

August 31, 2023

Ron Alarcon
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On Sunday 8/27/2023, we had completed a bucket proficiency training flight with helicopter N19BH using a 50' longline. Upon completion of practice, the helicopter came into land so we could stow the equipment and depart. As the helicopter came into land, the pilot put the helicopter through two repositions before landing in the intended area. The approach and repositioning of the helicopter occurred very fast without communication from the pilot on intended actions, which didn't allow for input from the crew. After the helicopter landed, we were signaled in, the crew disconnected the longline, I put the pilot door back on, and bucket was packed up. When we were stowing the bucket in the cargo compartment, we saw that the orange pack looked damaged, so we went to inspect. On looking at it, we saw the pack had been struck and the iPad and radio inside were damaged (the pack was located at the edge of the touchdown area, at the eight o'clock position of the intended landing orientation). We approached the pilot and showed him the iPad and said that we need to shut down and inspect the helicopter and tail rotor. The pilot inspected the tail rotor and area around it and could find no damage. We spoke of leaving the helicopter, but the pilot assured us that it in good order, so we boarded the helicopter and flew back to base. It flew without problem, and we arrived safely at base.

Sincerely,

Ron Alarcon

[Redacted Signature]

8/31/2023 AD

[Handwritten Signature]

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Upon the helicopter N19BH landing, our team patiently awaited the signal from the pilot to approach. As the helicopter came to an idle, the pilot gave us a reassuring wave, signaling that it was safe to proceed. Our task at hand was to carefully stow the longline and bucket back into the cargo compartment.

While attending to the loading process, I noticed a backpack that displayed signs of damage. Upon closer inspection, it became evident that the backpack had been hit by the tail rotor. This discovery prompted me to bring it to the attention of both the manager and the pilot, as it was crucial to assess the situation thoroughly.

With utmost caution, the helicopter was shut down, allowing the pilot to conduct a thorough inspection of the tail rotor. As all of us carefully observed, we were unable to identify any visible damage or issues. This reassured us that the helicopter remained in optimal condition for our return journey.

After completing the necessary checks and ensuring all equipment was securely stowed, we proceeded to board the helicopter. Our return trip to Hibbing tanker base commenced, landed safely and secured helicopter.


Thank you. Jim McCue

Brenden Williams

[REDACTED] Big Falls, MN

08/29/2023

After performing bucket proficiency with a 50' longline, 19BH returned to the landing zone and while re-positioning for the second time after a failed first attempt to land do to slope appeared to be having issues getting set down properly. The tail end of the helicopter appeared to bounce back multiple times and at one of the times it was visible that the rotor had struck or was very close to striking the ground. Upon shut down and evaluation of the scene around the helicopter it was apparent that an IA bag from the crew had been struck by the tail rotor on one of these close to the ground bounces.

Sincerely,

Brenden Williams

[REDACTED] 8/29/2023