



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



**Ambulance Operations  
Procedure  
for  
Approaching Aircraft  
[Fixed Wing and Rotary]**

**National Ambulance Service (NAS)**

<b>Document reference number</b>	<b>NASOP022</b>	<b>Document developed by</b>	<i>Colm Megan, Quality, Safety &amp; Risk Manager</i>
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## **1.0 POLICY**

- 1.1 It is the policy of the National Ambulance Service (NAS) to work in partnership with other agencies to provide safe and effective systems of work and communications so as to enhance staff safety and enhanced service to patients

## **2.0 PURPOSE**

- 2.1 To provide clear direction to all levels of responder, employed by the National Ambulance Service (NAS), when preparing for and approaching a **landed** aircraft [**Fixed Wing or Rotary**]
- 2.2 To eliminate the potential risk of staff injury associated with an inappropriate approach to a landing helicopter

## **3.0 SCOPE**

- 3.1 This Procedure applies to all Managers, Supervisor and Staff in the NAS

## **4.0 LEGISLATION/OTHER RELATED POLICIES**

- A. Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005  
B. National Ambulance Service Parent Safety Statement

## **5.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

**PPE** – Personal Protection Equipment

**Rotary – Helicopter**

## **6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of each Area Operations Manager to ensure that each Manager, Supervisor and Staff member is aware of and understands this Procedure.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of each Manager, Supervisor and Staff member to adhere to this Procedure.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the NAS Aviation and Special Operations Section to ensure appropriate and ongoing liaison and follow up with agencies engaged in helicopter operations to determine the safety and effectiveness of these procedures.

- 6.4 It is the responsibility of the Education and Competency Assurance Team to ensure appropriate safety briefings are included in any related training material.

## **7.0 PROCEDURE**

- 7.1 Park vehicle a minimum of 20 metres from the **Aircraft** landing point
- 7.2 Remain in the vehicle, until called forward by the **Aircraft** crew
- 7.3 Ensure that the appropriate PPE is worn, (High Visibility Garment and Helmet)
- 7.4 Ensure all PPE is fully closed and secured, ensure chinstrap closed and visor is down on the helmet
- 7.5 Keep all vehicle doors closed during landing of the **Aircraft**
- 7.6 Co-operate fully with all instructions given by the **Aircraft** crew
- 7.7 Do not approach the **Aircraft** unless signalled to do so by **Aircraft** crew
- 7.8 Follow the exact line of approach as directed by the **Aircraft** crew
- 7.9 If required, move vehicle towards the **Aircraft** only on receipt of an instruction from **Aircraft** crew
- 7.10 **If a helicopter** approach in view of pilot and crew, at all times
- 7.11 On approach to the **Aircraft** park the vehicle at a point designated by **Aircraft** crew
- 7.12 **If approaching a helicopter use** extreme caution if rotor blades still turning
- 7.13 Ensure that all loose material on stretcher, e.g., blankets, stretcher covers, etc, are safely secured, when approaching helicopter **or fixed Wing Aircraft**
- 7.14 Staff should never approach an aircraft during the take off or landing phase of its operation**

## **8.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

- 8.1 This Procedure will be circulated electronically to all Managers, Supervisors and Staff
- 8.2 This Procedure will be available in electronic format in each Ambulance Station and Ambulance Control for ease of retrieval and reference
- 8.3 Each Operational Support and Resilience Manager will ensure that the Manager/Supervisor responsible for updating Policies

and Procedures will return the Confirmation Form to NAS Headquarters to confirm document circulation to all staff

## **9.0 REVISION AND AUDIT**

- 9.1 This Procedure will remain under constant review and may be subject to change to facilitate any changes/developments in service requirements.
- 9.2 The NAS Aviation and Special Operations Section will liaise with agencies involved in helicopter operations and audit each event identified for safety review.
- 9.3 Any deviation will be followed up on as soon as practically possible so as to ensure the necessary remedial action is taken.

## **10.0 REFERENCES**

None applicable

## **11.0 APPENDICES**

**Appendix I** - Procedure Acknowledgement Form