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SAFETY NOTICE SN011

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FUEL EXHAUSTION

Many pilots miscalculate the seriousness of fuel exhaustion. Running out of fuel has the same impact as sudden engine or drive train failure. When the helicopter runs out of fuel, the pilot must immediately enter autorotation and execute a forced landing.

Do not think that running out of fuel is not critical because you are competent to execute an autorotation. When you are practicing emergency maneuvers, you are expecting the event. An unexpected event will not always have as positive an outcome.

If the pilot does not enter autorotation quickly, the rotor rpm will decay rapidly, the rotor blades will stall, and a situation develops from which there is no recovery.

Never take for granted that the fuel gauges are accurate or that the low fuel warning light is operative. These devices are not reliable enough to depend solely on them to advise you of the available fuel.

Important:

Record the hour meter reading at each fill up.
Plan your flight to ensure that you never allow less than ¼ full tanks.
Never allow the fuel level to become so low that the low fuel warning comes on.
During preflight, check fuel level visually.
Make sure caps are tight and vents are not blocked.
Check fuel for contamination.
Before takeoff, make sure fuel valve is full on.
During flight, continually scan both the hour meter and fuel gauges. If either indicates that you are low on fuel, land the helicopter.