

Helicopter Landing Zone (LZ) Safety Reminder

This morning, an SCPD helicopter was involved in an incident at a medevac landing zone where, after the patient was loaded, a sheet from the ambulance stretcher came loose and was blown into the rotor system. The aircraft was immediately shut down and the patient transferred to a second aircraft for transport. No personnel were injured, and the aircraft was placed back in service after an on-site inspection. However, the damage potential from this incident was very high.

As a reminder, any sheet or loose objects remaining on the stretcher or in the LZ after the patient is offloaded must be secured immediately.

Below are general notes on Landing Zone Safety:

Choose an area of at least 100' x 100' clear of people, vehicles, and obstructions such as trees, poles, and, especially, overhead wires.

The area must be level (<5 degree slope), free of stumps, brush, posts, large rocks and other obstacles.

Be aware of loose objects or dumpsters/debris on the LZ perimeter.

Consider the wind direction. Helicopters land and take off into the wind.

Choose an approach free of obstructions. Any obstruction you cannot eliminate should be relayed to the helicopter crew while enroute.

Walk the LZ prior to aircraft arrival and remove or secure any loose items in and around the landing area such as trash, blankets, hats, or equipment.

Wet down the landing area if dusty conditions are present.

After landing, the medic will come to the ambulance to assess the patient and receive your presentation, and may elect to perform additional medical interventions before patient loading.

Before moving the patient to the aircraft, personnel must remove any ball caps or loose clothing, and extra sheets, etc. should be removed from the stretcher. Max 4 personnel to move the stretcher to the aircraft

Follow the direction of the Flight Medic and aircrew when approaching the aircraft and loading the patient. Approach from the front, make eye contact with the crew, move slowly, and be aware of the tail rotor at all times.

After loading, secure any loose objects immediately and move slowly away from the aircraft following the same path you used to approach.

Thank you and stay safe,

**Sergeant John J. Vahey
CO, Aviation Section
Police Department, County of Suffolk, NY
2175 Smithtown Ave
Ronkonkoma, NY 11779
SCPDAviationOps@suffolkcountyny.gov**

Office (631) 854-5705

Fax (631) 467-5056