

Sanoca Rural Fire District, Inc.
Standard Operating Procedures
Emergency Operations

Fire Company Operations

Subject: Helicopter Safety

Adopted: October 01, 2005

PURPOSE

To provide safety guidelines for use by fire department personnel when operating with helicopters.

POLICY

The Incident Commander shall insure that fire department personnel follow approved safety guidelines when working with or around helicopters.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

- A. No smoking within 100 feet of the helicopter.
- B. Always approach the helicopter from the front, and only at the direction of a crew member.
- 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 which may be thrown up by the Rotor-wash.
- G. If helmets are to be worn, chin straps must be secured when operating near the helicopter. Safety glasses or goggles or helmet face-shield must be worn when helicopter is landing or taking off.

PROCEDURES

- A. Landing zone requirements:
 - 1. Minimum 100 X 100 feet.
 - 2. LZ cannot have more than a 30 degree slope.
 - 3. Area must be clear of wires, trees, buildings, 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. It would be a good idea to divert traffic via another route. Consider an alternate landing location such as a field or parking lot, or highway overpass, away from the incident, if the highway is too

narrow, or there are obstacles. The patient could be transported via ambulance a short distance to the LZ.

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.
8. An orange traffic cone shall be used at each corner of the 100x100 landing zone. The cones should also be used for night landings by wedging cone on top of a rechargeable lantern, then pinning a green strobe to the top of the cone. This will increase the visibility of the LZ for the pilot.
9. When the request is made for the Fire Department to set up a landing zone, a hand-line, charged and staffed, shall be in place in case of fire or crash. The hand-line shall be at least 1 ½" hose.
10. Once the proper location has been selected for the landing zone, advise the EMS supervisor immediately.

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 crew member assists them in exiting the aircraft.