



**Marine Notice 14/2011
Supersedes 16/2010**

Helicopter Operations

Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to provide information to ship owners, operators and masters, shipping agents, port authorities, pilotage providers, classification societies and helicopter operators about Issue 3 of Marine Orders Part 57 - Helicopter

Operations (MO 57), which came into effect on 1 August 2010.

Background

Ship-helicopter operations are becoming increasingly commonplace. In response AMSA has revised MO 57 to ensure that such operations continue to be conducted with very high standards of safety and operational awareness. AMSA has adopted the International Chamber of Shipping's (ICS) *Guide to Ship Helicopter Operations*, 4th Edition, 2008 as it is the most up-to-date publication promoting standardised procedures for ship/helicopter operations.

Marine Orders Part 57 Issue 3

A copy of MO 57 is available from AMSA's website at: www.amsa.gov.au/shipping_safety/marine_orders/Marine_Orders_currently_in_force.asp

MO 57 requires, in part, that:

- the master of a ship ensure that onboard arrangements, equipment, training and drills are at least as effective as those specified in the ICS Guide;
- a ship's arrangements, equipment, crew training and drills for helicopter operations are included in the safety management system onboard and that the master has provided instructions to the crew on these matters;
- documentary evidence is carried onboard regarding the deck strength of any intended helicopter landing area; and

- detailed communication between the ship and helicopter operator / pilot regarding the location and size of any obstacles in the intended helicopter landing / operating area take place.

Ship's masters, operators, owners and crew are required to comply with all requirements of MO57 that are applicable to them.

To comply, the operator, owner or master of a ship may need to obtain specific advice about the type(s) of helicopters used, and helicopter operations performed, in a particular port in Australia to which the ship may call. It is advisable that this information be obtained well in advance of arrival because many ports transfer their marine pilots using helicopters. Ship's agents may be able to assist by liaising with relevant port authorities.

Communication

Effective communication between ship and helicopter in preparation for and during helicopter operations is essential to ensure safety. Communication supporting preparation for a helicopter transfer may involve messages passed between the ship operator, the ship's agent and the helicopter operator. Communication during helicopter operations will generally be between the helicopter and the ship.

Before a helicopter operation is agreed it is essential that the ship's master (possibly with assistance from others, such as ships agents), ensure that all necessary information concerning a ship's helicopter facilities is provided to the helicopter operator and that this is acknowledged. Helicopter operators must ensure they communicate all important helicopter specific information (such as helicopter weight, landing gear type and rotor diameter) to the ship and the master should reply with formal acknowledgment.

Strength of Helicopter Landing Area

It is a fundamental safety requirement that the intended helicopter landing area is physically capable of withstanding the forces of a helicopter landing on it. MO 57 requires that documentary evidence regarding deck strength be available onboard. This information must include the maximum weight (tonnes) that can be landed on the nominated helicopter landing area. This information may be provided by:

- (a) the classification society that conducts the ship's surveys;
- (b) shipbuilder; or
- (c) a competent authority.

Helicopter Landing Areas

Helicopter landing areas can consist of purpose built landing pads marked in accordance with the requirements of the ICS Guide or areas of the ship's deck which are free from obstructions and which comply with the clear area requirements of the ICS Guide. These areas of deck may be marked for either landing or winching operations. However non-purpose built locations are not required to be marked where helicopter operations are "infrequent".

Noting the operational preference for helicopters to land on rather than carry out hover / winch operations, a space may be marked as:

- A designated landing location marked as "H".
- A "Winch Only" location (areas marked "Winch Only" are normally designated as such due to the presence of obstructions in the approach zones).

However, helicopters are permitted to land in unmarked or "winch only" locations so long as the area is capable of withstanding the dynamic and static loads imposed by the landing and take off and complies with the clear area and other safety requirements as set out in MO 57.

Additional information regarding helicopter operations can be found at the Frequently Asked Questions www.amsa.gov.au/publications/fact_sheets/helicopter_faq.pdf.

Further Information

For further information contact AMSA:

email: helicopter_operations@AMSA.gov.au

The International Chamber of Shipping's *Guide to Helicopter/Ship Operations*, 4th Edition (2008) is published by:

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