

Safety Notice SN-44

Issued: February 2017

CARRYING PASSENGERS

Carrying passengers is an additional responsibility for the pilot in command. Passengers have placed their trust entirely in the hands of the pilot. They have a right to be advised of risks associated with the flight. Risks include pilot experience level, aircraft capability, and operational considerations such as flight over water or night flight. Carrying a passenger in and of itself increases risk because passengers add workload and distractions.

Passenger Briefings

Always conduct a passenger safety briefing before allowing a passenger on board. Passenger safety briefings should include:

- Risks: A frank discussion of the risks associated with the flight. Ensure passengers know that you will be happy to cancel or discontinue a flight if anyone is uncomfortable.
- Entry and exit: Have passengers demonstrate proper operation of seatbelts and doors. Brief safe emergency entry and exit paths (away from tail rotor and within pilot's view). Do not board or disembark passengers with rotors turning unless procedures (such as ground escorts) are established before the flight.
- Aircraft controls: Always remove passenger-side controls. Ensure passengers secure any personal items brought on board. Caution passengers against inadvertently bumping the cyclic center post. Ensure passengers know how to operate headsets and intercom system.
- Expectations for the flight: Adhering to fixed schedules or flying over landmarks may not be possible due to weather, airspace, or performance limitations. If passengers are aware of these limitations prior to the flight, there will be less pressure for the pilot to attempt a task beyond his comfort or experience level.
- High workload times: Passengers should always tell the pilot about safety-related items such as traffic but should refrain from unnecessary conversation during takeoff, landing, and radio communications.

Safety Notice SN-44 (continued)

Newly-Rated Pilots

Accident data shows that new pilots carrying passengers have high accident rates. The workload and distractions added by passengers are magnified for new pilots who may still be getting used to the aircraft and operating environment. Newly-rated helicopter pilots:

- Should not carry passengers until accumulating 100 total hours helicopter experience including 20 hours pilot in command in type after receiving their helicopter rating.
- Should only fly in daylight with good VFR conditions and low winds.
- For the first several passenger-carrying flights, should limit flight to a local, familiar area.

Related Safety Notices

- SN-30 (doors-off flight with passengers is not recommended unless they have significant helicopter familiarity).
- SN-34 (photo missions have risks well beyond regular passenger carrying flights and require specific training and experience).