



MD-500 Light Enforcement Helicopters (LEH) are short-range, turbine-powered helicopters used by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Office of Air and Marine primarily as an observation helicopter for aerial patrol.

The MD-500 is a modern aircraft with roots in the U.S. Army's Light Observation Helicopter program, which dates to the 1950s.

The MD-500 is a rotary-wing aircraft designated as a Light Observation Helicopter. It is capable of a light lift, and flies with a crew of one (pilot).

The MD-500 is a highly effective aerial surveillance platform in border areas. Its maneuverability enables operations from off-airport sites and in metropolitan areas.

**Performance and Weights:**

- **Maximum Speed**  
152 knots (174 mph)
- **Service Ceiling Altitude**  
16,000 feet
- **Range**  
300 nautical miles (345 miles)
- **Endurance**  
2.5 hours
- **Maximum Gross Weight**  
3,000 pounds

**Features:**

- Laser designator combined with forward looking infrared detection system, which detects infrared radiation created by objects warmer or colder than ambient temperature.
- Night vision goggle-compatible