



Helicopter Long Line Incident

CAGC SAFETY ALERT

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Canadian Association of Geophysical Contractors

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Safety Alert

01-07

Incident Date

January 3, 2007

Incident Location

Pincher Creek Area

Description of the Incident

On January 3, 2007 an A-Star B2 helicopter was retrieving Heli bags from a seismic program. While picking up the seismic bags with a bag runner, the entire load of bags - plus the runner - prematurely released from the helicopter. The pilot had a load of 4 bags on and was approaching a 5th bag using the DynaNav system.

The Helicopter was equipped with the manufacturers cargo swing and utilized a mechanical emergency release system. Due to the snow cover on the worksite, the pilot had been using his load of Heli bags to “sweep” the target area in order to better acquire the pickup of his next bag. This excess motion along with the high winds in the area caused the protective sheathing around the release cable to become worn. This wear, in turn resulted in the cable catching on the carriage and causing the emergency release to be activated.

The incident destroyed the bag runner and some incidental damage to equipment in the heli bags. The incident had serious potential for injury to persons or property as it occurred near rural acreages.

Recommendations and Outcomes

- Daily inspection of all carriage and hook systems must be adhered to;
- Excessive use of the load to clear snow should be avoided;
- Recommend upgrading cargo swings to minimize movement;
- Do not fly near or over residential / farm sites at any time;
- Communication between the helicopter pilot and the coordinator to ensure the location of ‘skidded Heli bags’ is properly known to the pilot.

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