



## Helicopter Operations



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**Owner:** Gregg Sponburgh: Director of Safety & Emergency Preparedness - SEMC  
**Policy Area:** 03 Environment of Care  
**References:** Administrative Directive  
**Applicability:** MVHS

## Helicopter Operations - MVHS, MV-03-022

### PURPOSE

Mohawk Valley Health Systems (MVHS) maintains and makes available two helistops to authorized medical helicopter services, to be used to send or receive patients to/from other healthcare facilities, when transportation by helicopter is required due to medical necessity or other reasons.

### SCOPE

Faxton St. Lukes Healthcare and St. Elizabeth Medical Center Campuses.

### REFERENCES

US DOT Federal Aviation Administration Advisory Circular No: 150/53902C, Chp 4 Hospital Heliports  
 2010 Fire Code of NYS, Chp 11 Aviation Facilities  
 ECP016, *Helicopter Safety – Construction Equipment (SEMC)*  
 SEP007, *Helicopter Security (SEMC)*

### DEFINITIONS / ABBREVIATIONS

AOC	Administrator on Call
ETA	Estimated time of arrival
Heliport	An area of land or water or a structural surface that is used, or intended for use, for the landing and taking off of helicopters, and any appurtenant areas which are used, or intended for use, for heliport buildings and other heliport facilities.
Helistop	The same as "Heliport," except that no fueling, defueling, maintenance, repairs or storage of helicopters is permitted.
Rotor wash	Wind turbulence created by the main rotor at landing and take-off
Tail rotor	Small blades at the tail end of the helicopter

### PROCEDURE / DIRECTIVE

- Restrictions:

1. The helistop is for emergency medical transport only.
2. Helicopters using the helistop must weigh less than 12, 500 pounds (SEMC Campus Only).
3. No helicopters shall be based at either campus.
4. No helicopter fueling shall occur at either campus.

## 2. Safety Guidelines

### 1. Helistop Structure

1. The helistop and adjacent area shall be kept free of debris to prevent dangerous flying objects from the high winds generated by the helicopter blades (rotor wash).
2. In winter months, the helistop shall be kept free of snow and ice. Rock salt shall not be used on the helistop since it may become a projectile from the helicopter rotor wash and its corrosiveness may cause damage to the aircraft. Only appropriate non-corrosive de-icing materials shall be used on the helistop.
3. No vehicle parking shall be allowed on or immediately adjacent to the helistop. Signs shall be posted to this effect.
4. A portable fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 80-B shall be in place within 75' adjacent to the helistop.
5. The helistop shall be adequately lighted to allow landings at times when there is no or inadequate sunlight. Lights shall be pointed down toward the pad so as not to interfere with the pilot's vision. A windsock that is in good condition (not ripped or overly faded) shall be in place in the vicinity of the helistop.
6. A rotating red beacon light shall be in place and turned on in advance of a helicopter's arrival.
7. Security staff shall carry cell phones for communication while monitoring the helistop.
8. If any temporary structures are brought to the hospitals that extend more than 200 feet in the air (e.g. crane), notification to the FAA and the helicopter services shall be provided as per policy ECP016, *Helicopter Safety – Construction Equipment*. The top of the structure must be marked with flags during daylight hours and illuminated at night.
9. If the helistop needs to be temporarily closed for any reason, a large yellow "X" must be temporarily marked over the entire landing area to signal to pilots that the helistop is closed.

### 2. Personnel Safety

1. Access to the helistop during use shall be restricted to only staff trained in helicopter equipment hazards.
2. A running helicopter shall not be approached unless the helicopter crew instructs and leads MVHS staff to the aircraft.
3. Avoid the tail rotor area and helicopter blade area. Always approach the helicopter from the front in the full view of the pilot and only when the pilot indicates that it is safe. Secure all loose clothing and items in the vicinity of a running helicopter. Staff shall keep their heads down and not raise their hands or allow anything above head-level (e.g. IV stands) when in the vicinity of a helicopter with a spinning rotor. MVHS staff shall not open or secure helicopter doors or handle any equipment related to the aircraft.
4. Staff on the helistop, when the helicopter is landing or departing, shall wear eye and hearing

protection.

5. Security officers WILL NOT transport equipment and/or patients to or from the helicopter unless specifically ordered to do so by the Hospital Supervisor or the Administrator on Call (AOC) and instructed by Helicopter crew.
6. All security officers will be oriented to helicopter safety procedures at hire to the organization and periodically as required.

3. Responsibilities

<b>Who Responsible</b>	<b>Action to be Taken</b>
Safety Officer	Responsible for the Airport Security Plan and Triennial Airport Registration
Facilities Management	Responsible for the maintenance of the helistop including the landing area (structural integrity, drainage, snow/ice removal, painting, etc.), lighting, phone, windsock, signs, and any other relevant physical features needed for safe use. Place a yellow "X" on the landing pad when temporarily closed.  Also refer to SEMC Departmental Procedure ECP016, Helicopter Safety – Construction Equipment (SEMC Only).
Sending/ Receiving Unit	Contact Hospital Supervisor. Prepare to send or receive patient.
Hospital Supervisor	Notify Security of ETA and Switchboard (FSLH Only) of ETA
FSLH Switchboard Only	Notify Resource Officer in the ED. Notify New Hartford Police Department; NHPD (Regular transport is at discretion of NHPD to provide assistance, unless Hospital Supervisor requests).
Security	Routinely inspect the helistop for any maintenance issues, communicate any problems to Facilities Management.
FSLH	When notified of ETA for incoming/outgoing patient: Bring a stretcher to the helistop. Prepare helistop by turning on helistop lights and beacon. Secure a portable fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 80-B. Secure the landing pad to prohibit any unauthorized personnel, vehicles, or equipment to interfere with the helicopter during landing. Maintain visual contact with the helicopter at all times while it is approaching, landing and departing. Upon helicopter departure: turn off helistop lights and beacon, return fire extinguisher to its' storage hanger and safety equipment to its' storage.
SEMC	When notified of ETA for incoming/outgoing patient: Notify Utica Fire Department (Who are then on stand-by) Bring stretcher to helistop. Prepare helistop by turning on helistop lights and beacon and inspecting helistop surface. Secure a portable fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 80-B. Secure the landing pad to prohibit any unauthorized personnel, vehicles, or equipment to interfere with the helicopter by placing safety cones on either side of helistop and placing an officer in between levels 2 and 3 of the parking garage blocking traffic. Escort patient to and from unit

Who Responsible	Action to be Taken
	Upon helicopter departure: turn off helistop lights and beacon, return fire extinguisher, safety equipment, and safety cones to roof cabinet. Contact Utica Fire Department and notify them of helicopter departure.
	Also refer to SEMC Departmental Procedures SEP007, Helicopter Security.

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**This Document Replaces: EC-34, SPP111.**

**Attachments:**

No Attachments

**Applicability**

MVHS

