

## AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT REPORT No 5/88

### REPORT ON THE INCIDENT TO SIKORSKY S-76A HELICOPTER G-BHYB NEAR FULMAR A OIL PLATFORM IN THE NORTH SEA ON 9 DECEMBER 1987

The Inspector's report on this incident was submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport on 14 September 1988. He has agreed to its publication and the report is now available from HMSO Bookshops and accredited agents.

The aircraft was conducting a series of Shuttle flights between the Fulmar A and the Auk oil production platforms. The evening's flying, during which the incident occurred, comprised six Shuttle flights, each of two sectors.

On the fourth sector, whilst descending on an approach from a height of about 500 feet to the Fulmar platform and at about a quarter of a mile from the helideck, the aircraft lost all forward speed and entered a steep descent towards the sea. At a very late stage, the co-pilot managed to arrest the descent just as the aircraft touched the water. The flight was continued to a normal landing on the Fulmar helideck.

The report concludes that the incident was caused by the following:

1. The commander suffered a temporary incapacitation.
2. The co-pilot's response to the emergency situation was delayed partially by insufficient flightpath and instrument monitoring and partially by the difficulty of appraising the situation. The proportion of each is not known.
3. The company Operations Manual contained no procedures for the use of the Automatic Voice Alerting Device during visual approaches.

Four safety recommendations were made:

1. The CAA should require that helicopters operated in the Public Transport category (Passenger) are equipped with flight data recorders.
2. The CAA should re-consider the need for a two pilot crew in helicopters which are registered and operating in the Public Transport category under the Instrument Flight Rules.
3. The CAA, in conjunction with helicopter operating companies, should consider defining methods of identifying subtle incapacitation, as applicable to this type of operation.
4. The CAA, in conjunction with helicopter operating companies, should consider the production and provision of a visual approach aid for use on platform and rig helidecks.