



GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION

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AIR SAFETY CIRCULAR 7 OF 2013

Subject: **Seasonal Helicopter Operations- Safety Guidelines**

1. INTRODUCTION

Helicopter operations are being conducted regularly for pilgrimage flying at various places like Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Amarnath, Kedarnath, Badrinath, Manimahesh, etc. and at other tourist places in India.

Analysis of earlier helicopter accidents/incidents had revealed that laid down instructions were violated time and again and safety was jeopardized.

Though numbers of circulars have been issued in the past for ensuring safety during helicopters operations, following guidelines are issued for ensuring strict compliance.

2. REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Operational

2.1.1 All non-scheduled/private helicopter operators and their pilots should ensure that their license and ratings are current and are certified to carry out such operations.

2.1.2 All such operations should be as per the Visual Flight Rules only.

2.1.3 Weather

a) All operators should have arrangement for obtaining advance weather information pertaining to thunderstorms, cyclonic activities, heavy rains and any other environmental activities having detrimental effects on the safety of helicopter operations.

- b) Operators shall obtain weather from nearest ATC and from the MET every two hours.
 - c) Weather of all helipads where helicopter is required to operate, will be obtained from ground crew before commencing flying operations.
- 2.1.4 Prior to commencement of such operations, the operator shall get Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) approved from Flight Standard Directorate, DGCA. Copy of SOP along with day-to-day programme of operations should be shared with the State authorities and the local ATC for better coordination of helicopter operations. SOP should be supplemented with sketch/map of the area with helipads, force landing fields, routes, reporting points, etc.
- 2.1.5 During operations, it should be ensured that vertical separation, horizontal separation and time separation between the two helicopters is as per the SOP. Further, force landing fields will be nominated for any precautionary/forced landing.
- 2.1.6 The regulations contained in CAR Section 7, Series B, Part XII regarding requirements of pilots for hill flying shall be strictly adhered to.
- 2.1.7 Pilots engaged in such operations should be familiar with the local topography.
- 2.1.8 The flight crew/operators should ensure strict adherence to proper loading of helicopter in accordance with CAR Section 2, Series X, Part II. At no stage, there should be excess passenger/load. Load and trim sheet, passenger manifest should be made for all flights. Due precaution should be taken with respect to helipad elevation and temperature while calculating passenger load.
- 2.1.9 After arrival at destination, it shall be the responsibility of flight crew to inform telephonically about safe operations to the base and ATC (where flight is carried out with permission of ATC in control zone).
- 2.1.10 In case of more than one operator undertaking the operation in a particular area, coordination shall be carried out in consultation with DGCA. A common frequency is to be used for communication among various operators in the region.
- 2.1.11 FDTL
- a) The flight crew/operators should ensure strict adherence to FDTL requirements.
 - b) FDTL in terms of Flight Duty time and Flying Time will be maintained along with number of landings carried out in a day.

- c) FDTL records will be computerized with access to DGCA to cross check facts.

2.2 Airworthiness

- 2.2.1 The helicopter shall be kept airworthy at all times.
- 2.2.2 Before departure from base, the operator should ensure that the helicopter is free from any defect and proper rectification/maintenance procedures are followed.
- 2.2.3 The maintenance personnel should ensure deactivation of duplicate controls, in case passengers are accommodated on co-pilot's seat, as per the instructions in vogue.
- 2.2.4 During refueling, the quality of fuel should be ensured and proper record of uplift be maintained. Adequate fuel should be uplifted for the flight as planned including contingencies. Fuel storage shall also be as per relevant the Aircraft Rules.
- 2.2.5 Proper tool and equipment shall be available at the helipad as per the scope of operations. Sufficient number of technical manpower shall be available at the helipad.
- 2.2.6 No major maintenance shall be carried out at temporary helipad.

2.3 Safety

- 2.3.1 All non-scheduled operators and their pilots should ensure that prior to commencement of flight, weather conditions enroute and at the landing helipad are conducive to undertake such flights.
- 2.3.2 The requirements contained in CAR Section 5, Series F, Part III regarding pre-flight medical examination shall be strictly adhered to. It shall be ensured that doctors are available at the helipads prior to commencement of operations. The doctors shall be fully conversant with the Breath Analyzer equipment and procedures to be followed.
- 2.3.3 The flight crew and ground crew shall ensure safe embarkation disembarkation of passengers with helicopter rotors running.
- 2.3.4 Prior to the flight, passengers should be briefed on safety aspects like fastening of seat belts, no smoking, evacuation procedures, embarkation/ disembarkation etc.

- 2.3.5 The operator shall ensure that adequate safety measures are taken during landing/take-off. Under normal conditions, helicopter should land at designated helipad only.
- 2.3.6 The helipads used shall comply with CAR Section 4, Series B, Part V regarding "Minimum Safety Requirements for Helicopter Landing Areas used on Regular basis".
- 2.3.7 Emergency Response Plan (ERP) of the operator should cover the contingency due to the natural disaster. The ERP should also elaborate in the operations policy in providing relief/disaster management in case of involvement of their own helicopter or the helicopter of other operator.
- 2.3.8 All occurrences should be reported to DGCA as per CAR Section 5, Series C, Part I.

2.4 General

- 2.4.1 The operator should have valid Non-Scheduled Operators Permit (NSOP).
- 2.4.2. The operator shall use helicopters which are endorsed on their Air Operators Certificate.
- 2.4.3 The flight plan should be filed with complete details to the nearest ATC unit, indicating the exact number of passengers and load.
- 2.4.4 Operator shall submit to DGCA the number and type of helicopters proposed for the intended operation along with the details of crew members.
- 2.4.5 The operator shall ensure adequacy of dimension of the helipad for the type of helicopter being used.
- 2.4.6 Approach and take-off areas should be clear of obstacles like tall trees, high tension wires, etc.
- 2.4.7 Operations should be carried out strictly in accordance with sunset requirements.
- 2.4.8 All records pertaining to load and trim sheet, FDTL, pre-flight medical should be maintained as per the applicable Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) and should submit the data on periodic basis.
- 2.4.9 Operator shall obtain permission from the concerned State Government/ Shrine Board for operations.

2.4.10 Operators will ensure proper screening of the passengers and their luggage. Also, they will be responsible to check the identity of passengers and his nationality, etc.

2.4.11 Helipad maintenance, its cleanliness and passenger handling will be operator's responsibility. They will also ensure that all equipment required to activate helipad are serviceable at all times.

2.4.12 DGCA permission shall be obtained before undertaking such operations.

This circular supersedes Air Safety Circular 3 of 2012.



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Director General of Civil Aviation

To:

1. All Non Scheduled Operators
2. Civil Aviation Department, State Government.
3. Internal distribution as per list.
4. AAI for distribution to all ATC units.