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# Report finds pilot, engineer violated hot refuelling rules

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## BENTONG COPTER CRASH

# Report finds pilot, engineer violated hot refuelling rules

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A preliminary report on a helicopter crash in Bentong, Pahang, on Feb 6, which killed a member of the ground crew, has found that both the engineer and pilot failed to follow hot refuelling safety procedures.

The Air Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) report said the probable cause would be included in the final report.

In its preliminary report published on March 6, the bureau said the unsafe actions of both the pilot and the ground engineer during the hot refuelling introduced potential hazards.

Hot refuelling is the process of refuelling with the engine running and rotor rotating due to operational demands and time constraints.

The report said a Standard Work Practice (SWP) had been issued by a contractor engaged by Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) to its lessee to ensure the safety of the refueller, the helicopter and the surrounding environment while performing their tasks during hot refuelling.

It said part of the agreement required the lessee to oversee and monitor flight operations to ensure compliance and that it was their responsibility to ensure the companies adhered to these obligations.

However, based on video footage of the helicopter conducting hot refuelling a day before the accident, the crew did not adhere to the SWP.

“The unsafe actions of both the pilot and the ground engineer introduced potential hazards.

“The helicopter was hovering with its rotor blades still running while moving closer to the ground engineer, who was positioned directly beneath the main rotor

disc,” it said.

Under the SWP, crew members must wait at a safe distance from the landing point and should only approach the helicopter after receiving a clear instruction (a thumbs up) from the pilot.

“However, the crew were already positioned beneath the helicopter while it was still hovering and approaching for landing, indicating a clear violation of this procedure.

“When the lessor fails to comply with safety regulations, it is the lessee’s responsibility to oversee and monitor operations to ensure adherence to established requirements.

“In this case, the absence of a safety officer from the lessee at the helicopter landing site to supervise the hot refuelling process contributed to crew complacency, further increasing operational risks,” it said.

The report said the pilot, who was qualified and authorised to conduct the flight, had a prior accident in 2019 involving the same type of helicopter.

That crash occurred in Indonesia following a suspected engine failure. The AAIB said it was still waiting to obtain the final report from Indonesian authorities.

As a precaution, the AAIB recommended that the pilot’s company facilitate a medical consultation for a comprehensive evaluation.

On Feb 6, a Bell 206L4 helicopter operated by PT Zaveryna crashed while attempting to land in Bentong. The incident occurred at 10.20am near a hot spring pool in Kampung Janda, along the old Kuala Lumpur-Bentong road.

The helicopter, with registration number PK-ZUV, had been engaged in aerial work for TNB since Jan 21.