

AsMA Resolution on Preventing Injury & Death with US DoD Helicopter Cargo Compartment Seating

Title of Resolution: Preventing Injury & Death with US DoD Helicopter Cargo Compartment Seating

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Whereas, the US DoD established a minimum level of safety for helicopter seating during the 1960s and that minimum level of safety was codified in the US Army's Aircraft Crash Survival Design Guides,

Whereas, the minimum acceptable level of safety was implemented fleet-wide on cockpit seating through MIL-S-58095 (Crew Seat Specification),

Whereas, subsequently, based on contractor recommendations (proven to be a flawed model) the US DoD established a lower level of safety for helicopter cargo compartment seating that is codified in MIL-S-85510 (Troop Seat Specification),

Whereas, the US DoD has subsequently implemented a lower standard for safety in helicopter cargo compartment seating that is termed reduced capability (RC),

Whereas, the US DoD has experienced an epidemiologically documented (Mapes *et al*, 2007) two-fold increase in cargo compartment injuries and fatalities during mishaps as a result of using seats that do not meet the RC standard or MS-S-85510 or MS-S-58095,

Whereas, recent studies at the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) reveal that current US DoD helicopter cargo compartment seating does not achieve the reduced standard of protection or perform reliably to protect occupants due to repetitive failures of seat design,

Whereas, the same AFRL studies proved that adequate restraint in helicopter seating can only be achieved by using 5 point restraints to adequately secure personnel in seats & no current cargo compartment seats offer 5 point restraint,

Whereas, new technologies are available that could be used to meet or exceed current standards for occupant protection & occupant protection is essential for survival in low speed mishaps and 'shoot downs'

Therefore be it Resolved,

1. All helicopter cargo compartment seating should be held to the same standard as helicopter crew seating;
2. All helicopter seating should include 5-point restraints;
3. All helicopter cargo compartment seating with known failure modes should be repaired or replaced so that reduced capability accommodations can function as designed;

4. All helicopter occupants should be secured in adequate seats and 5-point restraints during all operations, including hover (at speeds below those necessary to generate effective translational lift); and,
5. Helicopter cargo compartment seating not performing to MIL-S-85510 should be replaced.