



A Subsidiary of Textron, Inc.

April 5, 2001

**INFORMATION LETTER 407-01-59**

This information letter, originally released in error as I.L. 407-01-01 on January 9, 2001, is being reissued with its correct sequence number. No changes made to the contents.



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January 9, 2002  
Revised: April 5, 2001

### **INFORMATION LETTER 407-01-59**

**TO: All Owners/Operators of Bell 407 Helicopters.**

**SUBJECT: BELL 407 ACCIDENT, S/N 53060**

The purpose of this Information Letter is to inform our Bell 407 customers of a recent fatal accident that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico. We want to inform you of what we know at this point concerning the accident and the safety precautions being taken during the investigation.

During a ferry flight of a Bell 407 over water, the aircraft disappeared off of radar and was later found in the water. The pilot and aft end of the tailboom are still missing. The aircraft sustained extensive damage indicating a high rate of speed upon impact. The preliminary evidence indicates that during some phase of the incident, both the main rotor and the tail rotor contacted the tailboom. An exhaustive investigation is underway, coordinated by the NTSB with assistance of the Canadian Transportation Safety Board (CTSB), Transport Canada Airworthiness (TCA), The FAA and Bell Helicopter.

Transport Canada has issued an Airworthiness Directive AD CF-2001-01 on January 8, 2001 reducing the airspeed of the 407 to 110 knots with the Airspeed Actuated Pedal Stop (AAPS) installed. We believe the FAA will follow shortly with the same limitations.

While the cause of the incident has not been determined, Bell considers this an appropriately conservative action as a safety measure while the investigation continues and more evidence is collected. It should be noted that in 1999, after extensive flight testing, Bell introduced the AAPS to provide additional protection to the tailboom and increase the VNE to 140 knots. Since this installation, the modified 407 fleet has attained over 60,000 flight hours without incident.

It is important to point out at this time, the final cause of the accident is still under investigation. Immediately after determination of the probable cause, we will work with the regulatory agencies to return the aircraft to the full operating envelope.