

# **Polson City/Rural FIRE DEPARTMENT Operating Guidelines**

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## **341.00 Helicopter Landing Zones (LZ) Operation**

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### **PURPOSE:**

To establish procedures for maximizing firefighter, law enforcement, EMS, and general public safety, when dealing with helicopter landing zone operations.

### **SCOPE:**

This procedure is to be followed by all members and officers of this department regardless of the district in which the landing/liftoff is located. Authority to deviate from this procedure rests with the Incident Commander who is solely responsible for the results of any deviation.

### **RESPONSE:**

If the department is dispatched to a rescue situation specifically for engine company operations, that company should participate in only engine company activities and additional personnel and equipment is to be dispatched as needed.

### **LANDING ZONE CONSIDERATIONS :**

Provide a LZ a minimum of 250 feet from the emergency scene. The LZ should be a minimum of 60 feet square during daylight, and 100 feet square during darkness or inclement weather. Once the location has been declared the incident commander will be notified by radio.

Inspect the proposed LZ for the following hazards:

- 1) Terrain:  
Level or Sloped, Rocks, bushes, tall grass
- 2) Obstacles:  
Signs, trees, antennae, power lines, vehicles
- 3) Wind Direction & Speed

### **LANDING ZONE OPERATIONS:**

1. The engine shall be parked no closer than 150 feet from the center of the LZ.
2. LZ corner marking devices shall be used (flares or specialized equipment).
3. A 250 foot pre-connected line shall be the primary line, but not deployed unless needed for LZ surface preparation.

4. The LZ shall be reasonably clear of debris. Utilize a pre-connected line to wash or wet down the area. The senior officer shall determine the need of wash/wet down.
5. Personnel shall remain outside of the LZ perimeter, shall not be in contact with the pre-connected line, and shall be in a position to use the engine or other vehicle as a shield from the LZ.
6. Full protective gear is required for all Polson Fire Department members working on LZ operations. If no gear is available, the member must be seated within a vehicle. Flying debris is a distinct probability in the event of flight failures and other loose objects. Eye protection shall be worn. The minimum is the helmet and face shield. **NO LOOSE CLOTHING (ball caps, etc.)**
6. In the event rescue personnel are still in the rescue process they shall be notified of the landing and suitable precautions (if any) shall be taken.
7. The pump operator shall be seated in the jump seat during landing/liftoff. This position will allow for proper shielding and immediate pump activations if necessary.
8. Communications with the helicopter shall be verified by command. In some situations EMS or law enforcement will be the communications sector. In any case, command must be assured direct communications are being performed. If EMS or law enforcement is unavailable for communicating with the helicopter, command must assign a qualified individual to perform the communications coordination.