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Safety recommendation: AIC 24-R05/23-1006

Addressed to: Heli Solutions Limited

Date issued: 4 July 2024

Investigation link: AIC 23-1006

Action status: Issued

Introduction

On 22 September 2023, at 15:15 local time (05:15 UTC), a Bell 407 helicopter registered P2-HSN, owned and operated by Heli Solutions Limited was conducting a VFR passenger charter flight from Simbai to Kovon, Madang Province, when during its hover to land on a field at Gebrau village in the Kovon LLG, the helicopter's rotor blades struck a tree.

There were six persons on board the aircraft: the Pilot, a Load Master and four adult passengers. The pilot sustained minor injuries while the Load Master and passengers sustained severe injuries. The aircraft was destroyed.

Safety deficiency description

The investigation identified that operational, safety and quality procedures required to be carried out before operating ad hoc or non-routine charter flights were not carried out to mitigate the risks associated with operating the flight, specifically to Gebrau before commencing the flight.

According to the Operator's *Operations Manual, Section 8.4, Appendix D, 'Helicopter Landing Site Management'*, prior to commencement of any operation, the Flight Operations Manager must conduct a landing site assessment and incorporate the findings into the operational risk assessment and Journey Plan. This assessment should include all likely landing areas including diversion landing points.

Section 8.4.4 '*Ad hoc Landing Sites*' of the *Operations Manual* also states that for Ad hoc use of a helicopter landing site, the Accepted Operator shall conduct a review of the site and ensure it meets the requirements of CASA PNG AIP/AD-6.

The Company Risk Assessment Process *in the Operator's Safety Management System Manual* states that to make our operations safer we need to know what could cause injury or damage and how likely it is to happen and how serious the result could be. As a component of our continuous safety improvement process, we maintain an occurrence/hazard reporting system (reactive/proactive) to collect and analyse data and carry out investigations. The internal '*Risk Assessment' Form HSS02*' is to be used by all personnel when a new task is undertaken that is not familiar to them. '*Risk Assessment' Form HSS02*' is used to calculate the risk rating. In considering the identified hazards, a strategy is implemented, and action taken.

The Journey Management Plan will take into consideration, but not limited to the following prior to the aircraft and crew being committed:

- The purpose and objective of the flight
- Aircraft type
- Pilot qualifications and recent experience
- Pilot flight and duty time limitations
- Route details
- Sector flight times
- Hazards, weather and available daylight

There was no Helicopter Landing Site assessment carried out and incorporated into the operational risk/threat assessment to mitigate the risks associated with operating the flight, specifically to Gebrau and no record of the Journey Plan to ascertain if the field was suitable for landing and lift off. The investigation determined from evidence gathered onsite and offsite that the landing area was not suitable for landing and lifting off and did not meet the requirements of CASA PNG AIP/AD-6.

Recommendation number AIC 24-R05/23-1006 to Heli Solutions Limited

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that Heli Solutions Limited ensure that before commencing Ad hoc or non-routine flights to unfamiliar Aerodromes/Helicopter Landing Sites/areas, the following operational and safety procedures should be conducted.

- Journey Management Plan
- Operational Risk Assessment
- Landing Site Assessment

The procedures must be completed and recorded accordingly to ensure risks are mitigated to as low as reasonably practicable.

Action requested

The AIC requests that the Heli Solutions Limited note recommendation *AIC 24-R05/23-1006* and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date, but no later than 2 October 2024 and explain including with evidence how Heli Solutions Limited has addressed the safety deficiency identified in the safety recommendation.



Maryanne J Wal
Chief Commissioner

Heli Solutions Ltd response to Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R05/23-1006

The AIC did not receive a response from Heli Solutions Limited within the 90-day period specified under *ICAO Annex 13 paragraph 6.10*.

On 4 November 2024, the AIC a courtesy follow - up email to the operator; however, no response was received.

Subsequently two additional follow-up emails were sent on 7 and 14 May 2025, respectively.

On 14 May 2025, Heli Solutions Ltd responded to Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R05/23-1006, advising that they would provide feedback.

AIC assessment to Heli Solutions Ltd Response

The AIC has assessed the lack of safety action by Heli Solutions Limited in response to Safety Recommendation *AIC 24-R05/23-1006* and has assigned the safety recommendation “*Unable to Assess*” rating. The safety risk remains.

The AIC has recorded the Status of the safety recommendation as : **MONITOR**

Maryanne J Wal

Chief Commissioner

28 May 2025

Heli Solutions Ltd response to Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R05/23-1006

On 11 September 2025, Heli Solutions Limited responded to Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R05/23-1006 and provided a document titled “*Pilot Information Guide*” (*PIG*) for helicopters. This document serves a similar purpose to the “*Route Guide*” used for fixed-wing aircraft. Heli Solutions Limited advised that the document would be submitted to CASA PNG for approval.

On 16 October 2025, Heli Solutions Limited advised the AIC that they had revised their Operations Manual in accordance with CASA PNGs rule change, adopting the 4-part manual structure. The “*Pilot Information Guide*” forms part of this revised manual set. The operator added that once the manual is submitted to and accepted by CASA PNG, a stamped copy will be forwarded to the AIC.

AIC assessment to Heli Solutions Ltd Response

The AIC has assessed Heli Solutions Limited’s response to Safety Recommendation AIC 24-R05/23-1006 and has assigned the recommendation a “**Satisfactory Intent**” rating.

The AIC has recorded the **status of the recommendation as: MONITOR.**



Maryanne J Wal

Chief Commissioner

23 October 2025