Boeing Reduces MD Explorer Direct Operating Costs

The Boeing Company has significantly reduced the cost of owning and operating its eight-place, twin-engine MD Explorer helicopter.

A series of ongoing improvements to the aircraft have resulted in reduced direct operating costs (DOCs), from $430 to $394 per hour, for new production aircraft.

DOCs, the cost to fly the helicopter for one hour, are determined by the cost of limited life and unscheduled spare parts, component and engine overhaul, fuel and labor. The cost of parts alone has been reduced by 22 percent for the MD Explorer.

The company's success in extending the life of several of the MD Explorer's major life-limited parts is driving the reduced DOCs, according to Erv Hunter, vice president and general manager of the company's Mesa, Ariz.,-based commercial light helicopter operation.

Continuing to make the MD Explorer more affordable to operate has been one of Boeing's primary goals for the aircraft. "We are making good on our promise to give operators the safest, quietest, most reliable and most affordable-to-operate helicopters available," Hunter said. "We fully expect further cost reductions as we continue testing and gain field experience."

Thirty-eight NOTAR® system-equipped MD Explorers are operating around the world. The fleet has accumulated more than 13,000 flight hours.

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