

## HELICOPTER OPERATIONS

Scenario / Background
<p>The yacht was tasked to relocate to a position to be ready to re-embark the owner and family. Meanwhile, the yacht has reconfigured with water sports equipment in the water, beach club now set out, sun deck prepared and tenders on the whips. The owner's rep has called the captain and said the owner and 4 guests want to come back to the yacht in an hour.</p>
Pre-activity considerations
<p><b>Pressure is now on:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Are we prepared? Use detailed checklists specifying key roles and equipment checks in the helicopter operations manual or ISM documentation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Crew availability and competence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do we have enough trained crew for helicopter ops while managing other ongoing activities?</li> <li>- Are key roles, such as HLO, HDAs, and a competent OOW, adequately filled?</li> <li>- Are whole ship activities, including interior team coordination, considered?</li> </ul> <p><b>The charter helicopter:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do we have details on the helicopter and pilot?</li> <li>- Is the helicopter compatible with our deck (size and weight limits)?</li> <li>- Does the pilot have deck landing experience?</li> <li>- Is the helicopter equipped for overwater ops?</li> <li>- Are country-specific permits and landing area certificates in place?</li> </ul> <p><b>If any of the above is questionable... SAY NO TO HELICOPTER OPS - DELAY!</b></p>
Equipment
<p>What do we need to operate aviation safely? <b>Manning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Landing Area:</b> 1x HLO, aviation-trained fire team, and HDAs.</li> <li>- <b>Bridge:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OOW/Watchkeeper competent in aviation ops?</li> <li>▪ Aware of weather changes affecting helicopter ops?</li> <li>▪ Communication with aircraft and situational awareness of other activities?</li> <li>▪ Avoiding controlled airspace?</li> <li>▪ Winds safe for approach/departure?</li> <li>▪ Manage tenders, toys, and beach club:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Close beach club, relocate toys.</li> <li>▪ Designate and crew a safety boat.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Note: This card and briefing sheet is intended for guidance only and in no way passes liability to any member of CHIRP or the Superyacht Training Group for its content and the procedures within.

- **Engineering:**
  - At anchor or on DP? If DP, sufficient redundancy?
  - Generators running with adequate fire pump capacity?
- **HLO:**
  - Correct manning and PPE for the landing team?
  - Landing area clear of obstructions (e.g., guest equipment, plants, sun loungers)?
  - Awareness of helicopter hazards (e.g., rotors, exhausts, downwash)?
  - Knowledge of aircraft doors, emergency exits, and baggage compartments?
  - Firefighting and rescue equipment ready, including aircraft-specific gear (e.g., chocks, tie-downs)?
  - Communication checks with the bridge, firefighting team, and circuits?

### **Brief**

HLO and OOW lead the briefing, with the Captain or Chief Officer present.

#### **BRIEFING POINTS:**

- **OOW:**
  - Program, timings, and purpose of helicopter ops (shutdown or rotors running?).
  - Current and forecasted weather.
  - Warnings to nearby vessels, lookouts, and sea space readiness.
  - Radar shutdowns, if necessary.
- **HLO:**
  - Deck prep and surrounding area checks, securing loose items.
  - Helideck crew assigned and tasks clarified.
- **Engineering:**
  - Status of propulsion, DP, generators, and emergency/standby fire pumps.
- **Interior:**
  - Guest areas secured and access routes cleared, as per HLO checks.
  - Discuss the operation, potential threats, and the operations manual as a guide.  
Captain/Chief Officer should ask questions and confirm satisfaction with procedures.

**Questions to confirm learning**

**Captain / Chief Officer:** Ask questions, ultimately you are the person saying GO or NO-GO!

- Are you content with the procedures briefed?
- Are you content with the program?
- Are you content that we will be able to meet the program (timings) safely?

**IF IN DOUBT.... STOP, RETHINK and COMMUNICATE YOUR INTENTIONS:**

- Are we taking any shortcuts to make this happen?
- Who is checking what, do they know what they are checking, who do they report to when complete?
- Where are the contingency plans?

**What if's / Emergency considerations**

- **OOW:**
  - What if DP fails?
  - What if comms with the aircraft or HLO are lost?
  - What if the primary met system fails?
  - What if there is an emergency on deck?
  - What if another vessel approaches or the safety boat becomes unserviceable?
- **HLO:**
  - What if comms with the helicopter or OOW are lost?
  - What if birds or another craft is in the helicopter's approach path?
  - What if a passenger refuses to be escorted, trips, or falls overboard?
  - What if primary firefighting equipment fails during a fire?
  - What if unsecured items blow onto the landing area or helicopter?
  - What if the team becomes dehydrated while waiting for the aircraft?
  - What if a guest's hat or scarf gets blown into a rotor?
- **Interior:**
  - What if secured items become loose during helicopter operations?
  - What if access routes are blocked?
  - How will HLO and OOW communicate if the program changes?

**Post activity debrief points**

Captain or Chief Officer to lead:

- What could we have done better / differently?
- Team and individual roles, is PRAISE due?
- Any equipment defects or shortfalls?

**DISCLAIMER** - This is a basic, hypothetical scenario; always refer to the vessel helicopter operations manual for guidance regarding your specific vessel.

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