

Bell Helicopter **TEXTRON**

A Subsidiary of Textron, Inc.

April 5, 2004

INFORMATION LETTER 407-04-81

TO: All Owners/Operators of Bell 407 and 206L series Helicopters

SUBJECT: Importance of Flight Manual Procedures at Low RPM

Bell Helicopter Textron has received a report of a recent incident, in South Africa, in which a Bell 407 tail rotor blade contacted the tailboom during shutdown.

Our investigation indicates that this incident happened during shutdown (at low and decreasing RPM) in a very gusty wind condition. Testing conducted by Bell Helicopter confirm that engine shutdown conducted in accordance with Flight Manual instructions provide ample clearance between the tip of the blades and the tailboom. However, significant departure from centered controls, particularly the tail rotor pedals, during engine shutdown in adverse wind conditions, increases the risk of inadvertent tailboom contact by the tail rotor.

This Information Letter is issued to again stress the importance of adhering to the procedures in the Bell 407 Flight Manual. The Bell 407 FM clearly states that for engine shutdown the collective should be in full down position and that the pedals and cyclic should be centered.

This incident has no bearing on the flight operation of the Bell 407. The dynamics of full RPM, centrifugal forces and system design - since the improvement of the tail rotor controls in 1999 – preclude all potential of contact between the tail rotor and the tailboom in flight.

Bell Helicopter is cooperating with the South African airworthiness authorities in the investigation. The intent of this IL was published in OSN 407-98-5 and 206L-98-37, dated 27 May, 1998.

Although there have been no incidents on the 206L, this Information Letter is sent to operators because of the similarity with the high altitude tail rotor system kit 206-704-722 (S.I. 206-2054 and 206-2057) and to stress the importance of the procedures for similar systems.

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