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Super D20B Upgrade Delivers Up to ~20% Reduction in Fuel Burn, Extended Endurance, and Significant Cost Savings for MD 500D Operators

Early operational results from the Super D20B upgrade program are showing meaningful improvements in fuel efficiency and mission endurance for MD 500D operators. Initial data indicates a reduction in fuel consumption from approximately 35 gallons per hour to 28 gallons per hour—an improvement of roughly 20 percent.

The performance gains are attributed to increased rotor system efficiency. By incorporating larger main and tail rotor discs, the aircraft operates with lower disc loading, allowing it to produce lift more efficiently and reduce the power required in flight. The result is a net decrease in fuel burn despite the larger rotor system.

These efficiency gains translate directly into extended mission capability. In standard configuration, endurance increases from approximately 1 hour 42 minutes to over 2 hours 12 minutes. When paired with a common 30-gallon auxiliary fuel tank, total endurance improves from about 2 hours 38 minutes to more than 3 hours 17 minutes—adding nearly 40 minutes of additional time on station.

Just as importantly, the reduction in fuel burn drives measurable operating cost savings. At typical utilization rates:

300 flight hours per year *(up to ~2,100 gal saved)*

- $5/gal: ~$10,500
- $7/gal: ~$14,700

600 flight hours per year *(up to ~4,200 gal saved)*

- $5/gal: ~$21,000
- $7/gal: ~$29,400

“The key takeaway for operators is simple: the aircraft is doing more with less,” said Ryan Weeks. “The Super D20B doesn’t just improve performance – it increases the value of every gallon of fuel on board and lowers the cost of every hour flown.”

The Super D20B upgrade is designed to provide operators with improved efficiency, extended range, and enhanced operational flexibility without compromising core aircraft performance.

For more information about this upgrade send an email to upgrades@mdhelicopters.com