

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.49

National Policy

Effective Date:  
9/10/08

Cancellation Date:  
9/10/09

## **SUBJ:** Work Program Development for Part 135 Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) Operators or Commercial Air Tour Operators

**1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice provides guidance to aviation safety inspectors (ASI) with oversight responsibility of one or more Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 135 air carriers conducting either Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) operations or commercial air tour operations.

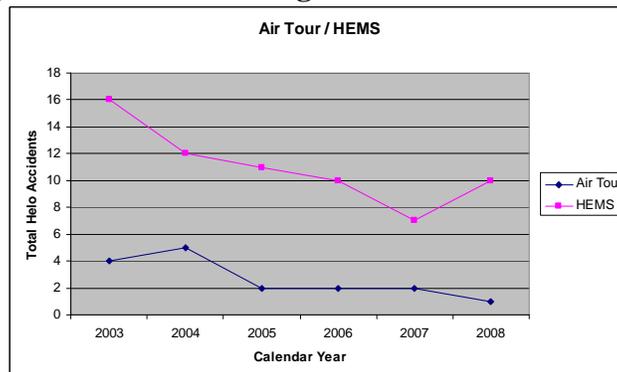
**2. Audience.** The primary audience for this notice is Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) ASIs with oversight responsibility of part 135 air carriers conducting HEMS operations or commercial air tour operations. The secondary audience includes Flight Standards branches and divisions in the regions and in headquarters.

**3. Where You Can Find This Notice.** Inspectors can access this notice through the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) at <http://fsims.avs.faa.gov>. Operators and the public may find this information at: <http://fsims.faa.gov>.

### **4. Background.**

**a.** Over the past several years, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has observed a marginal decrease in both helicopter air tour and HEMS accidents. However, to continue maintaining a downward progression of accidents, as illustrated in Figure 1, Downward Progression of Accidents Graph, below, better utilization of resources and consideration of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recommendations should be reviewed when developing a work program.

**Figure 1. Downward Progression of Accidents Graph**



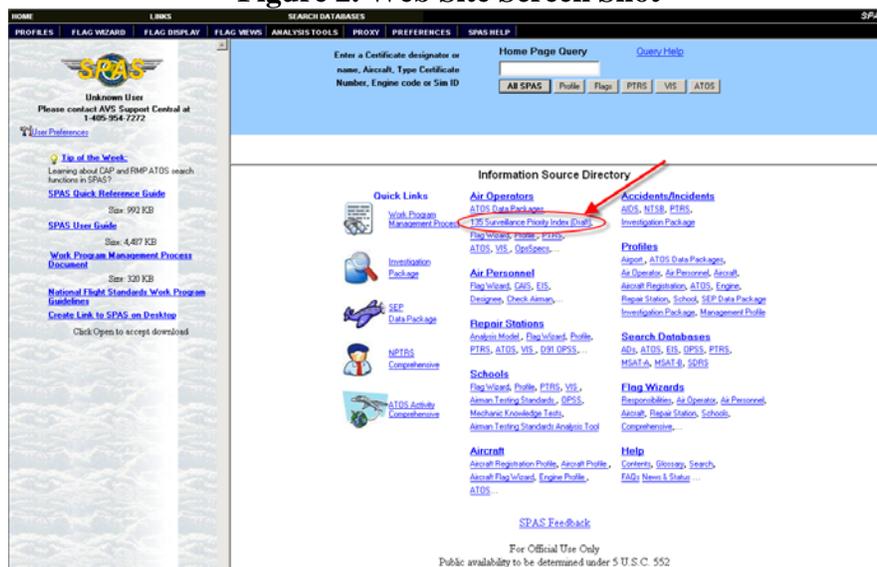
b. As a result of recommendations resulting from the investigation of the past HEMS and air tour operations accidents, the Director of the Flight Standards Service, AFS-1, determined that additional guidance should be provided, in the form of this notice, to ASIs with oversight responsibility of air carriers conducting such operations.

**5. Action.** When developing the inspector's annual work program, or reassessing the work program throughout the year, principal inspectors (PI) with oversight responsibility for more than one part 135 air carrier, that includes either a HEMS or air tour operations, should consider using the 135 Surveillance Priority Index tool; a new module in the Safety Performance Analysis System (SPAS). This tool will allow inspectors to prioritize work functions based upon the Surveillance Priority Index ranked analysis. When using the SPAS Surveillance Priority Index tool, it is important to remember that an operator's calculated index value is not an absolute measure of safety risk, but rather a tool to assist users in prioritizing operators when considering future surveillance. A definitive assessment of any operator's safety risk can only be made after conducting surveillance and analyzing the surveillance results along with other relevant data. The SPAS Surveillance Priority Index tool can be used to identify increased hazards of a particular operator and allow the ASI to increase or redirect surveillance, to include en route surveillance, as necessary, based on priority. The Surveillance Priority Index tool allows the FAA to leverage resources smartly, focusing proper attention and surveillance where it is most needed.

**Note:** PIs should use the Surveillance Priority Index tool to help prioritize surveillance, but should evaluate the results of the model carefully. The Surveillance Priority Index results should provide input into the PI's decision making, but should not serve as a substitute for the PI's judgment in prioritizing surveillance needs.

a. To access the SPAS Surveillance Priority Index tool, select the following link, titled 135 Surveillance Priority Index at <http://home.spas.faa.gov/spas.asp>; illustrated in Figure 2, Web Site Screen Shot. Once the SPAS Web page appears, find the aforementioned link under the Air Operators heading.

Figure 2. Web Site Screen Shot



b. Once the 135 Surveillance Priority Index link is selected, the SPAS Surveillance Priority Index query page will appear. To learn more about the SPAS Surveillance Priority Index tool, select the movie camera icon located at the top of the page illustrated in Figure 3, Web Site Screen Shot 2. An instructional video will appear and describe how PIs can use this tool to enhance their surveillance activities.

**Figure 3. Web Site Screen Shot 2**

c. Additionally, it is highly recommended that PIs of air carriers conducting commercial air tour operation conduct at least one en route inspection annually. When at all possible, PIs should plan their en route inspections so as not to occupy a seat that has been previously sold to a revenue passenger. (i.e., do not “bump” revenue passengers).

d. In addition to the previously listed action items, as currently cited in FAA Order 1800.56, National Flight Standards Work Program Guidelines, Paragraph 7a, Special-Emphasis Inspections of Appendix A, and this notice, PIs should consider the NTSB recommendations when planning surveillance programs. The latest NTSB safety recommendations can be found at the following link: <http://www.nts.gov/safetyrecs/private/QueryPage.aspx>.

**6. Tracking.** Beginning with the Fiscal Year 2009 work program planning, during your normal course of surveillance and oversight, document each en route inspection conducted on commercial air tour operators with the following:

a. Use Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS) code 1624 when accomplishing a part 135 air tour en route inspection.

- b. Enter "ATOURL" in the "National Use" field (without the quotes and without any spaces).
- c. Once the above actions have been accomplished, as appropriate, close out the PTRS.

**7. Disposition.** We will permanently incorporate the information in this notice to FSIMS before this notice expires. Direct questions concerning this notice to Edwin Miller, Commuter, On Demand, and Training Center branch, AFS-250, 202-267-8166, through your appropriate region.

ORIGINAL SIGNED by

James J. Ballough  
Director, Flight Standards Service