

## **Safety Notice SN-41**

Issued: May 2013

Revised: Jul 2021; Jul 2025

### **PILOT DISTRACTIONS**

Pilot distractions have caused or contributed to numerous fatal accidents. Examples of distractions include the use of mobile phones and portable electronic devices, unexpected events, consuming food or beverage, and attending to passengers.

Distractions may be visual, physical, or mental as each of these divert the pilot's attention from the primary duty of flying the helicopter. Numerous studies have shown that distractions while driving a motor vehicle are the equivalent of driving while impaired, leading to laws prohibiting this behavior. Operation of an aircraft while distracted is similarly affected and equally dangerous.

It is your responsibility as the pilot to maintain focus on the operation of the helicopter by not engaging in activities that unnecessarily distract from this responsibility.

Use of an autopilot never frees a pilot from the responsibility to closely monitor and control the aircraft. Do not fall prey to complacency while the autopilot is engaged or regard its use as an opportunity to engage in non-essential activities.

The following guidelines will help ensure your safety and the safety of your passengers:

- Keep your hands available to assume control of the aircraft at all times.
- Postpone lower priority activities until it is safe to do so or until after landing.
- Always maintain your visual scan outside the aircraft and of the flight instruments.
- Maintain situational awareness and mental engagement with the operation of the helicopter.
- Any avionics programming that takes more than a few seconds should be done while on the ground.
- If a door opens in flight, always land before attempting to close it.
- When hovering, keep both hands on the controls. If tuning a radio or other task is required, first land and reduce collective pitch.