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Securing Portable Operational Equipment during Agency Operations.

PURPOSE

With the increase of portable operational equipment being carried in aircraft during Agency operations, there is the potential for loose articles or equipment to be dropped from an aircraft or to be thrown around an aircraft cockpit in heavy turbulence, a crash or heavy landing situation or unsecured portable equipment jamming flight controls.

A number of occurrences have occurred in recent times where light, portable equipment has been dropped from aircraft conducting Agency operations.

The portable equipment of most concern are:

- Cameras – video or digital and associated cases.
- Map books/cases.
- Portable laptop computers or “tablets”.
- Portable Field IT (PFIT) kit.
- Portable radio kits.
- Thermal Imaging Camera (TIC).

The following procedures are to apply:

1. All portable items are required to be secured on the floor or under/through seatbelts during any take off or landing.
2. Use of any portable equipment in-flight must not interfere with flight controls.
3. A maximum of 3kg per unsecured item is imposed during an Agency flight. Portable equipment of a heavier nature is required to be secured at all times.
4. Items may be stored inside personal gear packs which should be secured.
5. The pilot is to approve the location and security of any such equipment prior to landing or takeoff.
6. Any portable equipment being used should be secured to the operator.
7. Only the minimum amount of equipment required to perform the task is to be unsecured at any one time.

8. All portable radio kits are to be secured with seat belts to the floor/seat or securely stowed in the cargo area for the duration of the flight.
9. Aircraft doors shall not be opened until the aircraft is well clear of main runway.

For any helicopter door off operations the requirements of Briefing Note 15 – Helicopter Doors Off/Removed Operations apply.

The Agencies do not currently conduct door off/removed operations from fixed wing aircraft.

Any loose articles or portable equipment not required during the flight should be treated as cargo and appropriately secured or stowed in a cargo locker/boot.

It is ultimately, the onus of any Agency person to ensure that when opening an aircraft door in such circumstances, that no item which may have become dislodged during flight/takeoff/landing falls from the aircraft.

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