

Changing of the Guard



Irish Coast Guard
GARDA CÓSTA na hÉIREANN



On the 11th of December 2013 at 1300 the new S-92A Helicopter took over from the venerable S-61N on shift in Dublin.

With Dublin online, the Coastguard's transition to the new helicopter was complete at all four bases. The S-92A has arrived.

The S-92A is a highly advanced helicopter featuring the latest generation technology resulting in far greater capability.

A few facts & figures (for those of you so inclined!)

Maximum Take Off Weight

(With no external load)

26,500lbs

Maximum Take Off Weight



(With external load)	28,300lbs
Maximum External Load	8,000lbs
Overall Length	68'6"
Rotor Diameter	56'4"
Fuselage Interior Dimensions	
Length	20'0"
Width	6'7"
Height	6'0"
Max Cruise Speed	157kts

The range with standard mission equipment of the S92 is 490 km.

However, with 2nd auxiliary tank fitted (kept on all bases), the range will extend to 637 km.

Both variations allow for 30 minutes hover on scene, the ability to lift 22 survivors and diversion fuel on return.

Upfront

Gone are the more traditional gauges associated with aircraft cockpits. In their place, 5 Multi-Function Displays (MFDs) greet the pilots, the glass cockpit. (Whilst there are still 4 traditional gauges providing heading, height, speed & attitude information to the pilots, they are very much standby instruments for use when all else fails.)

The MFDs provide the pilots with a wealth of information allowing increased situational awareness in any environment. The phrase of the moment is optimal configuration.....in short ensuring the right information is displayed at the right time.



This information will always include flight instruments, engine indications & gearbox indications. It can then also include other sources of information.....EGPWS (Enhanced Ground Proximity Warning System), TCAS (Traffic Collision Avoidance System), Moving Map, Radar, FLIR/ Camera Images.....you get the idea.

The aircraft is also equipped with a state of the art auto-pilot featuring advanced SAR specific modes, allowing for a true All Weather SAR aircraft.

Modifications to ensure full NVG capability are due to commence soon.



The crewmen have already completed the transition to Paramedic level of care and are fully approved to practice at CPG 3rd edition level. CHC Ireland has also successfully been granted approval as a CPG 3rd edition service provider. This will enable them to work seamlessly with other P.H.E.C.C. personnel especially advanced Paramedics. The equipment available to the crews include...

Stretcher Bay, Suction Units, Lifepak 2000, 12 lead ECG, Defibrillator, Oxygen, Braun Drugs Pump, Various pain relieving drugs & equipment for airway maintenance, Vacuum mattress, Vacuum splints, Burns kit, Obstetrics kit

SAR Fit

The aircraft is fitted with the latest generation FLIR system, which gives full 360-degree night vision & colour TV camera capability. The system features significant levels of zoom & the ability to record onto a USB device everything it sees.

The aircraft is fitted with two completely independent variable speed rescue hoists which operate at a max speed of 325 feet per minute and both have 300 feet of cable. The hoist also has a powerful spotlight positioned to illuminate the winchman if needed.

The aircraft is fitted with a Spectrolab Nightsun XP searchlight. It has 30-million candlepower of illumination and has a 1-mile target identification range.

A Chelton Homer is also fitted, allowing the aircraft to locate Distress Beacons.



Rotor blade de-Ice Protection System (RIPS)

The risk of ice build-up on rotor blades is a serious threat to helicopter rescue crews in cold environments and especially during Mountain Rescue operations where altitude can often play a significant role. The S92 is fitted with full de-icing protection on both the main & tail rotor blades, certified up to a height of 10,000 feet & down to a temperature of -40°C.

Rear Ramp



The aircraft is fitted with a rear ramp, which can be used for the deployment and recovery of personnel when the aircraft has landed on the ground. This has obvious advantages in the Mountain Rescue environment if the aircraft has landed, not least the ability for a stretcher party to walk directly onto the aircraft.

Cargo Hook

The aircraft is fitted with a cargo hook, which can be used for carrying underslung loads up to 8,000lbs in weight. This will allow the aircraft to conduct a wide range of operational requirements for the Coastguard.

Mountain Rescue & the S-92A



As with the introduction of any new technology, training is the key! As training progresses with all Mountain Rescues Teams familiarity with the machine & procedures will grow.

Increased performance, improved capabilities & enhanced equipment mean a greater ability to safely conduct Mountain Rescue Operations in weather conditions beyond the capabilities of other helicopters.

Communications between MRT personnel & the aircraft are available on FM & on Tetra.

Landing site preparation remains the same with the emphasis on clearing the site of loose articles.

The aircraft crew will have the final say if the site is suitable, so don't be offended if an alternate site is selected.



Clear the site of all loose items.

If in use.....do not look directly at the Search Light.

Only deploy smoke downwind of the site.

Position teams forward of the site.

Do NOT approach the aircraft without a clear 'thumbs up' from the crew.

Entry/ Exit from between the aircrafts 12 & 3 o'clock

During winching or approach, landing & take-off keep all comms to a minimum.

will ensure this is managed safely, but a greater emphasis must be placed on Hi-Line technique &, of course, PPE.

Ear & Eye Protection, Hi-Vis Vest &, of course, Helmets!