

## Helicopter safety

SWP-009

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### 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide information to Yukon Energy personnel using helicopters as part of their work.
- 1.2 Working in and around helicopters can present some unique hazards. Being prepared for flight is very important.

### 2.0 Guidelines

#### 2.1 General Safety

- Complete a JSA/Tailboard must be completed; include the pilot
- Locate the following:
  - First aid kit; could be marked on the outside of the helicopter with a sticker.
  - Fire extinguisher; only deploy when directed by the pilot.
  - Emergency locator transmitter (ELT); the pilot will identify its location and explain how to operate the ELT in case of emergency.

#### 2.2 In case of an emergency:

- Follow the emergency procedures and pilot's instructions.
- Once the helicopter is safely on the ground, exit the aircraft (pre-departure zone rules apply).
- REMEMBER the rotors may still be turning.
- Remain calm and exit the helicopter when instructed to do so.
- Survey the area for hazards.
- Travel with any medications that may be required: allergy medication, insulin, etc.
- Be prepared to spend a night outside.

#### 2.3 Approaching helicopters

- Make eye contact and acknowledge the pilot before you approach.
- Treat the helicopter as if the rotors are turning. Spinning rotor blades:
  - Are hazardous.
  - Are difficult to see and vary in height.
  - Create a strong downwash; making transfer and stowing equipment challenging.
- Approved safety eyewear is required when working in/around helicopters.
- Wait for a complete landing; the helicopter may touch down and then lift again to obtain a better footing.
- Always wait for the pilot's signal before approaching the helicopter.

#### 2.4 Angle of Approach

- Always approach a helicopter from the front or the front-half of the side.
- The pilot must be able to see you at all times.
- Never walk under the tail boom or anywhere near the tail rotor.

- 2.5 Loading a Helicopter on a Slope
- Loading and unloading a helicopter on a slope presents a unique risk.
  - REMEMBER, the main rotor is spinning; and, may be difficult to see.
  - Choose a safe path to/from the helicopter; if you walk uphill, you could walk right into the blades. Unload downhill when on a slope.
- 2.6 Keep Your Head
- Approach the helicopter in a crouched position.
  - REMEMBER, the main rotor of the helicopter can dip down several feet.
- 2.7 Carrying and Storing Gear
- There may be limited space on a helicopter; and, weight restrictions to adhere to. Pack your personal gear accordingly.
  - Ensure tools and equipment are transferred below waist level and horizontally when approaching the helicopter.
  - NEVER throw anything in (or out of) a helicopter.
  - Stow all equipment in the designated area or rear cargo compartment.
  - Avoid the pilot, the pilot's seat or hooking the pilot's seat belt.
  - Typically one person will load the gear while others board the helicopter. Some important considerations for gear loading include:
    - Store all of the gear behind the door.
    - Ensure there are no straps or buckles hanging out the door.
  - All passengers must be briefed prior to flight on the proper operation of the passenger and cargo doors.
  - Transporting bear spray
    - Inform the pilot that you have bear spray.
    - DO NOT transport in the main cabin; as it could be accidentally deployed.
    - Transport bear spray in a 'travel container' and in the cargo compartment.
- 2.8 On Board
- Fasten your seatbelt and shoulder harness; keep it fastened throughout the flight.
  - Put on your headset.
  - Inform the pilot when everyone is buckled in and ready to go.
  - During take-off and landing, avoid unnecessary talking.
- 2.9 Landing
- Wait until the helicopter has landed and pilot has given you a signal before you take off your headset and seatbelt.
  - Place headsets on the rack.
  - Once in a safe area, give the pilot thumbs up to indicate all crew members are a safe distance away and the helicopter is secure for take-off.
  - **Note** - Some pilots prefer that passengers evacuate the landing site immediately after unloading; others prefer that you crouch and wait for the helicopter to take off. If you are unsure, ask.
- 2.10 Helipads
- Choose helipad locations carefully.
  - Pilot may request additional room for the landing area; trees and debris may need to be moved to accommodate the size of the helicopter.

- Helipads need to be clear of debris and equipment that could be blown around by the rotor system.
- Equipment needs to be packed or secured away from the landing area to give the pilot room for positioning.
- Inform pilot of changes to transmission line structures or conductor height/location.

**3.0 Reference documents**

- Yukon Occupational Health and Safety Regulations
  - Part 13 – Trades and Miscellaneous; 13.25 to 13.33 - Aircraft Operations.