

Helicopter Downdraft and Sidewash Awareness

Significant forces; *comparable to Category 1 hurricanes* are generated during helicopter operations and will affect all structures, work sites, equipment, fixings, stored materials and personnel up to 25m or more from the helideck area.



In addition to normal helideck and FOD checks and inspections for damage or loose objects, consider the real potential for dynamic dropped objects in areas around and below the helideck area.

Ensure all items are secured during heli-ops including fire fighting equipment and boxes, luggage, furniture, personal equipment etc.

Clearly identify all approach and take-off routes to determine likely exposure areas (roofs, stairs, gentries, decks, gates etc).

Consider potential for funnelling effects through constricted areas that may affect other work areas.

Identify and assess individual fastening and retention methods of all items and fixtures that are not an integral part of the helideck structure.

Ensure secondary retention is appropriate to protect against loosening of fastenings and install adequate safety securing where applicable.

Ensure DROPS Inspections include routine checks of all items subjected to helicopter downdraft and sidewash forces.

Carefully risk assess any new or temporary equipment mounted within the exposed area such as beacons, comms, signage, aerials – even bird deterrents.

Routinely inspect all temporary activities in the vicinity such as scaffolding or working areas at height to ensure all tools and equipment are adequately secured.

Study and share all industry alerts and learnings relating to helicopter downdraft and sidewash incidents in task planning, tool box talks and safety meetings.



Many incidents have occurred due to lack of awareness and failure to ensure appropriate securing after accessing boxes or panels in the helideck area. Verify that all fastenings and straps are installed correctly after any activities in areas affected by helicopter downdraft and sidewash.



DROPS
DROPPED OBJECTS
PREVENTION SCHEME

CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE MAKE A DIFFERENCE

For further details of DROPS Guidance, Resources, Membership or Training:

Email: admin@dropsonline.org

www.dropsonline.org