

# Hauser Lake Fire Protection District

## Standard Operating Guideline Helicopter Landing Zone & Safety Procedures

Effective: \_10 /01 /08

SOG 015

The following KCEMSS Landing Zone & Safety Procedures shall be the Policy of the Hauser Lake Fire Protection District when utilizing helicopter transport during EMS operations.

### Kootenai County EMS System Landing Zone & Safety Procedures

In an effort to standardize safe scene operations, Idaho's air ambulance agencies have developed the following basic landing zone (LZ) and safety guidelines. EMS units are encouraged to seek more specific and in-depth safety training from the air medical program(s) they intend to use.

Landing Zones fall into three basic categories, listed here in order of general safety.

**Established helipads.** Usually located at airports or hospitals, heliports are generally constructed with consideration to size, slope, and surface, as well as approach and departure paths.

**Pre-established (or Designated) Landing Zones.** These are essentially pre-arranged rendezvous locations. By pre-planning specific LZ sites with your chosen air medical provider, the pilots are given the opportunity to survey the area ahead of time to identify potential hazards.

**On-scene Landing Zones.** Having the aircraft land at the scene typically offers the most expedient evacuation of the patient. Care must be taken to insure a suitable and safe LZ is prepared.

**Landing Zone Officer.** The most important component of safe scene operations is the LZ Officer.

### Helicopter Safety

#### Landing Zone Selection

**DAY:** Landing surfaces must be at least 75'X75' and as level as possible (less than a 5 degree slope). The center 12'X12' must be clear of stumps, large rocks, and face should be clear of all debris that might be blown by the rotor wash.

**NIGHT:** Landing surface must be at least 100'X100' and as level as possible (less than 5 degree slope). The entire landing area must be clear of all obstacles. The corners of the landing surface must be marked by dimmed vehicle lights if possible. Other lights such as emergency flashers, strobe lights, and flashlights can be used to help the pilot locate the LZ.

All poles, wires, trees, and other tall obstacles within the immediate landing area must be located and their position reported to the pilot prior to landing the helicopter. No vehicle traffic is allowed in the LZ.

## **Communications**

Approximately 10min. out from the landing zone, pilot or crew will contact you on the designated scene frequency. At this time, brief helicopter crew on the LZ, locations of obstacles, direction of wind, and possible landing direction. Give a patient update for the flight crew. If you see the helicopter before the pilot locates the LZ, give them direction relative to the helicopter. For example "we're at your three o'clock" or "we are north of you."

## **Safety**

Ensure that the patient is not in the LZ itself and is protected from the rotor wash and blowing dust. If the LZ is sloped, approach and depart the helicopter on the downhill side.

The following basic helicopter safety procedures are divided into 2 categories. The first is intended for personnel who will normally work outside the helicopter during the loading or unloading of patient or equipment. The second category is intended for personnel who may travel as a passenger in the helicopter.

### **Category 1**

**NEVER APPROACH THE HELICOPTER UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO DO SO BY THE PILOT OR FLIGHT CREW.**

- Always approach the helicopter from the front within the walk zone.
- Never approach helicopter with loose, unsecured or tall items that might be drawn into the rotor blades.
- Wear hearing protection.
- When approaching main rotor path, duck down well below the rotor height. In windy conditions or on sloped terrain, rotor may dip as low as 5 feet for the ground.
- Only assist the pilot and flight crew in loading and unloading patient and equipment when requested.
- Never lean against or take hold of any part of the helicopter unless you are asked to do so by the pilot or flight crew.

- Assign someone to ensure that on-lookers and other ground personnel stay clear of the “danger zone.”
- **SMOKING IS PROHIBITED WITHIN 50’ OF HELICOPTER.**

## **Category II**

**OBSERVE ALL OF THE CATEGORY 1 PROCEDURES UNTIL YOU ARE SAFELY INSIDE OF THE HELICOPTER.**

- Never lean against or take hold of any lever, control or cord while entering or exiting the aircraft. “Hand Hold” areas are clearly marked and caution should be taken to ensure that only the designated handles are used.
- When entering and exiting the helicopter, make sure that all loose clothing, baggage and equipment do not bump or get caught in the flight controls. In flight, never touch any buttons, levers, pedals, or handles unless instructed to do so by the pilot or flight crew.
- **SEAT BELTS WILL BE WORN AND SECURED AT ALL TIMES.**
- Each passenger should become familiar with the location of the first aid kit, fire extinguisher, emergency door release handle, and correct body position for emergency landing.
- Know how to properly wear the head set and use the intercom system.
- Do not exit the helicopter until the pilot or flight crew has cleared you to do so. When leaving the helicopter, depart to the front of the helicopter in view of the pilot.
- Prior to leaving the helicopter, ensure that seat belts are inside the doors and that the doors are secured.

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