

Flight Safety

Operational Safety Notice OSN2024-001

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MD Helicopters Operational Safety Notice Emergency Locator Transmitters

Having an Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) installed in your helicopter can promptly notify Search and Rescue (SAR) personnel of the location of the helicopter in the event an emergency occurs. In the aftermath of a recent tragic accident involving an MD Helicopters aircraft, investigators discovered that the 406 MHz ELT did not activate as designed. The ELT was appropriately installed, secured, and connected to the antenna. However, a critical detail emerged as the activation switch on the ELT was found in the off position rather than the expected armed position. Additionally, the helicopter was equipped with a remote switch control panel for the ELT located in the cockpit. Neither the helicopter operator, nor SAR personnel, received an ELT activation signal following the impact of the helicopter with terrain.



Original photo courtesy of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)



An improperly installed or maintained ELT may not activate in the event of an emergency. This can cause delayed emergency response and add to the risk for the SAR personnel during the search. For mechanics, it is pertinent to ensure that the ELT is installed and maintained properly in accordance with the ELT manufacturer's instructions. For pilots, if a remote switch control panel for the ELT is installed in the cockpit, it is pertinent to conduct the regular testing of the ELT in accordance with the manufacturer's operations manual.

Here are some additional resources about ELTs:

NTSB Safety Alert SA-030 "Armed" for Safety: Emergency Locator Transmitters

["Armed" for Safety: Emergency Locator Transmitters \(ntsb.gov\)](https://www.ntsb.gov/alerts/Pages/SA-030-Armed-for-Safety-Emergency-Locator-Transmitters.aspx)

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Advisory Circular 91-44A Installation and Inspection Procedures for Emergency Locator Transmitters and Receivers

[AC 91-44A - Installation and Inspection Procedures for Emergency Locator Transmitters and Receivers - CHG 1 \(faa.gov\)](https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/ac_html/ac91-44a-installation-and-inspection-procedures-for-emergency-locator-transmitters-and-receivers-chg1)

FAA Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin HQ-12-32 Hook and Loop Style Fasteners as a Mounting Mechanism for Emergency Locator Transmitters

<https://drs.faa.gov/browse/excelExternalWindow/113DBBA8CE192DE286257A0700582093.0001>

Fly safe!

airsafety@MDHelicopters.com

