

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.63

National Policy

Effective Date:  
1/12/09

Cancellation Date:  
1/12/10

**SUBJ:** Validation of HEMS Safety Initiatives

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**1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice requests information from principal operations inspectors (POI) with oversight responsibilities of Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 135 helicopter operators authorized to perform helicopter emergency medical service (HEMS) operations. Because this information is important to the progress of accident prevention within the HEMS community and is of interest to the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) senior management, inspectors must complete the actions described below by *February 1, 2009*.

**2. Audience.** The primary audience for this notice is certificate-holding district office (CHDO) POIs who have oversight of part 135 HEMS operators. The secondary audience includes the inspector workforce who provides geographic surveillance of HEMS operators, 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 can find this notice at <http://fsims.faa.gov>.

**4. Discussion.** Beginning in late calendar-year 2005, the FAA distributed certain safety enhancement documents identified as *best practices*. Directly after the dissemination of each of these safety enhancement documents, the number of fatal accidents in HEMS operations decreased significantly. However, in 2008 the number of fatal accidents has returned to an unacceptable level. We need to know if HEMS operators still have the recommended safety enhancements in effect.

**5. Assessment and Validation of HEMS Safety Initiatives.** POIs having oversight of part 135 HEMS operators will determine for each of their HEMS certificate holders which of these best practices are still used. Each POI will then respond appropriately through the Program Tracking and Reporting Subsystem (PTRS) as described in each paragraph below.

**Note:** There are 74 HEMS operations certificate holders, thus we are looking for one report/entry for each certificate holder regarding each subject area.

**6. Decision-Making Skills and Risk Assessment Programs.** On January 28, 2005, the FAA published notice N 8000.293, Helicopter Emergency Medical Services Operations. This

document provided guidance for safety inspectors who were helping operators review pilot and mechanic decision-making skills, procedural adherence, and crew resource management practices. On August 1, 2005, the FAA published notice N 8000.301, Operational Risk Assessment Programs for Helicopter Emergency Medical Services. This document provided guidance to inspectors promoting improved risk assessment, risk management tools and training to all flight crews, including medical staff. On January 1, 2006, FAA published Safety Alert for Operators (SAFO) 06001, which provided the same information to operators.

**Note:** FSIMS maintains copies of expired notices and superseded bulletins. You can access them by clicking on the Publication tab and selecting “All” next to “Inactive Documents.”

**a. Action 1.** By February 1, 2009, POIs, after reviewing the best practices regarding crew resource management with HEMS operators for which they have oversight, will:

- (1) Open a PTRS record using code 1030.
- (2) For an operator who has not implemented the best practices described in the information referenced in subparagraph a above, enter “AMRMN” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (3) For an operator who has implemented the best practices described in the information referenced in subparagraph a above, enter “AMRMN” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (4) Close the PTRS record after completing the inspection.

**b. Action 2.** By February 1, 2009, POIs, after reviewing best practices regarding risk assessment with HEMS operators for which they have oversight, will:

- (1) Open a PTRS record using code 1030.
- (2) For an operator who has not implemented the best practices for risk management enter “RISKN” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (3) For an operator who has implemented the best practices for risk management enter “RISKY” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (4) Close the PTRS record after completing the inspection.

## **7. Loss of Control (LOC) and Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT).**

**a. Background.** On January 24, 2006, the FAA issued guidance to inspectors describing acceptable models for LOC and CFIT avoidance programs. The guidance provided inspectors with information to provide to HEMS operators for developing LOC/CFIT accident avoidance programs.

**b. Action 3.** By February 1, 2009, POIs, after reviewing the LOC/CFIT guidance regarding LOC/CFIT with HEMS operators for which they have oversight, will:

(1) Open a PTRS record using code 1030.

(2) For an operator who has not implemented the acceptable models for LOC and CFIT accident avoidance programs, enter “CFITN” in the National Use field (without quotes).

(3) For an operator who has implemented the acceptable models for LOC and CFIT accident avoidance programs, enter “CFITY” in the National Use field (without quotes).

(4) Close the PTRS record after completing the inspection.

