



SAFETY **LIFELINE**

Tools to keep you safe.

July 21, 2008

DO YOU DO A WALK-AROUND? DO YOU DO IT EVERY TIME?

Think back on your behavior. Do you always perform a walk-around? When you do, is it active – head up, eyes scanning – or is it a shuffle around the perimeter just to say you did it? It's not someone else's responsibility to make sure that cowlings are latched, steps are secured, doors are closed, FOD is not present on the pad, fluids are not leaking, or other hazards are present. It is EVERYONE'S responsibility.

FACTS

Last week, a crew was transferring a patient from a base hospital. The pilot and the medical crew neglected to perform the walk-around prior to departure. Upon lift-off from the helipad, the medical crew noticed that the shoreline power was still connected and alerted the pilot. The pilot descended back to helipad and shoreline cord was unplugged, door secured and the mission was completed. This was the first flight of the day for this crew.

OTHER INFORMATION

The med crew went into the base hospital to package the patient while the pilot went to the aircraft. Upon returning with the patient after approximately 20 minutes from time of the initial page, the med crew returned to the aircraft, loaded the patient, closed the clamshells and entered the aircraft and strapped in. The med crew did not perform a walk-around due to taking care of the patient and making the assumption that since the pilot had been with the aircraft for 20 minutes that

everything on the pre-flight list had been completed. The pilot initiated the start up sequence and pulled pitch to start to come up. At approximately 8 – 10 feet of the pad, the med crew noticed the shoreline and notified the pilot. No damage was done to the aircraft or the shoreline.

IMPLICATIONS

Failure to complete a walk-around could result in a variety of unsafe conditions. Reports of cowlings departing the aircraft in flight are one event that a walk around could prevent. Similar to this situation, there have been reports of helicopters attempting to take their auxiliary power units (APU) with them. In this case, several scenarios could have played out that could have resulted in damage, injury or even total aircraft loss with fatalities. In the best case, the cord would have broken free and fallen to the ground with little to no damage. Increasing in severity, damage could have occurred to the electrical system of the aircraft and to the electrical system on the ground by shorting out the system as it disconnected. Perhaps the worst case scenario would be if the shoreline had broken and a longer section snapped back into the main rotor system or the tail rotor causing damage and loss of flight control.

SUMMARY

On every flight, we function as a team. Perform the walk-around like you've never seen the aircraft before. Share information that you have and always be aware of your surroundings. No item is trivial when it comes to safety. Complacency can kill you.

