

# **POINT PLEASANT BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **Helicopter Landing Operations**

### **Standard Operating Guideline**

#### **Purpose:**

To establish guidelines for the safe and effective use of a helicopter on emergency scenes and to ensure the establishment of a safe and secure landing zone.

#### **Authority:**

Once the need for a helicopter landing has been established, the Incident Commander will assign a Landing Zone Officer (LZO) to oversee the establishment of a safe and secure landing zone and to handle all communications with the helicopter crew. If available, a Safety Officer shall assume this role. An engine or truck company will be assigned to the LZO to assist with LZ operations.

#### **Communications:**

The Landing Zone Officer (LZO) shall be the only person to initiate and maintain communication with the helicopter via radio. When possible, the helicopter will communicate with the LZO via South Jersey Fire Net VHF radio frequency (154.265MHz). The LZO should be prepared to provide the pilot with the local weather conditions, wind direction, location of the LZ, best direction for approach and any hazards around or within the perimeter. Visual contact should be maintained with the pilot at all times. On final approach, the LZO should stand on the edge of the perimeter with his/her back to the wind and arms straight over his/her head. The LZO should limit radio communications with the helicopter to warnings about potential hazards and be prepared to wave off the landing by waving his/her arms back and forth overhead.

#### **Procedures:**

##### **Landing Zone (LZ) Selection and Preparation:**

- The primary landing zone designated for our department is the center of the playing fields behind the Antrim School. In the event it is not practical to use that field, an LZ may be established in a large parking lot or on a ball field meeting the established guidelines.

The following LZ criteria must be adhered to:

- The landing zone (LZ) must be a minimum of 110 feet by 110 feet, level, firm, dry and free of debris – parking lots or ball fields are good choices

- Personnel should walk through the entire LZ to remove any debris that may cause damage to the helicopter and dusty areas should be wet down prior to landing
- There must not be any overhead obstructions, wires, tree limbs or other objects that may cause damage to the aircraft upon approach, landing or take off. At night, an emergency vehicle with flashing lights should be placed under wire obstructions, which are hard to see from the air and a spot light should be shown on any other type of hazard.
- NEVER SHINE LIGHTS AT THE HELICOPTER as you can momentarily blind the pilot
- Under the direction of the LZO, the LZ perimeter should be secured by the engine or truck company from any pedestrians or vehicles
- All personnel and apparatus should be kept a minimum of 100 feet from the LZ perimeter(200 feet from the aircraft)
- At night, the corners of the LZ should be marked with the strobe light kit or by forming an X at the center of the LZ with the low beam headlights from two emergency vehicles. Orange traffic cones may be used during the day or orange fluorescent paint may be sprayed on the ground in a large X at the center of the LZ
- An additional strobe light or cone should be placed on the appropriate side of the perimeter to denote wind direction (e.g. if the wind is blowing out of the North, you would place the light or cone on the center of the North side of the LZ perimeter)
- DO NOT use flares under any circumstances!

#### Landing Zone Safety:

A safe and secure landing zone is the primary responsibility of the LZ Officer!

The following precautions should be followed at all times:

- Common Sense and Caution should prevail at all times
- All personnel and bystanders should remain at least 200 feet outside the perimeter unless directed by the LZ Officer
- Do not run or smoke inside the LZ perimeter
- Secure all loose objects and personal items (e.g. helmets, hats, blankets, stethoscopes) from rotor wash
- Shield your eyes or wear protective eyewear during landing and take off
- DO NOT APPROACH THE AIRCRAFT WHILE THE ROTORS ARE TURNING AND NEVER APPROACH FROM THE REAR OF THE AIRCRAFT!!
- When directed or escorted by the air crew, you should always cautiously approach the aircraft from the front while maintaining eye contact with the pilot
- Crouch down when approaching the aircraft and do not raise anything above shoulder height
- If the aircraft has to land on a slope, always approach it from the down-slope side to avoid the rotor