

## IOGP Aviation Sub Committee Safety Notice      Oct 2023

### Increasing Operational Safety risk due to Offshore Helicopter Supply Chain Challenges

This letter has been issued by the IOGP Aviation Subcommittee (ASC), to notify all IOGP member companies of a **serious and deteriorating supply chain situation** in offshore helicopters that presents both **significant safety and operational risks** and which requires immediate management attention. The actions outlined are for the immediate attention of Logistics and Supply Chain management teams, but should also be shared with operations teams. The notice is intended to raise awareness of the impact of OEM level supply chain shortages on our contracted helicopter operators (particularly for the Sikorsky S92 type) and promote actions that will avoid increasing the safety risk and reduce potential operational impact. Concurrently, the ASC will be engaging with the helicopter operators, the OEMs and other industry stakeholders to address the underlying supply chain issues.

### Background and Impact

As previously outlined in the May 2023 Safety Notice, the whole aviation industry is experiencing inventory shortages for critical components. However, the Sikorsky S92, the pre-eminent heavy type in the sector, has been particularly impacted over the last year. The following information has been derived from data provided by the three largest S92 operators (Bristow, CHC &, PHI) whose fleets represent 61% of the total S92 Offshore/SAR fleet.

- Those operators currently have a total of **20 aircraft in AOG** (aircraft on ground) condition, awaiting replacement Main Gearboxes (MGB). (13% of their fleet). Three additional operators have reported an additional **11 S92 currently AOG** for MGB.
- Given current OEM forecast for deliveries, that total of 31 has the potential to **double by the end of 2024**.
- For one operator the total number of S92 AOG days at the part number level, has gone from **214 in 2022 to 3009 in 2023**.
- As a result, **dispatch reliability rates** have fallen from an industry norm of **96% to around 80%**.

The reduction of available aircraft, coinciding with increased offshore activity levels, is already impacting operational schedules and causing stress to offshore logistics operations, with operators not always able to meet contracted customer demand. It should be highlighted here that **this situation is not fully in the control of our contracted operators** and that **they have already been taking extraordinary actions** to maintain availability where they can.

The **safety risk** for us associated with this situation, comes in particular from the impact on their maintenance organisations, which is illustrated as follows:

- **Robbery or cannibalization action**, moving components from one aircraft to another to keep one airworthy, has **increased in 2023 by between 50% – 106%**, with over 50 parts being taken from an aircraft entering maintenance, not being uncommon.
- Maintenance extension requests to the OEM **have increased on average 850% YTD**.

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- The time taken to put an S92 through a heavy maintenance 1500hr check has **increased on average 75% to 75 days**, requiring around 25% additional manpower.
- **Overtime** for maintenance departments has **increased 57% YTD** on average.

These figures represent an unprecedented level of stress on the departments, their personnel and management teams. This was recently highlighted in the 2023 joint HeliOffshore/ASC Safety Survey, has been reflected in ASC assurance data that has shown a significant increase in maintenance related audit findings and also in a perceptible increase in maintenance related incidents being reported. The ASC believe **the potential and conditions for a serious safety event is clearly growing unless action is taken.**

### Action Required

This situation with the S92 is no longer fully in the control of the operators and if we value the safety of our operations and the resilience of our critical contracted partners, now is not the time to add to their burden, demand that contract terms written under different conditions are met or apply punitive financial penalties for not meeting aircraft availability targets. These will not improve availability, but will worsen the operators position further and potentially add further stress and risk to their maintenance departments.

The situation with the S92 parts availability has the potential to deteriorate further in the coming 12 months, leading to further reductions in aircraft availability.

So, now is the time to engage calmly with the operators and other users within a particular region, reach collaborative agreement on the most productive use of available resources and support measures that reduce safety risk. In particular, the following actions, previously given in May, remain relevant:

- Engage with local operators to build shared understanding of supply chain impact on your contracted service and co-develop resilience strategies.
- Raise awareness across your own company's operational stakeholders of the situation and any short-term impact and limitations.
- Ensure contracted operators have full visibility of your operational demand planning and your expectations over the coming year.
- Consider the temporary sharing of contracted aircraft assets to enable better utilisation of available assets and reduce stress on maintenance departments.
- Review contractual penalty/KPI arrangements to ensure they are not inadvertently creating higher risk conditions, preventing the sharing of available assets or punitively adding to operational stress.

The ASC will be engaging with the OEM and will work with other industry stakeholder groups to seek the best path to a sustainable resolution. In the meantime, it is emphasized that effective local action and engagement between individual clients and contracted operators is essential if the safety risks are to be mitigated and our normal very high levels of safety performance maintained.

Tony Cramp

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Chairman Aviation Sub Committee

IOGP Safety Director

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