

PREPARING FOR A HELICOPTER LANDING

OPP, MNRF or Air Ambulance

When a helicopter is called upon, prepare in advance. If possible have extra copies of this fact sheet to hand out to volunteer emergency workers.

HELICOPTERS

- Land on flat rocks and open spaces
- Generate winds up to 100 mph called rotor wash
- Rotor wash is hazardous as the air currents from the rotor wash can overturn even very large boats
- Keep the Scene Safe! - See below

PREPARE FOR THE LANDING

- Inform helpers about how to prepare for a safe helicopter landing using this fact sheet as a guide.
- Clear potential landing areas of *everything* that is unsecured, including boats, canoes, kayaks, lumber, furniture, tarps, garbage containers, etc.
- In winter, pack down fresh snow to prevent whiteout conditions. If not practical, warn the aircrew of loose or powder snow conditions.
- Position someone wearing an orange reflective vest on the dock/shoreline then send them to safety when spotted by approaching helicopter.
- Take cover inside while helicopter arrives and departs
- Or stay at least 200 feet away and wait for instructions from helicopter crew.

ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES

- Avoid waving your hands above your head to attract attention; this is the universal “wave-off” signal telling pilot NOT to land.
- Avert your eyes to protect from rotor downwash.
- No smoking within 200 feet of helicopter.
- Safely ensure that pets are secured and children are kept out of the way of emergency workers.
- Dogs may run toward helicopters creating danger and hazard.

KEEP THE EMERGENCY SCENE SAFE!

- Dress appropriately to give assistance - avoid bare feet and flip-flops.
- Leave pets and children at home when assisting at any emergency scene as they may compromise everyone’s safety.
- Do not be a gawker! Ensure that additional boats and people stay well away from the scene as they may interfere or hamper the efforts of emergency workers.