


SAFETY ALERT



ExxonMobil – Aviation Services

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SAFETY ALERT No.:	FSS-0014	ISSUE DATE: October 22, 2007
SUBJECT:	Helicopter Night Medical Evacuation Flights	
Aircraft Type:	All Helicopters	
Geographic Area:	World Wide	
Operation Type:	Night Helicopter Flights	

Details:

An industry accident on October 13, 2007 involving a night medical evacuation flight highlighted the potential risks associated with these flights. Although the cause of the accident is unknown, there were six fatalities.

Night flights should not be conducted for purposes other than life threatening medical emergencies unless an acceptable Risk Analysis has been conducted in accordance with the EM Aviation Operations Guide.

The purpose of this Safety Alert is to promote discussion between on-site Company management, medical personnel, aviation contractor management and appropriate Company aviation representatives to ensure affiliates have a robust approval process in place prior to initiating night medical evacuation flights.

Background: Compared to daylight operations, flying at night involves greater risk. Some of the elements comprising this risk are:

- decreased sensory indicators available therefore increased dependence on instruments;
 - certain equipment failures are more critical
 - aircraft equipment fit and crew proficiency in use must be considered
- higher than normal demand on crew coordination;
 - increased responsibility of non flying pilot to "monitor and backup" flying pilot
- demands increased pilot proficiency and recency;
 - pilots must train each 90 days in role specific environment
- possibility of pilot disorientation is increased due to lack of visual cues;
 - especially important during transition to "visual" conditions
- night emergency landing on water is very difficult and degree of success is low;
 - lack of horizon and texture of surface makes successful landing difficult
- ability of local Search and Rescue (SAR) sources to effectively mount a rescue at night is more difficult and more dependent on environmental conditions and available signals from downed personnel

.....Since 1992, only 3% of the worldwide OGP-hours were flown at night - BUT 10% of all *fatal* OGP documented helicopter accidents occurred at night.....

Over the period, the statistics reveal:

- 22 helicopter accidents occurred at night, 13 of which involved fatalities (59%)
- 42 lives lost

NONE of these flights were flown in support of life threatening medical situations and could have waited until first light for successful completion.

EM Aviation Services recommends discussing the subject of this Safety Alert at offshore safety meetings.

"Nobody Gets Hurt"