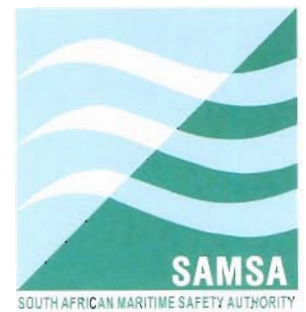


# South African Maritime Safety Authority



Ref: SM 6/5/2/1  
SM 12/1/1

Date: 19 July 2001

## MARINE NOTICE No. 18 OF 2001

TO ALL AGENTS SURVEYORS AND MASTERS OF SHIPS CALLING AT SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS

### HAZARDS ARISING FROM THE USE OF HELICOPTERS WHEN LANDING PERSONNEL ON THE DECKS OF SHIPS

1. The ports of Durban and Richards Bay have established a helicopter service for landing marine pilots on vessels while they are proceeding to their berths in those ports. On larger gearless vessels such as Cape and Panamax size bulk carriers, the helicopter lands on a dedicated hatch cover so that the Marine pilot may board the vessel directly from the aircraft.
2. In a recent incident off a South African port, a seaman was killed when he was struck by the tail rotor of a Portnet helicopter, which had landed on his vessel. The aircraft's crew were unaware of his presence until the moment the incident occurred..
3. **It is emphasized that helicopter rotors are extremely dangerous to people in close proximity to them. Therefore, no person may approach a helicopter in operation on the deck of a ship without the knowledge and permission of its pilot or a crew member, and then, only when signalled that it is safe to do so.**
4. The helicopters in use in Durban and Richards Bay are Agusta A109s, which were chosen for their ability to operate in adverse wind conditions. It is a characteristic of these aircraft that the main rotor tilts forward over the front of the aircraft while rotating at lower speeds. The height of the tip of the rotor blade above the deck is less than that of an average man when the helicopter has settled on board with the rotor idling. Further, the tail rotor blade is situated at the rear of the aircraft directly behind the pilot and his crew member, and out of their normal field of vision. Any person approaching a helicopter from this blind spot also places himself at extreme risk.
5. The diagram on page 2 clearly illustrates the danger areas around a helicopter when it is in operation.

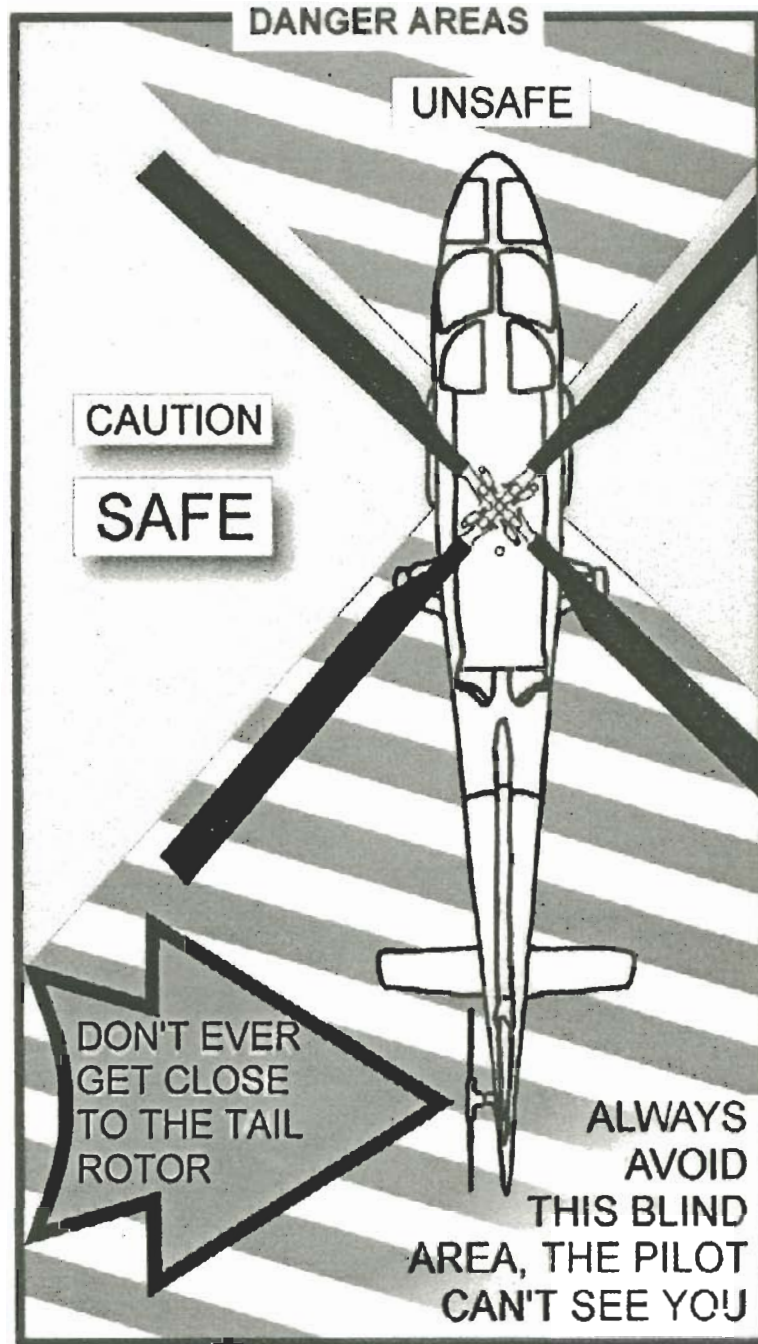
#### Safe Ships - Clean Seas

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#### SAMSA BOARD:

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Mr S N Mthethwa, Capt B R Watt (Chief Executive Officer)



6. The purpose of this Marine Notice is therefore to warn ship's staff who are delegated duties concerning helicopter operations, that **the aircraft in question are only to be approached from the side and never from the back or front, and never without an indication from it's crew that it is safe to do so.**

*B. R. Watt*  
B R WATT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER