

Tully Hose Co. No. 1

Standard Operating Guidelines
Helicopter operations
Guideline # TF-306 – Rev.1

Purpose: To establish guidelines for safe operations involving helicopters.

The transport of a patient(s) by helicopter should be considered under the following conditions:

Ground transportation to the appropriate care facility will exceed thirty minutes.

The helicopter can be airborne and transport to the designated hospital quicker than ground transportation can transport the patient(s) to the nearest appropriate hospital.

Ground Transportation is compromised.

A proper helicopter-landing zone is available.

A multiple casualty incident (MCI) threatens to overload local capabilities.

Difficult access situations.

When a decision is made to request a helicopter evacuation, the Incident Commander will make that request to Fire Control.

Helicopters are normally safe, but they must be approached with caution.

The rotors of the helicopter present the greatest hazard and should be avoided at all times. When the rotors are in motion they may dip down. When landing and taking off helicopter rotor blades create downdrafts that can be dangerous. Stay clear of the tail rotor; never approach the aircraft from the rear. When approaching a helicopter, all equipment such as shovels, axes and tools must be carried horizontally, below the waist, never upright or over the shoulder. Approach or leave aircraft in a crouching manner (for extra clearance from the main rotor. On uneven ground, always approach on the down slope side. Always approach or leave in the pilot's field of vision.

The helicopter crew is most familiar with the aircrafts behavior under different conditions. The crew will decide when it is safe for you to approach the aircraft. Ground personnel should never approach the helicopter unless escorted by the crew.

All unnecessary personnel should be kept well out of the landing zone area. Personnel must remain alert at all times and constantly evaluate the situation and their surroundings to ensure that landing zone security has not been compromised. All landing zone personnel are required to have protective gear on.

For communication purposes the landing zone will be designated "TFD LZ".

Once radio contact has been established between LZ command and the aircraft and there is an obvious danger to the aircraft, immediately transmit ABORT! ABORT! ABORT!

If you are not in radio communication raise your arms over your head and cross and uncross your arms in an exaggerated motion. The aircraft will abort its landing until the LZ is cleared.

Command will assign personnel to select and identify a landing zone. The assigned personnel shall have a portable radio, eye protection and high visibility safety vests.

Landing zones must be relatively flat and free of obstructions and should be at least 100 sqft x 100 sqft, 100 sqft = about 30 large steps. Landing zones and aircraft approach lane should be clear of wires, towers, vehicles, and loose objects that can be kicked up by the downdraft from the aircraft. Landing zone should consist of firm ground with less than 8 degrees of slope. A Safety Officer should be assigned to the landing zone. An engine must be assigned to the landing zone.

All unnecessary personnel should be kept well out of the landing zone area. Personnel must remain alert at all times and constantly evaluate the situation and their surroundings to ensure that landing zone security has not been compromised. All landing zone personnel are required to have protective gear on.