

Envelope Expansion Program on Schedule for MD 600N Helicopter

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A planned program to enhance the performance of the MD 600N helicopter, the newest rotorcraft from The Boeing Company, is proceeding at top speed. The aircraft enhancements are scheduled for completion this year.

Chief among them is an increase in the relationship between the helicopter's maximum gross weight and the altitude at which it will safely land and take off. The aircraft was certificated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) earlier this year for takeoffs and landings from sea level to 1,700 feet (518 meters) at a maximum weight of 4,100 pounds (1860 kilograms). The company is nearing completion of testing that will allow the relationship to grow to 7,000 feet (2134 meters) in altitude at 3,800 pounds (1724 kilograms), or greater.

Other recent enhancements allow operators to fly the helicopter with its doors off at up to 115 knots, operate at temperatures up to 52 C (126 F) and lift up to 2,134 pounds (969 kilograms) on its external cargo hook. The aircraft also has been certified for slope landings up to 10 degrees in any direction.

Other certification tests are under way that will:

- permit operations in temperatures down to minus 30 C (minus 22 F);
- enable the helicopter to use emergency floats;
- make possible the use of special executive seats in the rear cabin;
- operate with an air conditioner; and
- add the extra safety of wire strike protection to the fuselage.

Additionally, the aircraft will complete high-intensity radio frequency (HIRF) testing at the Patuxent River Naval Test Center in Maryland next month.

This testing will ensure that the helicopter's electronic components are protected from powerful radio waves often emanating from ground-mounted radio antennas. The HIRF tests are critical for aircraft operating in Europe's crowded airspace.

Since receiving FAA certification earlier this summer, the company has delivered three MD 600Ns to customers in the United States, Europe and Africa. Another 20 are scheduled for delivery by yearend. The company recently announced a sale of 45 MD 600Ns to the United States Border Patrol, which will use the helicopters in drug interdiction operations and to curb illegal entry along the southern U.S. border.

The MD 600N is a larger, more powerful version of the company's MD 500 series. It operates with the NOTAR® system for anti-torque and directional control. The system eliminates the conventional tail rotor, making the aircraft safer, quieter and easier to fly.

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