Subject: AS 350 Throttle Quadrant

Area of Concern: Flight Safety

Distribution: All Aviation Activities

Discussion: The Alaska Aviation Safety Foundation recently published two Safety Briefings on the Airbus AS 350 to highlight a safety issue. The following information is from the safety briefing.

The control quadrant found on the Airbus AS 350 series (AS 350 B, AS 350 BA, AS 350 B1, AS 350 B2, and some AS 350 B3 models) include the main rotor brake lever and the emergency fuel shutoff lever. The fuel flow control lever (FFCL) has been removed and a twist-grip throttle is now mounted on the collective. The control quadrant is mounted to the floor and the levers are susceptible to interference from passengers and objects. This can result in inadvertent movement of the controls and cause a loss of engine power.

Methods to prevent this interference are described in the passenger briefing supplement shown here. Operators and pilots should consider printing and laminating the supplement and carrying it with the passenger briefing cards in the helicopter and have each passenger review the supplement before each flight.

Pilots should ensure passengers are adequately briefed on the potential to inadvertently move the various control quadrant levers and should use extreme caution when loading and unloading passengers. All objects should be safely secured in the helicopter. All seat belt assemblies for the front passenger seat should always be secured when not in use and not left dangling loose.

Passengers should be aware of the potential to inadvertently move the various control quadrant levers. They need to understand that all body parts and objects must always be kept away from this critical safety area, and ensure all objects are properly secured prior to flight. If an object is dropped anywhere...
in and around the control quadrant (such as a cellular phone, pen, tool, camera lens, etc.), the passenger should not reach for the item but should immediately alert the pilot about the dropped item. Objects dropped inside the control quadrant gate plate have the potential of jamming the levers.

Numerous events have occurred worldwide that can be attributed to control quadrant interference. If an interference event occurs, and you feel this was due to the inference susceptibility of the control quadrant design, report the event to the FAA via a Service Difficulty Report (https://av-info.faa.gov/sdrx/). FAA Advisory Circular (AC) 20-109A “Service Difficulty Program” states that, “any report can be very constructive in evaluating design or maintenance reliability.”

The Alaska Aviation Safety Foundation Safety Briefings can be found at:


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