



# Safety Alert

From the International Association of Drilling Contractors

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ALERT 08 – 07

## HELICOPTER LIFTS OFF WITH OUT WARNING WHILE HLO ASSISTS PASSENGER

### WHAT HAPPENED:

The crew-change helicopter was on deck with passengers preparing to disembark. The Helicopter Landing Officer (HLO) was standing next to a seated passenger helping him adjust his 4 – point safety belt. Suddenly and without any radio notification or warning, the helicopter simply lifted off the deck. The HLO managed to step back and slide the door closed before the chopper flew away. There was no visual or radio contact giving the “all clear” to pilot before taking off. The HLO tried to contact the pilots immediately after the incident, but there was no reply back.

### WHAT CAUSED IT:

According to the helicopter company:

- (1) Pilot training was deficient;
- (2) The helicopter cabin duties were insufficiently defined allowing confusion;
- (3) The pilot did not properly assess the situation which lead to the incident;
- (4) The pilot did not observe the “door open” light.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS:** To address this incident, this company did the following:

### Immediate Actions by Contractor Resulting in Client’s Follow-up

Since personnel logistics for the operation are a Client matter, the Company Man was informed. The official document, specific for air-related near miss / incidents was completed and immediately forwarded to the Client. An e-mail was also sent to the Client containing a video of the incident and requesting that corrective measures be put in place. The helicopter company was contacted by the Client’s Representative. The Client’s Flight Safety Officer met with the helicopter company to show the video and discuss the causes and preventive measures. The helicopter company asked for a copy of the video to be used in pilot training in order to minimize chances of recurrence. The Client’s Contract Manager was also notified to take the necessary administrative measures necessary to prevent recurrence by ensuring the pilots adhere to their checklist procedures for disembarking.

### Contractor Initiatives put in place:

If HLO sees he must assist a passenger – or for any need for delay – he is to call the pilot on the radio or walk to front of helicopter and signal to delay lift-off. When assistance is finished, he will radio or signal “all clear for take-off.”

Pilots should be trained as per the country-of-operation’s laws and regulations pertaining to helicopter operations, which include offshore pilot responsibilities. Helicopter provider’s pilots should be trained in the Client’s General Operations Manual that includes the safety rules related to offshore landing and take off procedures. An annual refresher training course, that includes flight simulation and HLO ops, should be conducted.

### Further Recommended Precautions

Large crew-change operations normally have a pilot and co-pilot. It is the practice of some helicopter companies for the co-pilot (or pilot) to walk around the helicopter (not tail rotor side) to verify:

**The Corrective Actions stated in this alert are one company’s attempts to address the incident, and do not necessarily reflect the position of IADC or the IADC HSE Committee.**

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- (1) All passengers are secure.
- (2) All hatches and doors are completely closed and secured.
- (3) There is nothing on or near the helideck that can be sucked into the helicopter's engine intake port.
- (4) The landing skids are not caught in the helideck net.
- (5) HLO and his crew are on standby alert prepared for take-off.

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