



HSAC-RP

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HELICOPTER SAFETY ADVISORY CONFERENCE-RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

Multiple Helicopter Operations on Offshore Helidecks

Background

Numerous accidents and incidents have occurred as a result of multiple helicopters operating from the same helideck. These accidents and incidents occur due to a lack of proper planning, risk assessment and managerial controls. Pilots should not be the only decision makers if this type of operation is safe. Stakeholders should make these decisions, such as the platform operator/owners and the managers of helicopter companies involved.

The Aiming Circle or Touchdown Positioning Marker (TDPM) is painted on the helideck, used by the pilot for guidance and obstacle clearance information while landing, taking off, or maneuvering. Anytime this circle is not fully available in view for use, obstacle clearance can no longer be guaranteed. This obstacle clearance has nothing to do with the helicopter that may be parked on the helideck, but rather other obstacles that cannot easily be seen or viewed at all times by the pilot. It is for this reason that greater controls should be developed to prevent accidents and incidents.

Recommended Practice

Prior to beginning this type of operation or as a method of verifying current operations the following tasks should be completed:

1. The primary stakeholder Helideck Owner Operator (HOO) should utilize risk assessment procedures to determine if this operation is required for business needs.
2. Clear defined restrictions should be developed and documented in concert with the helicopter operator management team, to ensure proper controls are designed and implemented.

Recommended Procedures (RP's) are published under the direction of the Helicopter Safety Advisory Conference (HSAC), P.O. Box 60220, Houston TX. 77205 as a medium for discussion of Gulf of Mexico aviation operational safety, pertinent to the energy exploration and production industry. RP's are not intended to replace individual engineering or corporate judgment nor to replace instructions in company manuals or government regulations. Suggestions for subject matter are cordially invited.

3. At all times these procedures must ensure full obstacle clearance of at least 1/3rd rotor diameter from all obstacles in the vicinity of the helideck must be maintained.
4. Considerations must be given to operational factors such as aircraft weight and performance, wind (direction and velocity) from all directions, temperature, wet deck and other aircraft parking.
5. At no time will any parked helicopter be closer than 3 feet from the helideck edge.
6. The Pilot in Command (PIC) is the final decision maker to operate under these circumstances.
7. The helicopter on deck must be shutdown, with all aircraft main rotor blades tied down properly.
8. Medium transport and larger helicopters will not land on any offshore helideck where a light helicopter is parked unless the light helicopter is properly secured to the deck and main rotor tie downs are installed.
9. In addition to the above procedures, it is recommended that all Helidecks undergo regular inspections to ensure all changes to the Helideck are recorded and managed within the local approval for multiple helicopter operations.

Additional guidance can be found in the following references:

CAP 437, API RP 2L & HSAC RP 2008-1