

Helicopter Ground Operations

A-027

Date: 04-06-1999

To provide safety guidelines for use by fire department personnel when operating with helicopters. The Incident Commander shall insure that fire department personnel follow approved safety guidelines when working with or around helicopters operated by the Emergency Service Departments or other agencies.

1: SAFETY GUIDELINES

- A. No smoking within 100 feet of the helicopter.
- B. Always approach the helicopter from the front.
- C. Never go near the tail of the helicopter.
- D. No running within 100 feet of the helicopter.
- E. No vehicles or personnel within 100 feet of the helicopter.
- F. Protect eyes from debris that may be thrown up by the rotor wash.

2: PROCEDURES

A. Landing zone requirements:

- 1) Minimum 100 X 100 feet, and 120 x 120 feet at night.
- 2) Maximum 15 to 30-degree slope.
- 3) Area must be clear of wires, trees, poles, emergency vehicles, debris and other obstacles.
- 4) Signs, poles and wires are difficult or impossible to see from the air. If they are at or near the landing zone, this information must be relayed to the pilot prior to landing.
- 5) In cases where a highway is the landing zone, traffic should be stopped at least 150 feet away in both directions.
- 6) The helicopter will usually try to land into the wind or with no more than 90 degree cross wind.
- 7) Vertical take offs and landings will not routinely be done. Instead, a slight angle will most probably be used.

B. Approaching the helicopter:

- 1) All approaches should be done from the front and sides. ***Never approach from the rear.***
- 2) Always wait for a signal from the pilot before approaching the helicopter.
- 3) If it becomes necessary to go from one side of the helicopter to the other, always walk around the front. Never walk to the rear, duck under the tail section, or walk around the tail rotor. Always remain clear of the rear area.
- 4) Due to the flexibility of the main rotor blades, personnel should approach the helicopter in a crouched stance.
- 5) If the helicopter must land on a slope or grade, personnel should approach from the downhill side.

C. Operating around the helicopter:

- 1) Fire Department personnel should remain away from the helicopter at all times when it is on the ground and the engine is running. Personnel should only approach the helicopter when:
 - a) Accompanying a crew member, to the aircraft to assist in loading or unloading a patient; or

b) It is necessary to provide medical assistance to or rescue occupants of the helicopter.

2) Patients should be kept away from the helicopter until its paramedic has prepared the aircraft and has evaluated the patient. The paramedic will then supervise the loading of the patient on the aircraft's litter before being placed in the helicopter.

3) If IV's are carried while loading a patient, they should not be carried so high as to permit them to hit the main rotor blades.

4) Personnel should not attempt to open or close aircraft doors. If fire department personnel are in the helicopter, they should remain there until a crewmember assists them in exiting the aircraft.