

Yakima County Fire District 12– Standard Operating Guidelines

SOG 4-5 – Helicopter Operations

1. General

1.1 Purpose. The purpose of this Standard Operating Guideline is to provide guidelines to assist personnel who have requested assistance from an area helicopter service to provide support for on scene operations.

1.2 Scope. This Standard Operating Guideline shall apply to all members of Yakima County Fire District 12.

1.3 Enforcement. Enforcement of this standard operating guideline is the responsibility of the District's officers. Any person deviating from the provisions of this guideline may be required, at the discretion of the officer in charge, to submit in writing, within five (5) calendar days, an explanation for such deviation to the requesting officer who will forward the explanation up the chain of command for further review.

2. Requests for Helicopter Support

2.1 Requests for helicopter support shall be made to Control by the Incident Commander. Most requests will be made for a medical evacuation helicopter or rescue helicopter.

2.2 Requests for helicopter support shall include:

- The reason for the request (ie. medical evac., water rescue, search for missing person)
- Location of the landing zone
- Where applicable, available patient information
- Ground contact assignment

2.3 If on scene resources are committed, the Incident Commander shall request an additional engine company to set up and secure the landing zone.

2.4 Communication with helicopters shall be conducted on a specific frequency (AM Aircraft Radio, LERN... etc).

3. Engine Company Responsibilities

3.1 Unless otherwise directed by the Incident Commander, the engine company assigned to the landing zone shall respond directly to the landing zone and report to Operations or the Incident Commander if Operations has not been established.

3.2 All personnel shall be in full personal protective equipment as specified in SOG 11, Safety.

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3.3 Location and Securing a Landing Zone. Personnel shall make every effort to locate a landing site that is: flat and firm, large and unobstructed, and free of debris. Landing zone borders should not be less than a square measuring 100 feet per side.

3.4 Landing Zone Safety

3.4.1 Landing zones should be established to allow the aircraft a 12 to 20 degree down angle approach. While a hovering landing may be possible, it is a more dangerous approach.

3.4.2 Lighting used to illuminate the landing site should never be aimed up at the helicopter.

3.4.3 District personnel should secure the area to 50 feet to the rear, sides, and front of the aircraft as necessary to keep bystanders away. Personnel located to the front of the aircraft should maintain visual contact with the pilot.

3.4.4 Under no circumstances shall personnel approach the aircraft unless directed to do so by a member of the flight crew.

3.4.5 Personnel operating in or around the aircraft shall wear eye and hearing protection.

3.4.5 In the event of an emergency involving the aircraft, the Incident Commander shall request a full first alarm assignment.

4. Helicopter Loading

4.1 Assistance with the loading, carrying, or securing of patients in the helicopter shall be done at the sole discretion of the flight crew.