

# SAN DIEGO FIRE-RESCUE DEPARTMENT

## AIR OPERATIONS DIVISION

### HELICOPTER GROUND SAFETY OPERATIONS

- Approach from the Pilots visual field (front) 10 o'clock – 2 o'clock.
- Approach only after being signaled to do so by the Pilot or Crew Chief.
- Never approach from or circle the rear of a helicopter or area of the tail rotor.
- Wear full PPE's, Helmet (fitting, chinstrap), Nomex (sleeves down, collar up), Leather boots, gloves, and eye protection.
- Maintain Situational Awareness at all times. Maintain eye contact with the helicopter during takeoffs and landings.
- Helicopter crew members will open/close compartments/doors and load & offload passengers and equipment.
- **NEVER** go aft (rear) of the skids at anytime.
- Keep feet on the skids or a foot away from the skids.
- Keep all unauthorized personnel/vehicles at least 200 feet away from landing areas.

### LANDING ZONE REQUIRMENTS

- Day: 100' x 100' safety circle
- Night: 200' x 200' safety circle. (Utilize the helispot directory for approved landing zones for night operations).
- Clear area and secure all loose items that could pose a danger if picked up by helicopter rotor downwash (trash cans/lids, plywood, dry hose lines, cones, etc.).
- Establish radio contact with helicopters prior to landing. 8P (SDMA20), 9P (SDMA30), Med Air, White 3 and CDF A/G, are all examples of radio channels that may be utilized.
- Identify aerial hazards, wind speed/direction, slope if a factor, and other obstacles that may be an issue (wires, trees, structures, light standards, etc.).
- Helicopter approach/departure paths should be clear of obstacles and will be into the wind.
- Dust abate landing areas with water prior to helicopter arrival if necessary.

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## **HELICOPTER MISSIONS**

**Weather minimums are a 500 foot ceiling (cloud base) and 1 mile visibility at the point of departure, enroute, and at the destination.**

- Firefighting (no hover fill at night, ground fill only)
- Air Rescue (Land & Water)
- Patient Transport to all hospitals (configured for two patients)
- Recon/Aerial Observation Platform
- Lighting/FLIR & Daytime Color Camera
- Microwave Downlink/Fire Mapping
- Passenger/Cargo (Internal/External) Transportation
- Large Animal Rescue

## **NIGHT WATER DROP POLICY**

**One of the following five (5) conditions must exist for night time fire fighting water drops to be considered:**

- Lives are, or will be threatened
- Structures are, or will be threatened
- Resources of significant economic value are, or will be threatened.
- Excessively high suppression cost will be prevented by taking action.
- Potential for large fire growth and/or extended resource commitment deemed unacceptable by management.

**Night Helicopter Water Drop Mission Requirements Include:**

- Air Operations Division has sufficient personnel available to safely manage the operation.
- High probability of mission success.
- Use of multi-engine helicopters.
- Approval at the Deputy Chief level.