

United States Department of the Interior
Aviation Management Directorate

Safety Alert

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Subject: Passenger briefing requirements

Area of Concern: Aviation Operations

Distribution: All DOI Aviation Activities

Discussion: A recent helicopter incident has demonstrated that some Interagency forms and checklists do not contain all of the preflight briefing items as required by 351 DM 1.5 B. Briefing and FAR Part 135.117 Briefing of passengers before flight.

The required passenger briefing requirements are presented in Interagency Aviation Training modules A-101: Basic Aviation Safety, A-108: Pre-flight Briefing and De-briefing and S-271 Interagency Helicopter Air Crewmember Training. The requirements are:

- No smoking
- Use of seatbelts
- Placement of seat backs
- Location of emergency exits
- Operation of doors
- Location of fire extinguishers
- First aid kit, survival kit and ELT
- Supplemental oxygen
- Shut off procedures for battery & fuel

However, the requirement to brief the "location and means for opening the passenger entry door" was overlooked in the development of subsequent job aids, including the orange Five Steps To a Safe Flight wallet card. Therefore, extra attention is required by Helicopter Managers and crewmembers to ensure that the "location and means for opening the passenger entry door" is included in preflight briefings.

Note: Although the use of passenger entry doors must be included in preflight briefings, additional operational procedures or restrictions may be established for personnel entry to and egress from aircraft during normal operations, which require passengers to wait for helitack personnel to load and unload aircraft.

It is the responsibility of everyone involved in aviation operations to ask questions if they are unsure of any procedure or operation in and around aircraft. If policy is not being followed or if you see an unsafe action bring it to the attention of an aircrew member or manager. Remember, "If You See Something, Say Something".

This Safety Alert has been coordinated with the USDA/Forest Service.

/s/Robert Galloway
Aviation Safety Manager