing a Safety Directive to implement the necessary changes.

CAA Status - Open

Revised response to Recommendation 2014-035

The CAA have had initial liaison with industry through the BHA and subsequently have identified, from the AAIB recommendation SR 2014-35 and emerging findings following another recent helicopter accident, that a broader and deeper review of IFR flying outside controlled airspace in general is advised. It is intended that a multi-disciplined review be initiated, potentially involving industry participation, to review the whole subject and produce recommendations and suggested courses of action. Target date for completion of the review is now 01 October 2015.

CAA Status - Open