



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Aviation  
Administration**

# SAFO

Safety Alert for Operators

SAFO 11008  
DATE: 9/14/11

Flight Standards Service  
Washington, DC

[http://www.faa.gov/other\\_visit/aviation\\_industry/airline\\_operators/airline\\_safety/info](http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info)

*A SAFO contains important safety information and may include recommended action. SAFO content should be especially valuable to air carriers in meeting their statutory duty to provide service with the highest possible degree of safety in the public interest. Besides the specific action recommended in a SAFO, an alternative action may be as effective in addressing the safety issue named in the SAFO.*

**Subject:** Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB) Safety Advisory Notice AO-2011-016-SAN-001 regarding hydraulic-boost servos on hydraulic system-equipped Robinson R44 helicopters

**Purpose:** This SAFO alerts operators and maintainers of Robinson R44 helicopters with hydraulic system-equipped flight controls, of Safety Advisory Notice AO-2011-016-SAN-001. The Safety Advisory Notice was issued by the ATSB in response to a fatal Robinson R44 accident.

**Background:** In February 2011 a Robinson R44 helicopter was conducting pilot evaluations at Cessnock Aerodrome in New South Wales, Australia. During the evaluation, the pilot was performing a simulated hydraulic failure when the helicopter experienced an actual hydraulic system failure. While repositioning the helicopter to investigate the failure, the helicopter crashed resulting in a fatal accident. The circumstances of the accident are currently under investigation, a probable cause has not yet been determined. However, the ATSB has released a preliminary investigation report that identified a bolt securing part of the flight control system was detached. Based on the preliminary investigation report the ATSB issued Safety Advisory Notice AO-2011-016-SAN-001. The preliminary investigation may be found at the following link: [http://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation\\_reports/2011/air/ao-2011-016.aspx](http://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation_reports/2011/air/ao-2011-016.aspx).

**Discussion:** The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) encourages all operators of hydraulic system-equipped R44 helicopters, and organizations performing inspection, testing, maintenance and repair activities on the flight control systems of those helicopters, to note the circumstances detailed in this preliminary report.

**Recommended Action:** The FAA recommends that operators and maintenance facilities take the necessary steps to inspect the hydraulic-boost servo connections and linkages on all hydraulic system-equipped R44 helicopters.

**Contact:** Questions or comments regarding this SAFO should be directed to the General Aviation Branch, AFS-350, at 202-385-6429.