Boeing MD 600N Envelope Expansion Program Nears Completion

The Boeing MD 600N eight-place, single-turbine helicopter is nearing the end of a year-long envelope expansion program that enhances the overall performance of the aircraft.

Testing is complete that allows the aircraft to increase the weight and altitude at which it may takeoff and land. The Federal Aviation Administration is expected to give its approval later this month for takeoffs and landings at 7,000 feet (2134 m) density altitude with an aircraft weighing up to 3,850 pounds (1746 kg) and at 4,000 feet (1219 m) density altitude at 4,100 pounds (1860 kg).

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 kg) on its external cargo hook. The aircraft also has been certified for slope landings up to 10 degrees in any direction.

Other certification tests have been approved that permit operations in temperatures down to minus 40° C; enable the helicopter to use emergency floats; make possible the use of special executive seats in the rear cabin; bubble windows for extra interior comfort; moveable landing light; 33.5 gallons (126.8 L) auxiliary fuel tank operate with an air conditioner; and add the extra safety of wire strike protection to the fuselage.

Additionally, the aircraft has completed high-intensity radio frequency (HIRF) testing at the Navy facility Patuxent River Maryland. This testing ensures 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 European airspace.

Since receiving FAA certification earlier last summer, the company has delivered 21 MD 600Ns to customers in the United States, Europe and Africa. Another 20 are scheduled for delivery by yearend. By the end of July, the company is scheduled to deliver the first 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 369/500N 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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For further information:
Ken Jensen
(602) 891-2119