**8. Operational Control Centers.** On May 5, 2008, the FAA’s Flight Standard Service issued Advisory Circular (AC) 120-96, Integration of Operations Control Centers into Helicopter Emergency Medical Services Operations. AC 120-96 highlights the “best practices” for use by HEMS operators in establishing their Operational Control Centers (OCC) and training their specialists. Although the establishment of an operational control center is a decision of the certificate holder, we strongly recommended the training cited in the AC for anyone performing the flight locating requirement of 14 CFR part 135, §135.79.

**a. Action 4.** By February 1, 2009, POIs, after reviewing the best practices regarding operational control centers with HEMS operators for which they have oversight, will:

(1) Open a PTRS record using code 1030.

(2) For an operator who has not established an OCC, enter “OPSCN” in the National Use field (without quotes).

(3) For an operator who has established an OCC, enter “OPSCY” in the National Use field (without quotes).

(4) Close the PTRS record after completing the inspection.

**b. Action 5.** By February 1, 2009, POIs, after reviewing the guidance regarding dispatch-like training with HEMS operators for which they have oversight, will:

(1) Open a PTRS record using code 1030.

(2) For an operator who has not provided *dispatch-like* training, enter “FOLLN” in the National Use field (without quotes).

(3) For an operator who has provided *dispatch-like* training, enter “FOLLY” in the National Use field (without quotes)

(4) Close the PTRS record after completing the inspection.

## **9. Flight Data Recorders (FDR) and Devices which can Re-create a Flight.**

**a. Background.** Even though regulations do not require FDRs for HEMS operations, FDRs offer value in any accident investigation by providing information on aircraft system status, flight path, and attitude. The weight and cost of true FDR systems are factors in requiring them

for HEMS operators. However, there is equipment on the market that performs the function of a flight data recorder. An example of such technology is the Appareo data logging and recording systems. (Reference: [http://www.appareo.com/products/data\\_logging.php?dd=data](http://www.appareo.com/products/data_logging.php?dd=data)). The size and weight of these systems are more appropriate for use on helicopters. We are interested to know if the certificate holder has incorporated any of these devices in their fleet.

**b. Action 6.** By February 1, 2009, POIs, after reviewing this paragraph regarding flight data recorders or similar devices with HEMS operators for which they have oversight, will:

- (1) Open a PTRS record using code 1030.
- (2) For an operator who has not begun equipage of FDR-like systems, enter “FDRN” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (3) For an operator who has begun equipage, enter “FDRY” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (4) Close the PTRS record after completing the inspection.

#### **10. Terrain Awareness Warning Systems (TAWS).**

**a. Background.** The FAA supports the voluntary implementation of TAWS and did consider the possibility of including rotorcraft in the original TAWS rulemaking process. We are interested to know if the certificate holder has incorporated any of these devices in their fleet.

**b. Action 7.** By February 1, 2009, POIs, after reviewing this paragraph regarding TAWS with HEMS operators for which they have oversight, will:

- (1) Open a PTRS record using code 1030.
- (2) For an operator who has not begun this type of equipage, enter “HTAWN” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (3) For an operator who has begun this type of equipage, or Enter “HTAWY” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (4) Close the PTRS record after completing the inspection.

#### **11. Radar Altimeters (RADALT).**

**a. Background.** RADALTs are usually only required on HEMS operations that fly night vision goggles (NVG). Having an operational RADALT has always been a good practice for day and night time operations. We consider continuous use of RADALTs in all conditions a best practice for terrain avoidance. We believe that RADALTs are already in widespread use in the HEMS community, but we need to confirm that.

**b. Action 8.** By February 1, 2009, POIs, after reviewing this paragraph regarding RADALT with HEMS operators for which they have oversight, will:

- (1) Open a PTRS record using code 1030.
- (2) For an operator not equipped with a RADALT, enter “RADN” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (3) For an operator who is equipped with a RADALT, enter “RADY” in the National Use field (without quotes).
- (4) Close the PTRS record when the inspection is completed.

**12. Disposition.** This notice will not be incorporated into FSIMS. Direct questions concerning this notice to Edwin Miller, Part 135 Air Carrier Operations Branch, AFS-250, at (202) 267-8166 or [edwin.miller@faa.gov](mailto:edwin.miller@faa.gov).

ORIGINAL SIGNED by

John M. Allen  
Director, Flight Standards Service