ENSTROM SUFFERS SET-BACK ON TH180 TRAINER

News / Business aviation, Events / Festivals, Manufacturer



Light rotorcraft manufacturer Enstrom Helicopter arrives at Heli-Expo with its display shorn of a key exhibit after its new TH180 piston-single trainer was severely damaged during flight-testing.

"A piece of test equipment failed last week and totalled it," says Pierre du Pont, director of product support at the Menominee, Minnesota-based manufacturer.

Rather than being able to show off the TH180 in Louisville, instead Enstrom is working frantically to usher its next prototype into operation, which will cause a delay of around six weeks, says du Pont.

Certification was planned for year-end, with customer deliveries following in early 2017 "and we are still trying to meet that schedule", he says.

The 210hp (156kW) Lycoming HIO-390-powered TH180 is pitched as an alternative to the Robinson R22/44 in the training market.

© 2015-2026 50SKYSHADES.COM — Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes is prohibited.

Meanwhile, the company is still trying to find its feet under Chinese ownership following its January 2013 acquisition by Chongqing Helicopter Investment Company.

With the Chinese economy now entering a difficult period, the Beijing government has over the past 12 months introduced rules on moving capital out of the country, making it harder for Enstrom to gain investment from its parent.

"Being short on money really slows development projects down," says du Pont.

Despite the problems, Enstrom is hopeful that it can attract more military trainer contracts for its Rolls-Royce M250-C20W-powered 480B.

It has so far secured orders from countries including Japan (30), Thailand (16) and Venezuela (16) and believes the first two require further examples of the 1.3t helicopter for their respective armies.

02 MARCH 2016

SOURCE: FLIGHTGLOBAL
ARTICLE LINK:
https://ut.50skyshades.com/news/airlines/enstrom-suffers-set-back-on-th180-trainer

© 2015-2026 50SKYSHADES.COM — Reproduction, copying, or redistribution for commercial purposes is prohibited.