



A Subsidiary of Textron, Inc.

April 5, 2001

**INFORMATION LETTER 407-01-60**

This information letter, originally released in error as I.L. 407-01-02 on March 2, 2001, is being reissued with its correct sequence number. No changes made to the contents.

# **Bell Helicopter** **TEXTRON**

A Subsidiary of Textron, Inc.

March 2, 2001  
Revised: April 5, 2001

## **INFORMATION LETTER 407-01-60**

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

**SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT- ACCIDENT, BELL 407, S/N 53060**

This information letter is issued to update our customers on the status of the investigation into the recent unfortunate accident of a Bell 407 in the Gulf of Mexico. The initial findings were originally reported in I.L. 407-01-01. We want to inform you of the steps Bell has taken to date in an effort to return the aircraft to its originally certified  $V_{NE}$ .

Transport Canada and the Federal Aviation Administration have released their respective Airworthiness Directives (AD) that mandate a reduction in the  $V_{NE}$  from 140 KIAS to 110 KIAS, for aircraft fitted with the Airspeed Actuated Pedal Stop (AAPS). Even though the cause of the accident had not been determined at that time, Bell supported this conservative effort as a safety measure while the investigation was on-going. However, Bell stated we fully believed that the AAPS, introduced after extensive certification testing, provided all the protection necessary to the tailboom.

Since we first reported the accident in January, all of the airframe except for the aft most section of the tailboom, vertical fin and tail rotor has been recovered. The pilot's body was subsequently recovered, however the results of the autopsy are still pending. All through the investigation, Bell Helicopter has offered its full cooperation to the NTSB, the Canadian Transportation Safety Board (CTSB), Transport Canada Airworthiness (TCA) and the FAA. While a final cause is still under investigation, Bell remains convinced that the tail rotor striking the tailboom did not cause the accident.

We have reviewed all the aircraft systems and components to include rotor, hydraulics, drive system, avionics and controls as well as others. To date, no components have been identified as responsible for the accident. The major components have been relocated to the Bell investigation laboratory for detail analysis and documentation. Our analysis of the physical evidence further supports our flight testing and conviction that the tail rotor striking the tailboom did not cause the unfortunate accident. We are now actively requesting a revision to both Transport Canada and the Federal Aviation Administration Airworthiness Directives to restore the 407  $V_{NE}$ .

There are approximately 486 Bell 407 helicopters operating worldwide with an estimated 480,000 hours accumulated on the fleet. These are continuing to provide a safe and profitable product for the industry daily. We appreciate your patience and continuing support as this issue is brought to closure.