

President's Message

In Our Business, Little Things Become Big Things...

December's HYDRO ONE accident was a tragic and sobering reminder that sometimes it's the little things that can be really important. The TSB recently released more details relating to the accident, which can be found at (readers should take note that the attached link contains graphic images of the aircraft wreckage):

<http://www.tsb.gc.ca/eng/enquetes-investigations/aviation/2017/a17o0264/a17o0264.asp>

While the TSB's investigation is ongoing, it appears that a canvass bag blew off the aircraft's platform and, along with its attached carabiner, and struck the tail rotor. It was also evident that two of the three passengers were not wearing their seat belts.

The TSB has asked HAC to emphasize to its operator members the importance of ensuring that all passengers are wearing their seat belts. While we may never know *why* these passengers were not wearing seat belts – the investigation may shed some light on this subject.

The TSB has also asked the association to emphasize the importance of ensuring that items carried outside the aircraft are properly secured during flight. We all know that in another set of circumstances, that tool bag could have fallen harmlessly from the helicopter – only to be lost, but sometimes the holes in the Swiss Cheese align, with disastrous consequences. We know that lightly weighted items - and even some heavier items with the right profile - can be carried to the tail.

There certainly will be many lessons-learned flowing from this accident, as the details and the circumstances running up to it become evident. Those lessons could include elements of CRM; Operational Procedures; training; attachment mechanisms; cultural issues - to name only a potential few. As the circumstances running up to this accident become evident, we all need to be vigilant, and open to an assessment of our own vulnerability under similar circumstances. As an industry, we need to use it as an opportunity to consider our own operational procedures and safety culture, in the hope that we can minimize the risk of a future accident.