



**Marine Notice 16/2010  
Supersedes 6/2010**

## Helicopter Operations

### Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to provide advice 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 these operations in Australian waters continue to be conducted with very high standards of safety and operational awareness. AMSA has accepted as an example of best practice the International Chamber of Shipping's (ICS) *Guide to Ship Helicopter Operations*, 4th Edition as it is the most up-to-date guide promoting standardised procedures for ship-helicopter operations worldwide.

### Marine Orders Part 57 Issue 3

Ships intending to conduct any kind of helicopter operation, including winching, landing and marine pilot transfers, in Australian waters are required to comply with MO 57. The owner or master of those ships must provide onboard arrangements, equipment, training and drills which are at least as effective as those specified in the ICS *Guide to Ship Helicopter Operations*, 4th Edition. 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](http://www.amsa.gov.au/shipping_safety/marine_orders/Marine_Orders_currently_in_force.asp)

The owner or master of a ship may need to obtain specific advice about the type(s) of helicopter used and associated helicopter operations in a

particular port in Australia to which the ship may call. Ship's agents may be able to assist by liaising with relevant port authorities. It is advisable that this information be obtained well in advance of arrival at an Australian port because many ports transfer their marine pilots using helicopters.

Issue 3 of MO 57 contains several changes, some of which require action by Australian and foreign flagged ships intending to conduct helicopter operations (including marine pilot transfers using a helicopter) within Australian waters. These changes are:

- the withdrawal of the Australian Code of Safe Practice for Ship Helicopter Operations;
- the introduction of the ICS *Guide to Helicopter/Ship Operations*, 4th Edition (2008) and the requirement that the master of a ship must ensure that safe arrangements are at least as effective as those specified in the ICS Guide;
- the addition of a requirement to demonstrate that 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;
- the addition of a requirement for documentary evidence to be carried onboard regarding the deck strength of any intended helicopter landing area;
- an increased emphasis on detailed communication between the ship and helicopter operator/pilot regarding the location and size of any obstacles in the intended helicopter landing/operating area; and
- the inclusion of a provision for the conduct of emergency operations such as medical evacuations.

## Safety Management System

Ships that conduct helicopter operations must have within their safety management systems all relevant helicopter operation procedures, emergency procedures, drills, training and equipment lists for conducting these operations.

## 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 are 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.

## Further Information

For further information contact AMSA:  
email: [helicopter\\_operations@AMSA.gov.au](mailto: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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