

“RULE OF ESSES”

CALSTAR SUGGESTED LANDING/PICKUP ZONE

NOTE: The following information should be used as a guideline and as an aid to assist on scene personnel. These guidelines are based on a culmination of personal and professional experience as well as field-tested techniques.

As every situation is unique, modification to or deviation from these rules may be required provided safety is not compromised.

SIZE: Size of the Landing Zone (LZ) is critical in ensuring that all parties involved are able to arrive, establish critical care, and depart the scene safely. As the principal assessment of a suitable LZ is deemed necessary, the person(s) on scene must first determine that an area large enough to accommodate the helicopter exists. As a general rule of thumb, provide an area at least 100' x 100' (75' x 75' day, 125' x 125' night) for adequate helicopter clearance.

SUITABILITY

Suitability goes along with size of the LZ as one cannot exist without the other. Items of interest as well as safety concerns to the on scene coordinator should include, but are not restricted to the following:

- A.** Checking the area for loose debris, rocks, grass, straw, leaves, snow, clothing, etc.
- B.** Checking the area for wires, poles, string, clothesline, individual trees, bushes, antennas, radio and cell towers etc.
- C.** Verify during your physical walk-through of the LZ that potential hazards are identified...we recommend using a “Z” or “N” type walk-through pattern so all corners, middle, and perimeter areas are covered.
- D.** Checking the area for compost piles, dirt piles, or any other substance that can become a flying missile hazard or cause “Brown Out” conditions.
- E.** Checking/securing livestock, pets, horses, migratory birds, etc.
- F.** Checking the area for holes, ditches, metal stakes, irrigation piping, or other hazards to the landing gear/skid.

SLOPE: The degree of slope is paramount to helicopter/personnel safety. As a helicopter is a highly dynamically balanced piece of machinery, all helicopters have mechanically designed restrictions as to the degree of slope they can undertake. As a general rule of thumb, attempt to find the most level piece of terrain available (don't pull out a carpenter's level) that does not exceed 5 degrees of slope... the pilot will determine upon landing if the degree of slope is suitable.

SECURITY

Security is one of the most overlooked aspects of LZ preparation. Scene calls generate emotion which brings out the best (and potentially worst) in individuals. Often, potential rescuers and Good Samaritans become victims due to their own good intentions by rushing to assist trained personnel near rotating main and tail rotor blades, endangering all personnel involved. Scene personnel **MUST** provide CONTINUOUS LZ security to allow rescue personnel the freedom to complete their mission without fear of endangerment. **DO NOT ASSUME** that law enforcement or other personnel will assume responsibility...if you are prepping the LZ, strategically place security personnel around the high traffic accesses to

the LZ and REMAIN VIGILANT until all personnel have departed. If news camera or other aircraft appear overhead, alert the rescue pilot. The security team should assume a "first in - last out" posture.

SAFETY

Every member of your LZ team is a safety officer! Every member of your team has a voice when it concerns safety! Remain in communication with your personnel. If you are talking to the pilot as he/she is landing, if you see, hear, perceive, or believe an unsafe condition or act exists, DO NOT ALLOW the pilot to land the aircraft. Tell the pilot to abort his/her approach...the pilot will immediately abort and will not question you. Once the hazard has been neutralized, contact the pilot and proceed with the approach and landing. When possible, park vehicles under hazards such as overhead wires for ease of identification during overflight of the area.

THINGS TO DO TO ASSIST THE PILOT IN LOCATING THE LZ/PZ1:

1. Report having visual contact with the helicopter.
2. Report not having a visual but hear the helicopter (sound approaching or fading).
3. Vector the aircraft from the nose of the helicopter i.e. "Turn (left) (right) or proceed straight ahead" (do not use compass directions).
4. Turn all "Code 3" lighting on (even in the daytime).
5. Station vehicles around the perimeter of the LZ (shine lights away from LZ at night).
6. Use a smoke marker (ideal for wind direction) if available.
7. Use a florescent day-glow marking panel or wear highly visible clothing.
8. Use large structures as guides i.e. "Three hundred yards west of K-Mart".
9. Wet down parking lot LZ's to provide a distinguishing feature for the aircrew.
10. Wet down approach/departure points as able, to minimize blowing debris.
11. During night landings, face vehicle headlights away from the apex of the LZ.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST:

1. Plan ahead for "Murphy's Law"...If anything can go wrong, it will!
2. Always have a contingency (back-up) plan. DISPATCH EARLY...we can always cancel while en route!
3. Plan for an alternate LZ.
4. Do not determine if the weather is suitable for a helicopter, call us and let the aircrew decide!
5. Have back-up communications ready...check your batteries!
6. Secure/remove your ball caps near helicopters.
7. When the aircraft lands, take signals from the aircrew...DO NOT APPROACH AN AIRCRAFT WITHOUT FIRST BEING ACKNOWLEDGED!