

Bell Helicopter **TEXTRON**

A Subsidiary of Textron, Inc.

May 25, 1999

INFORMATION LETTER 407-99-41

TO: All Owners/Operators of 407 Helicopters.

SUBJECT: Bell 407 V_{NE} Recovery Status

This Information Letter is issued in the spirit of regular updates for Bell Helicopter 407 operators on the subject of regaining the 407 original airspeed. The 407 V_{NE} recovery continues to receive the highest level of attention at Bell Helicopter.

Many operators have inquired as to the cause of the tail rotor contacting the tail boom in flight. It has been determined that the cause was a sudden, full input of left tail rotor pedal at cruise airspeed. This sudden input caused exceptional flapping of the tail rotor, to the extent that it deformed the yield indicator and the pitch links and allowed contact with the tailboom. The incident aircraft did not have the modified pedal stop installed and the cause of the input has not been determined. Investigation by the regulatory authorities has revealed no mechanical failure or materiel defect.

After exhaustive testing, Bell Helicopter has developed and introduced a remedy that will preclude tailboom contact after such an inappropriate control input. This configuration change, introduced by Alert Service Bulletin, ASB 407-99-27 on 20 April 1999 authorizes a 407 V_{NE} of 130 knots. This ASB is made mandatory by Transport Canada AD CF-98-36R5. In a letter to Bell Helicopter, the FAA has determined that ASB 407-99-27 constitutes an Alternate Means of Compliance (AMOC) to FAA AD 99-06-15 and allows an increase in V_{NE} to 130 knots.

Development continues at Bell Helicopter for a further modification that is intended to restore the originally certified 140 knots V_{NE} and tail rotor authority. Immediately upon being informed by the regulatory authorities of their acceptance of the ultimate solution, Bell Helicopter plans to expedite the modification of the entire 407 fleet.