

CHC Sikorsky S-92 "Rescue 116" accident investigation

“Rescue 116” CVR transcript publication is unnecessary and harmful, says pilot community

Montreal - Brussels, 18 April 2017

Last Friday, the Irish Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) published the last two minutes of the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) transcript of a fatal helicopter accident (CHC Sikorsky S-92 "Rescue 116"), which occurred at Black Rock, on the west coast of Ireland, on the 14th of March 2017. That same day, this transcript filled newspapers and websites, including the front page of the Irish Times.

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA) and the European Cockpit Association (ECA) strongly condemn this publication as unwarranted, unacceptable, counterproductive to flight safety, and a breach of both ICAO Annex 13 Standards and EU Regulation 996/2010.

Not only does the publication contravene the internationally agreed principles of accident investigation confidentiality, set out in ICAO Annex 13 and EU Accident Investigation Regulation 996/2010, but it unnecessarily adds to the burden of the victims' families, and is also a breach of trust to all those involved in commercial aviation.

There is absolutely no justification for - or benefit from - publishing specifically the last two minutes of this flight, other than feeding a thirst for sensationalism.

Indeed, according to ICAO Annex 13 paragraph 5.12 and the EU Regulation 996/2010 Article 14 (paragraph 1) the State conducting the investigation of an accident shall not make CVR recordings and any transcripts from such recordings available for purposes other than accident or incident investigation. Such recordings shall be included in the Final Report or its appendices only when pertinent to the analysis of the accident. Annex 13 goes on to state that "parts of the records not relevant to the analysis shall not be disclosed." No benefit has been noted in the report to justify the Irish investigation body's decision to disclose CVR data.

In this early stage of the technical investigation, many critical questions remain to be answered. IFALPA and ECA call for adherence to the proper accident investigation process and expect a comprehensive and accurate analysis of events based on the highest professional standards. IFALPA and ECA remain fully committed to enhancing aviation safety and our organisations' resources are at the disposal of the Accident Investigation Agencies to achieve this aim.