



Helicopter Induction / Safety Awareness Guidelines

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Introduction

The Australian pipeline industry requires responsible persons to ensure that potential hazards which may be encountered with helicopter transportation are identified and that persons who may be potentially impacted are informed and prepared to cope with those identified hazards.

There must be a consistent, planned and considered approach to the provision of a comprehensive induction on helicopter safety on all projects and operational activities where helicopter transportation is used.

This guideline does not address the requirements of helicopter operators other than the Australian pipeline industry requires that helicopter service providers are certified to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations of Australia.

The following guidelines should be considered in both the project planning and operational phases.

1 Risk management and forward planning

1.1 General

Helicopters are a frequently used method of transport – particularly in areas of limited access. All personnel who use helicopters must be familiar with basic safety rules. These rules are applicable in all circumstances, even when working in difficult or trying conditions. Any departure from the rules detailed below could pose a serious threat to personal safety.

The first step toward achieving a safe environment for journeys in a helicopter is to identify the hazards and/or health and safety deficiencies which may exist and systematically manage those issues.

1.2 Hazard types

Hazard types include:

- Rotors / rotating parts
 - Main Rotor: the area, which is covered by the sweep of the main rotor blades, is known as the rotor disc. Movement anywhere under the disc should be undertaken with caution, as the main rotor can tilt to within 2.4 metres above ground. This clearance is further reduced when the helicopter is operating on uneven ground.
 - Tail Rotor: this is unprotected and very difficult to see due to its high rotational speed. Personnel movement aft of the rear door area is absolutely forbidden while rotor is turning.
- Approaching the helicopter on level ground
 - The aircraft must never be approached without the permission of the pilot irrespective of whether the engines are running or not. All approaches must be made from between the 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock positions. Never approach a helicopter from the rear. The pilot is unable to see you and the tail rotor is very dangerous.
 - Ensure that when you are approaching a helicopter you maintain eye contact with the pilot. To seek approval to approach the helicopter, signal the pilot by extending one arm horizontally at chest height with thumb extended upwards. Only when a return thumbs up signal is received from the pilot may an approach be made.
 - As you approach, ensure that you duck your head down as the rotor blades can sag. If the helicopter is on uneven ground there is a greater danger of being hit by a rotor, and you

must ensure that you have enough headroom before you move closer. If in doubt, don't move.

- Approaching the helicopter on sloping ground
 - When the rotor blades are turning, avoid moving towards a helicopter down a slope or exiting a helicopter and walking up a slope. You could walk into a rotor blade. Approach a helicopter on level ground or from the downhill side but only after being given "thumbs-up" clearance to approach from the pilot.
- Slips, trips and falls – embarking and disembarking.
- Dust and other wind-borne debris – eye injuries.
- Cargo / baggage – No loose baggage in passenger cabin or cockpit.
- Helicopter rotor wash (wind) will blow ground debris such as dirt, sand and vegetation all over the place. The landing area should be kept clear of debris. However, at times you may have to land on unprepared landing points. Shield your eyes (with eye protection) as the helicopter comes in to land, and make sure all your baggage is secure and that you've taken off all loose items of clothing such as hats, scarves and the like.
- Seatbelts (fit for purpose, used by all).
- Safe evacuations.
- Unfit to fly / transport (passenger health and behaviour, cargo restrictions).

2 Communication procedures

Ensure that you are able to communicate with the pilot throughout the flight. Most helicopter cabins are fitted with noise cancelling headsets for each seat to enable communication with the pilot. A voice check should be undertaken each flight. Pay attention to the pilot's safety brief, and be aware of how to open the doors in case of an emergency.

3 Dos and don'ts

The objective is to ensure that coordinated and effective plans, systems and appropriately trained personnel are in place to detect, mobilise, contain and recover from an emergency situation.

- Do – wear eye protection to prevent injury from dust and debris raised from the down draft
- Do – approach and leave a helicopter so that the pilot can always see you
- Do – observe the path of the rotor blades while they are turning and keep well under them
- Do – carry long objects parallel to the ground preferably between two persons, one at each end to avoid contact with the rotor blades
- Do – remember the machine can move in any direction including backwards
- Do – wear ear protection while in flight
- Do – wear a life vest if travelling over water
- Do – carry bags (e.g. laptops) by handles – not by using the shoulder strap
- Do – ensure seat belts are placed back on the seat when unclipped (trip hazard)
- Do not – lift objects higher than your waist while under the rotors
- Do not – get near the tail rotor or tail boom
- Do not – unfasten seat belt until the pilot indicates it is safe to do so
- Do not – distract or make unauthorised signals to the pilot
- Do not – leave loose objects in the cabin

- Do not – wear safety helmets while embarking, disembarking or in flight
- Do not – smoke on board or within 50 metres of a helicopter
- Do not – leave loose objects near the helicopter or landing area where they may be blown by the rotor down wash
- Do not – carry alcoholic beverages on board helicopters
- Do not – carry or load any material with toxic, corrosive, incendiary or explosive characteristics
- Do not – stand on or near a landing area or platform when a helicopter is making an approach or departure
- Do not – approach a helicopter from “up hill” or exit a helicopter “up hill”. The rotor blades may be too close to the ground and strike you.

For more information contact APGA 02 6273 0577 or apga@apga.org.au