



Safety Information Bulletin

Operations

SIB No.: 2017-03

Issued: 06 March 2017

Subject: Helicopter Stabilised Hover Checks Before Departure

Ref. Publications:

- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) [16016](#), dated 15 November 2016.
- [EHST Helicopter Flight Instructor Manual](#), Chapters 2, 28, 29, as well as Chapters 11a, 11b, 11c, 12 and 13.
- [FAA Helicopter Flying Handbook](#), Chapters 9 and 10.

Applicability:

All Rotorcraft operators

Description:

The FAA conducted a review of helicopter incidents and accidents over the past five years, which identified several accidents where a loss-of-control (LOC) was encountered immediately after take-off while light on the skids/gear, or from other issues caused by missed checklist items. As a consequence of this review, the FAA issued SAFO 16016.

Following publication of SAFO 16016, EASA also conducted an analysis of 32 known occurrences over the past five years involving LOC during take-off. The results of this analysis support the conclusions from the FAA review.

At this time, the safety concern described in this SIB does not warrant the issuance of an operational directive under Regulation (EU) [965/2012](#), Annex II, ARO.GEN.135(c).

Recommendation(s):

EASA supports the actions contained in FAA SAFO 16016, and recommends pilots to take the following actions before and during the take-off sequence:

- (1) Ensure the take-off area is sufficient for the conditions and the capabilities of the helicopter, as well as free and clear of debris that could pose a hazard to a helicopter.
- (2) Use an appropriate checklist, to ensure the helicopter is properly configured for take-off.
- (3) Unless not possible due to environmental conditions (such as the possibility of whiteout, brownout, etc.), perform a hover check prior to take-off. If a take-off from the surface is required, perform the hover check, land, and then depart from the surface, taking the helicopter's performance into consideration.

This is information only. Recommendations are not mandatory.



- (4) When performing a vertical take-off, raise the helicopter vertically from the surface to a normal hovering altitude (2 to 3 feet) with minimal lateral or longitudinal movement, maintaining a constant heading. If at any time during initial collective pull, the helicopter does not appear to be stabilized, abort the take-off by smoothly reducing the collective.

EASA also recommends pilots to take the following action:

- (5) Review, and ensure familiarity with, the EHEST Helicopter Flight Instructor Manual, Chapters 2, 28, 29, as well as Chapters 11a, 11b, 11c, 12 and 13.

Contact(s):

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