Boeing MD Explorer Receives Validation by Europe's JAA

Europe's Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) have completed validation of the Boeing MD Explorer helicopter in its 902 configuration, and recommended that the JAA's 27 member nations issue Amended Type Certificates for the aircraft.

This action makes the MD Explorer the first helicopter to be validated under the JAA's strict Joint Aviation Regulations Part 27 Category A guidelines. The validation paves the way for the MD Explorer to be certified and to operate throughout the JAA's member nations. The validation also makes the twin-engine, eight-place MD Explorer the first helicopter in its weight classification to achieve the higher safety, reliability and performance category explicit in the Category A classification.

Among other enhancements, Category A-rated helicopters are capable of safely continuing flight during a landing or takeoff on a single engine if necessary. The rating is an enduring operational requirement in most European countries.

"The MD Explorer is a unique helicopter," said Erv Hunter, Boeing general manager of Commercial Light Helicopters. "Reaching this milestone of safety and performance capability is good for our industry, for our customers and for the public."

The MD Explorer was first certified in its MD 900 configuration by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration in December 1994 and by the JAA in 1996. Thirty-two MD Explorers in both 900 and 902 configurations are operating in the U.S., Europe, Central America and the Pacific Rim nations.

It is anticipated that JAA member nations will begin issuing Amended Type Certifications for the MD Explorer within the next month.

The advanced version of the MD Explorer incorporates performance improvements over the original MD Explorer. Among these are increases in the maximum gross weight to 6,250 lbs (2835 kg) and integration of the more powerful Pratt and Whitney 206E turbine engines.

Other enhancements include an upgraded transmission, improved software for the integrated instrument display system, more efficient engine air inlets, improved mechanical engine controls and a new fuel system.

Additionally, the new MD Explorer is the safest and quietest helicopter in its weight classification.

The initial MD Explorer in the 902 configuration was delivered through Tomen, a Japanese distributor, for use in electronic news gathering. Two additional 902-configured MD Explorers have been delivered to Police Aviation Services of the United Kingdom for use in law enforcement and air medical service.

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