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CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT



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महानिदेशक नागर विमानन का कार्यालय
सफदरजंग एयरपोर्ट के सामने
नई दिल्ली - ११० ००३

Reference: No.: संख्या : AV 22024/33/2011-FSD
Dated: दिनांक : 4th November, 2011

OPERATIONS CIRCULAR No. 12/ 2011

Subject:- WEATHER CLEARANCE FOR HELICOPTER FLIGHTS

Numerous helicopter accidents in the recent past have occurred due to pilots flying in inclement weather conditions inadvertently, either because they were ignorant of the weather enroute or at destination. More recently, IFR and VFR helicopters have met with fatal accidents with VIPs on board due to flying in meteorological conditions not conducive to helicopter flying. All such accidents are avoidable if pilots adhere to proper Met briefing and clearances for all phases of flight, viz, at port of origin, enroute and at destination. Most of the helicopters fly under VFR conditions at low altitudes and do not have on board 'weather radar' or long range communication to get enroute or destination weather, nor do they have the endurance to circumvent bad weather enroute and make it to alternate airport.

In keeping with the recommendations of various courts of inquiries, all helicopter operators will adhere to following instructions regarding Met Clearance before launching a flight :

- All helicopter flights, IFR or VFR, will be executed only when weather at port of origin, enroute and at destination is within the Pilot's and helicopter's minima's with no significant 'trend' to deteriorate.

- In case the launch of Flight is delayed by 30 mins or more, the PIC should obtain latest destination weather on phone or make use of satellite bulletins available on mobile internet to do so and get the trend.
- For helicopters carrying out shuttle services/ flights between helipads in uncontrolled airspace or offshore, the Operators will make arrangements to make available existing weather at the helipads/ helidecks to the pilots on RT every 30 mins.
- In case the pilot encounters bad weather at any stage of flight which would entail VFR flight entering into IFR conditions, he/ she shall take timely decision to discontinue the flight or take alternate action as per the Flight Plan clearance.
- During monsoons and during times when visibility is low, if any section of flight is over hostile environment (terrain, vast water body, dense vegetation or militant activities where immediate landing is not possible), all helicopter flights will be planned very deliberately with alternate route, force landing fields etc and will be monitored by the Operations branch of the Operator.

Importance of weather briefing and adhering to weather minima's in helicopter flying must be stressed. Above instructions are only guidelines, the Operators should develop and put in place their own system and checks to ensure that all pilots fly in safe weather conditions only. This aspect will be checked by the FSD/ DGCA during the annual audits of the operators, Private and NSOP, and during random ramp inspections of helicopter flights

Sd/-
(A.K. Sharan)
Joint Director General of Civil Aviation
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To

All Helicopter Operators