

**Schuylkill County Fire Chiefs Association  
Standard Operating Guidelines  
Helicopter Landing Zone Guideline**

Date:

Adopted

January 20, 2026

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**1. Purpose**

To provide standardized guidelines for establishing and operating a helicopter landing zone (HLZ) safely and effectively during operations.

**2. Scope**

Applicable to all personnel involved in HLZ operations including ground guides, security teams, fire/rescue, and EMS Crews. Fire Dept or EMS Crews may secure a landing zone following the following procedures. **The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has no rules or regulations governing the landing of medevac helicopters at accident or rescue locations**

**3. HLZ Site Selection Criteria**

- **Size:**
  - Day: Minimum 100 ft x 100 ft
  - Night: Minimum 150 ft x 150 ft
- **Surface:** Firm, level ground (avoid slopes > 7 degrees)
- **Obstacles:** Free from obstructions such as trees, wires, poles, debris
- **Approach/Departure Paths:** Clear of vertical and horizontal obstructions
- **Wind:** Ideally approach into the wind

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**4. Marking the HLZ**

- **Daytime** and **Nighttime:** Do not use strobe lights, cones, any tarps (ie things that can fly), smoke. solid red lights in a box shape, this will cause issues at night with use of pilots Night Vision.

**5. HLZ Setup Procedures**

- Secure perimeter (360° security if in a hostile area)
- Brief personnel on HLZ layout and safety
- Clear and mark hazards
- Identify HLZ controller and radio frequency
- Establish and test communications

**6. Communication**

- HLZ controller to maintain radio comms with aircraft
- Use standard hand and arm signals if radio fails
- Use of brevity codes and landing signals

**7. Safety Protocols**

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- All personnel wear eye and ear protection
- No loose clothing or unsecured gear
- Approach/exit helicopter from the front or side only, when signaled by crew
- Never approach from the rear (tail rotor danger)

**8. Emergency Procedures**

- Fire suppression available (fire extinguishers, water, shovel)
- Medical personnel on standby
- Abort criteria established (weather, security, technical issues)

**9. Documentation**

- Record HLZ location (grid, GPS)
- Weather conditions
- Time on/off
- Aircraft tail numbers
- Any incidents or deviations