HELICOPTER PILOTS WELCOME CALL FOR IMPROVED SAFETY

Helicopter pilots operating around Britain's shores and represented by the British Airline Pilots’ Association (BALPA) welcomed the findings of a UK Parliament House of Comons Transport Select Committee report into offshore helicopter safety, issued earlier this month.

General Secretary of BALPA, Jim McAuslan, said, “The Transport Select Committee report adds further weight to the urgent need for safety improvements to prevent accidents and make every offshore flight a safe one. Pilots are working with the CAA and operators to improve helicopter safety offshore and support the Select Committee’s call for a public inquiry. This should examine issues highlighted in the report including the safety risks of commercial pressure on operators and ensuring the UK regulator, CAA, retains full control over regulating offshore flights rather than delegating to an ill-equipped European regulator.”

BALPA is actively supporting the recommendations of the Civil Aviation Authority to improve North Sea helicopter safety including:

- A new offshore helicopter safety forum which is already established and toward which helicopter pilots are actively contributing.
- Recommendations to standardise best practice in training and operational procedures together with the use of Helicopter Flight Data Monitoring (HFDM) as a tool to improve flight safety.
- Recommendations to improve survivability in the event of an accident.
- The limitation to operations over very rough seas, which will avoid the reliance on ‘Dacon Scoop’ as the sole means of survivor recovery from very rough sea.
- The CAA to assume full control of certification of offshore helidecks which will ensure that safety improvements are rapidly implemented.

Photo caption

Illustration reproduced by kind courtesy of BALPA ©