

Plagens Howard

From: Martin, Wayne [MARTINW@tc.gc.ca]
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2008 12:12 PM
To: Lemieux, Yves
Subject: RE: A92H0029 - NTSB Request for support

Hi Yves:

Yes they do. Rainbow has been issued the same authorization as the Canadian Operators.

Now having said that I phoned Rainbow this morning on another matter and at the same time asked if their aircraft was equipped with a conspicuous paint scheme. The gentleman I spoke with was unsure but eventually stated that he believed that the aircraft had black blades with orange tips.

I will ask Rolfe Dinwoodie (FAA) to look further into the subject. The protocol is to contact the FAA and they will address the operator directly or in conjunction with us.

Regards,

Wayne Martin
Regional Superintendent
Helicopter and Aerial Work Operations
Commercial and Business Aviation
Ontario Region
905-477-8613

-----Original Message-----

From: Lemieux, Yves
Sent: June 30, 2008 2:51 PM
To: Martin, Wayne
Subject: RE: A92H0029 - NTSB Request for support

Thanks Wayne. To your knowledge, do the Rainbow Helicopters (USA operator) abide by the actions we decided to implement on our side of the border?
Yves

-----Original Message-----

From: Martin, Wayne
Sent: Monday, June 30, 2008 2:14 PM
To: Lemieux, Yves
Subject: RE: A92H0029 - NTSB Request for support

Hi Yves:

RE: NTSB information regarding CYR 518 Niagara Falls, ON

I have tried to supply the information you have requested below My answers are in a different colour

Regards,

Wayne Martin
Regional Superintendent
Helicopter and Aerial Work Operations
Commercial and Business Aviation
Ontario Region
905-477-8613

-----Original Message-----

From: Lemieux, Yves
Sent: June 17, 2008 6:31 PM
To: Martin, Wayne
Subject: FW: A92H0029 - NTSB Request for support

Hi Wayne

As discussed, we want to provide Howard all the information we have on this subject. Accordingly, review the Safety Actions we said we were taking and other we took. Include activities we have carried out or procedures we have put in place since the report was published to address evolving issues that seem to surface every season. Please answer the questions below to the best of your knowledge. If you don't have the answers, we will find out from other sources such as the TSB. Hopefully, we can respond to Howard as soon as possible. Thanks for your anticipated assistance with this.

Yves

-----Original Message-----

From: Plagens Howard [mailto:howard.plagens@ntsb.gov]
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 4:50 PM
To: Lemieux, Yves
Subject: RE: A92H0029 - NTSB Request for support

Thanks. I am the IIC of a midair involving two news helicopters in Phoenix last summer, and we are looking at similar issues. I want to confirm what information that I am looking for from you, if it is not too difficult for you to get.

From your report:

Section 4.1.2 states requirements that have been implemented for Niagara Falls flights. Two of these requirements are that "aircraft shall operate with navigation, rotating beacon, and strobe lights illuminated" and that "all helicopters shall have approved conspicuous paint schemes on the upper surfaces of their blades."

The letter of authorization states: "Each helicopter shall have conspicuous paint schemes of the upper surface of their main rotor blades, consisting of alternating bands of contrasting color."

- National Helicopters uses black and white.
- Niagara Helicopter uses red and white.

I spoke with acting Operations manager for Niagara Helicopters he stated that the system is quite effective - especially when looking for aircraft operating at lower altitudes.

I also spoke with the Operations Manager at National. His comments were similar - they are effective when looking at aircraft operating at lower altitudes.

Did TC implement these requirements?

As mentioned above it is a requirement to operate in CYR 518.

Was there a letter from TSB that was transmitted to the FAA requesting that the agency take these actions?

I am not sure about a letter from the TSB. There were several meetings between all of the interested parties in 1993. As a result of these meetings a memorandum on understanding was developed between the FAA and Transport Canada to work together and share information.

What effect have these requirements had on Niagara Falls flight operations? Have you had any feedback from operators?

The requirements have been very effective. There has been negative and positive feedback. Some of the operations consider the existing operating conditions to be too strict.

Section 4.1.6 states that "interested parties, operators, and regulatory officials from both countries will review flying operations at Niagara Falls on a semi-annual basis."

All operators, including the one US operator and interested stakeholders (CYSN FSS, etc) meet yearly to discuss airspace and operational issues.

Transport Canada (PAXR) and the FAA (Rolfe Dinwoodie) are in regular contact when any issues are discussed.

Have these meetings been taking place since about the time of the report's issuance (1993)?

The meetings have been held every year since 1993. They are a mandatory requirement of the authorization.

Who holds the meetings, and who generally attends?

Transport Canada hosts the meeting.

How have these meetings benefited flight safety?

Yes greatly:

- all operators are invited to discuss issues both operationally and from a safety perspective;
- all operators have met personally;
- all operators are familiar with the other operations;
- airplane operators are invited as well;
- safety issues are discussed openly in a proactive environment;
- Transport Canada and the FAA have a venue to directly communicate with each other;
- to the best of my knowledge there has only been one reported "near miss" incident involving a scenic tour operator since 1992. This involved Rainbow Air and a US police agency - Rolfe Dinwoodie (FAA) has the details.

Is any of the information discussed at the meetings forwarded to U.S. pilots?

Yes. The US operator and FAA always attend.

Basic I am looking to see what has happened since these safety actions were taken.

Best Regards,

Howard

-----Original Message-----

From: Lemieux, Yves [mailto:LEMIEUY@tc.gc.ca]

Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 1:39 PM

To: Plagens Howard; McDonald, Ken

Subject: RE: A92H0029 - NTSB Request for support

Good afternoon Howard

I received your telephone message and will be working on getting the information you requested. I am out of the office for the next 3 days. Hope to have answers early next week.

Yves