FAA Approves Sikorsky Aircraft's New Platform Approach System For S-92® Helicopters

Feature Offers Enhanced Safety Through Reduced Pilot Workload

STRATFORD, Connecticut - Sikorsky Aircraft Corp. today announced the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has approved a new functionality on the S-92® helicopter to provide offshore oil operators with an automated approach that reduces cockpit workload by 60 percent and allows safer operations under challenging weather and operating conditions. Sikorsky, a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (NYSE: UTX), developed the new safety feature in close collaboration with PHI, Inc., an important Sikorsky customer that is operating S-92 and S-76® helicopters in the Gulf of Mexico, providing transportation to offshore oil workers to the platforms there.

"Rig Approach" will be available as an option on the S-92 helicopters, providing a fully coupled and automated approach capability with a higher safety margin than currently is available with any other offshore approach procedure. The feature can be retrofitted to aircraft already operating.

"Our new Rig Approach feature takes the guesswork out of the equation when a pilot is flying out to an oil platform. It provides a 'hands off' approach that increases the safety of the aircraft tremendously. Sikorsky continues to hold safety as its highest priority, and we are excited to bring Rig Approach to our customers," said Dan Hunter, Sikorsky's Commercial Programs Director.

FAA officials flew in February for the certification review. That flight was the culmination of several years of development which began in 2007 when a pilot from PHI Inc. approached a Sikorsky pilot about collaborating to develop a safer method of approaching oil platforms and rigs.

Sikorsky conducted the bulk of its certification flight testing in 2011 and followed that with a year of working with the FAA to provide a path for certification.

"Automated rig approach had never been done before so the FAA had no basis on which to compare it," said Ron Doeppner, Sikorsky's Project Pilot. "We couldn't go to the FAA regulators and say we're certifying this according to existing data. We're writing the book on it, working with the operator (PHI) and the FAA."

"The "Rig Approach" system is one of the most intuitive and innovative systems I have ever flown," said Paul Perkins, Chief Pilot for PHI. "We flew more than 19,000 hours of IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) Operations last year and will increase that number in 2013. The Rig Approach will play a huge role in our S-92 IFR operations by providing the crew with automation that reduces the workload at critical times during the instrument arrival procedure and provides additional barriers to CFIT (controlled flight into terrain). This system provides the crews with technology that is easy to use, makes sense, and reduces the current workload from 17 pilot initiated items to only seven. Safety is paramount in our operations and the Rig Approach is a fantastic tool bringing a safer product to our cockpits."

The multi-mission S-92 helicopter incorporates numerous safety features, including a flaw-tolerant design. In February, the global fleet achieved the half-million flight-hour milestone. Off shore oil operators fly the aircraft for an average of 90 – 110 hours per month in often challenging environments. The S-92 helicopter also performs Head of State missions, search and rescue (SAR) operations as well as a variety of transportation missions for utility and airline passengers. Since entering service in September 2004, the S-92 fleet has grown to 170 aircraft and logged more than 530,000 flight hours to date.

This summer, Sikorsky will formally offer the S-92 platform to the U.S. Government, which is seeking to replace the "Marine One" helicopter fleet that transports the President of the United States.

Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., based in Stratford, Conn., is a world leader in helicopter design, manufacture and service. United Technologies Corp., based in Hartford, Conn., provides a broad range of high technology products and support services to the aerospace and building systems industries.

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