GR No. 9 Helicopter Emergency Escape Facilities

(Previously Issued as Airworthiness Notice No. 27, Issue 3, 29 October 2001.)

1 Applicability

1.1 This Generic Requirement is applicable to those UK registered helicopters required to carry the equipment specified in the Air Navigation Order 2009 (as amended) Schedule 4 paragraph 4(13) (d) (v) (cc) and being operated:

a) for the carriage of passengers or cargo to or from vessels or installations used in connection with oil or gas exploration or exploitation; or

b) for the transfer of personnel to or from vessels or lighthouses.

Additionally, this Generic Requirement also applies to helicopters being operated:

c) over the sea or tidal estuaries in association with pollution monitoring; and

d) in a dedicated offshore Search and Rescue role.

2 Introduction

2.1 In 1985, a programme of review and improvement of helicopter post-ditching escape facilities was carried out jointly by the CAA and the operators concerned with offshore helicopter operation. Following this review the CAA issued a Direction to Operators requiring action on certain aspects of survival systems, to retrospectively apply recently introduced airworthiness requirements.

2.2 Directions issued to specific operators are not a usual means of promulgating such requirements, but are used only on rare occasions where action needs to be taken as a matter of urgency on a number of different aircraft types. This Generic Requirement is necessary to ensure that the applicability of the relevant requirements is drawn to the attention of all concerned.

3 Compliance

Compliance is required prior to operating any helicopter defined in paragraph 1 above.

4 Requirements

NOTE: For all references to BCAR requirements, equivalent requirements agreed with the CAA may be acceptable.

4.1 All liferaft installations shall comply with the requirements of BCAR 29.1411(d) (3), which require liferaft installations to be suitable for use in all sea conditions in which helicopter ditching, flotation and trim are required to be evaluated.

4.2 All Emergency Exits, including crew Emergency Exits, shall be marked and illuminated to comply with BCAR 29.811(a), which requires exit marking to remain adequate if the helicopter capsizes after ditching and the cabin becomes submerged.

NOTE: Guidance on the interpretation of this requirement is in paragraph 1 of CAAIP Leaflet 44-30.

4.3 All non-jettisonable doors of Ditching Emergency Exits shall comply with BCAR 29.809(i), which requires such doors to have means of securing them in the open position so they do not interfere with occupants egress in all sea conditions up to the maximum required to be evaluated for ditching and flotation.

4.4 All openings in passenger compartments agreed by the CAA as suitable for the purpose of underwater escape shall be equipped so as to be openable in an emergency.

NOTE: This means that all openings such as windows of a suitable size shall be made openable from inside the helicopter. Further advice on interpretation of this requirement is contained in paragraph 2 of CAAIP Leaflet 44-30.

5 Additional Information

5.1 CAA Specification No. 2 requires helicopter liferafts to have a high level of damage tolerance.This can be provided in part by design of the liferaft, but action is also necessary to minimise the chances of liferaft damage while the liferaft is on the water adjacent to the helicopter, due to projections on the exterior of a helicopter.

5.1.1 Examples of projections which need to be considered are aerials, overboard vents, unprotected split pin tails, guttering and any projection sharper than a three dimensional right angled corner.

5.2 It is recommended that all projections likely to cause damage in a zone delineated by boundaries which are approximately 1·22 m (4 ft) above and 0·61 m (2 ft) below the established static water line, should be modified or suitably protected to minimise the likelihood of their causing damage to a deployed liferaft, and that all relevant approved maintenance schedules should be amended to ensure that such protection remains effective.

5.2.1 While the boundaries specified in paragraph 5.2 are intended as a guide, the total area which should be considered should also take into account the likely behaviour of the liferaft after deployment in all sea states up to the maximum in which the helicopter is capable of remaining upright.

5.3 Operators and maintenance organisations are reminded that wherever a modification or alteration is made to a helicopter within the boundaries specified, consideration should be given to affording such protection as may be required to prevent the modification or alteration causing damage to a deployed liferaft.

5.4 Particular care should also be taken during routine maintenance to ensure that additional hazards are not introduced by, for example, leaving inspection panels with sharp corners proud of the surrounding fuselage surface, or allowing door sills to deteriorate to a point where sharp edges become a hazard.

5.5 The same considerations apply in respect of emergency flotation equipment.

5.6 As part of the overall assessment of flotation equipment and its operation brought about by the issue of the Direction, the maintenance aspects of the various systems were examined.This resulted in a rationalisation of all the relevant approved maintenance schedules to ensure a common approach to the maintenance of flotation systems acrossdifferentoperatorsfleets. Operatorsshouldtherefore, ensurethattheestablished common approach to the maintenance of on board flotation equipment is continued.