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Safety recommendation: AIC 20-R11/AIC 19-1001

Addressed to: PNG Air Services Limited

Date issued: 12 August 2020

Investigation Link: AIC 19-1001

Action status: Active

Introduction

On 11 August 2019, the PNG AIC was informed by Papua New Guinea Air Services Limited (ASL) of an accident involving a Bell 427 helicopter, registered P2-HSG, owned and operated by Niugini Helicopters.

On the same day, PNG instituted an investigation into the occurrence by initially authorizing the commencement of the investigation, and the appointment of an Investigator-In-Charge (IIC) in accordance with PNG Legislation, Civil Aviation Act (as amended 2016) and ICAO Annex 13 standards.

Occurrence

On 11 August 2019, at about 11:25 local time (01:25 UTC), a Bell 427 helicopter, registered P2-HSG, owned and operated by Niugini Helicopters, was conducting a VFR flight from Kokopo, East New Britain Province to Kimbe, West New Britain Province, when it impacted the water, over a reef, about 3.1 nm North West of Baluma township.

The pilot, the sole occupant of the helicopter sustained minor injuries and egressed the aircraft. He was reported to have been rescued about 40 minutes after the accident.

Safety deficiency description

The AIC found that the HF quality deficiency was an ongoing issue which was first identified and highlighted by the AIC through a previous accident investigation reference *AIC 16-1002*, involving a Pilatus Britten Norman BN-2T aircraft, registered P2-SBC which occurred in Kiunga on 13 April 2016.

During the investigation, AIC issued a safety recommendation *AIC 16-R12-1002*, which was associated with ineffective HF communication system. The recommendation read:

The Accident Investigation Commission recommends that PNG Air Services Limited, should take action to improve High Frequency radio capability to ensure, as much as possible, that transmission are clear and readable so vital transmissions for the safety of aircraft operations are not missed.

PNG ASL responded, acknowledging the deficiency and stated the following:

On July 11 2018, PNG Air Services Limited informed the Accident Investigation Commission that its program to deploy and commission duplicated Transmitter and Receiver systems located at Nadzab Airport, Lae had been delayed, but expected completion towards the end of 2018.

During this helicopter accident investigation, the AIC retrieved audit records from CASA PNG to verify the status of the HF system. The audit records, along with pilot and ATS staff interviews confirmed that the upgrade of the HF system, up to the date of release of this report, has not been completed.

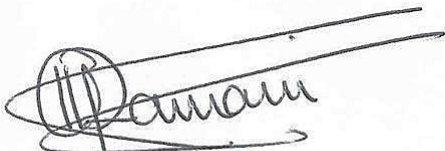
Recommendation AIC 20-R11/19-1001 to Papua New Guinea Air Services

The PNG Accident Investigation Commission recommends that PNG Air Services Limited should take action to improve High Frequency radio capability to ensure, as much as possible, that transmissions are clear and readable so vital transmissions for the safety of aircraft operations are not missed.

Action requested

The AIC requests that ASL note recommendation *AIC 20-R11/19-1001*, and provide a response to the AIC within 90 days of the issue date but no later than 10 November 2020, and explain including evidence, how PNG Air Services Limited has addressed the safety deficiency in the safety recommendation.

STATUS: ACTIVE.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Hubert Namani', with a large, stylized circular flourish at the end.

Hubert Namani, LLB

Chief Commissioner

12 August 2020

NiuSky Pacific Limited response

On 2 May 2022 the Papua New Guinea Accident Investigation Commission (PNG AIC) received a response from the Civil Aviation Authority of PNG (CASA PNG), providing excerpts of the 258-page Nadzab HF Commissioning Document of October 2021 by NiuSky Pacific Limited (NSPL).

AIC assessment

The AIC notes that the information in the excerpts provided, by CASA PNG has fully addressed the safety deficiency identified in the Safety Recommendation, AIC 20-R11/19-1001.

The AIC assigns NSPL response as *fully satisfactory* rating.

The AIC has recorded the **Status of the AIC Recommendation: CLOSED**



Capt. Aria Bouraga, MBE
Acting Chief Commissioner

13 May 2022