

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

FOR RELEASE: 6:30 P.M., E.S.T., FEB. 21, 1975

ISSUED: February 21, 1975

Forwarded to:

Honorable Alexander P. Butterfield
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
Washington, D. C. 20591

SAFETY RECOMMENDATION(S)

A-75-17 PRIORITY I
A-75-18 PRIORITY II
A-75-19 PRIORITY III

The National Transportation Safety Board is currently investigating a fatal accident involving a Bell Model 206A helicopter, N4726R, which crashed into Long Island Sound near Milford, Connecticut, on February 1, 1975. A ground witness reported that one or both main rotor blades separated in flight before the crash. This main rotor installation was not found with the recovered wreckage.

The Safety Board removed from the wreckage a lower main rotor pitch-change clevis which had been fractured. A preliminary metallurgical analysis revealed that the clevis contained a fatigue fracture which had propagated through about 75 percent of the cross section of the threaded clevis shank before the clevis finally separated. We have determined that the clevis was either P/N 206-010-340-3 or 206-010-331-7. It had 2212.3 hours in service, and the aircraft had accumulated 987.3 hours since overhaul. Currently, there is no specific inspection requirement or mandatory retirement schedule for this part. Failure of the clevis can result in loss of control of the respective rotor blade and separation of the main rotor system.

The Safety Board is not aware of any other failure of this clevis. However, there have been four fatal Bell 206 accidents in which insufficient wreckage was recovered to permit determination of cause. Although we cannot verify that these accidents were the result of a fatigued pitch-change clevis, the consequences of such a fracture are such that we believe immediate corrective action is warranted.

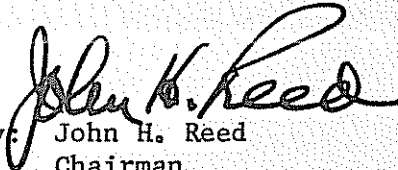
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Therefore, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that the Federal Aviation Administration:

1. Issue an Airworthiness Directive requiring an immediate inspection of all Bell Model 206A lower, main rotor pitch-change clevises for cracks.
2. Issue an Airworthiness Directive establishing specific time intervals and procedures for inspecting both the upper and lower, main rotor pitch-change clevises on all models of the Bell 206 series.
3. Establish a mandatory retirement schedule for these clevises.

Personnel from our Bureau of Aviation Safety will be available if any further information or assistance is desired.

REED, Chairman, McADAMS, BURGESS, and HALEY, Members, concurred in the above recommendations. THAYER, Member, did not participate.


By: John H. Reed
Chairman

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC ON THE DATE SHOWN ABOVE. NO PUBLIC DISSEMINATION OF THIS DOCUMENT SHOULD BE MADE PRIOR TO THAT DATE.