



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



**National Ambulance Service (NAS)**  
**Ambulance Operations Procedure**  
**Safely Approaching an Aircraft**  
**(Fixed Wing and Rotary)**

<b>Document reference number</b>	<b>NASOP022</b>	<b>Document developed by</b>	<b>Colm Meegan, Aero - Medical Liaison Officer</b>
<b>Revision number</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Document approved by</b>	<b>NAS Leadership Team</b>
<b>Approval date</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> August 2014</b>	<b>Responsibility for implementation</b>	<b>Each Chief Ambulance Officer</b>
<b>Revision date</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> December 2019</b>	<b>Responsibility for review and audit</b>	<b>NAS Aero – Medical Liaison Section</b>

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## **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 Officers, Supervisors 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**

<b>PPE</b>	Personal Protection Equipment
<b>Rotary</b>	Helicopter
<b>NEOC</b>	National Emergency Operations Centre

## **6.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of each Chief Ambulance Officer to ensure that each Officer, Supervisor and Staff member is aware of and understands this Procedure.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of each Officer, Supervisor and Staff member to adhere to this Procedure.
- 6.3 It is the responsibility of the Aero-Medical Liaison Section to ensure appropriate and on-going liaison and follow up with agencies engaged in aircraft 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:

### Prior to aircraft approaching landing site:

- Emergency Aero-Medical Services.
- Landing Zone Preparation and Safety

### The Pilot of the Aircraft is ultimately responsible for the decision to land an aircraft in the dynamic landing zone

- 7.1. The following 5 point check should be carried out by a NAS crewmember, prior to the arrival of the Aero-Medical Service to an incident site or Pre-Determined Landing Zone. However, this may not always be possible due to condition of patient or a number of other factors, including the arrival of the aircraft.

### Five Point Check:

1. Landing site is a minimum of 50 strides by 50 strides, where possible
2. No obvious wires are crossing the landing site?
3. No obvious wires could impede the flight path to the landing-site?
4. No people or animals are on the landing site, at time of survey?
5. Crew-member has walked the landing site and it appears free of any loose objects?

### Protocol should be to confirm the 5 point checklist completed to Aero-Medical Dispatcher, NEOC

### Rationale:

- An average adult stride is approximately <1m. ie .7m men and .6m ladies, obviously depends on height, leg length etc etc....
- Consider upping it to 50 x 50 strides, if it needs to be 30m x 30m.
- ie this will cover the shortest stride, e.g. 0.6m x 50 strides = approx 30m. or average male = 35m
- Considering the frequency which crews will interact with helicopters, probably 50 strides x 50 strides is most appropriate
- As they walk the square to measure it, they can be looking for debris etc.....

## **Procedure: Aircraft approaching landing site**

- 7.2 Park vehicle a minimum of 30 metres from the Aircraft landing point and remain in the vehicle, where applicable, until called forward by the Aircraft crew
- 7.3 Ensure that the appropriate PPE is worn, (High Visibility Garment and Helmet) Fit disposable earplugs prior to helmet application
- 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 and take- off of the Aircraft
- 7.6 Co-operate fully with all instructions given by the Aircraft crew
- 7.6 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 the National Emergency Operations Centre for ease of retrieval and reference
- 8.3 Each Operational Support and Resilience Manager will ensure that the Officers/Supervisor responsible for updating Policies and Procedures will return the Confirmation Form to National Ambulance Service 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.

**Revision History:** (This captures any changes that are made to a SOP when it has been revised. This may be placed at the back or close to the front of the document according to local preference.)

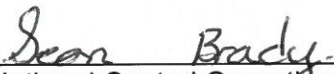
No	Revision No	Date	Section Amended	Approved by

## 10.0 APPENDICES


### Appendix I - Procedure Acknowledgement Form

**11.0 Signatures of Approval:**

**All persons must sign and date this page after they have read and understood the Standard Operation Procedure/Policy.**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
National Control Operations Manager  
On Behalf of the National Ambulance Service

Date: **3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
National Ambulance Director  
On Behalf of the National Ambulance Service

Date: **3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017**

**Document Control No. 1 (to be attached to Master Copy)**

**NASOP022 Safely approaching an Aircraft (Fixed Wing and Rotary)**

**Reviewer:** The purpose of this statement is to ensure that a Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline (PPPG) proposed for implementation in the HSE is circulated to a peer reviewer (internal or external), in advance of approval of the PPPG. You are asked to sign this form to confirm to the committee developing this Policy or Procedure or Protocol or Guideline that you have reviewed and agreed the content and recommend the approval of the following Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

**Title of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:**

**NASOP022 Safely Approaching and Aircraft (Fixed Wing and Rotary)**

I acknowledge the following:

- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline described above.
- I have read Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline document.
- I agree with the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline and recommend its approval by the committee developing the PPPG.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Block Capitals)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please return this completed form to:**

**Name:** Niamh Murphy  
**Contact Details:** Corporate Office  
National Ambulance Service  
Rivers Building  
Tallaght Cross  
Dublin 24  
email [niamhf.murphy1@hse.ie](mailto:niamhf.murphy1@hse.ie)



## Key Stakeholders Review of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guidance Reviewer Statement

**Reviewer:** The purpose of this statement is to ensure that a Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline (PPPG) proposed for implementation in the HSE is circulated to Managers of Employees who have a stake in the PPPG, in advance of approval of the PPPG. You are asked to sign this form to confirm to the committee developing this Policy or Procedure or Protocol or Guideline that you have seen and agree to the following Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:

**Title of Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:**

**NASPO022 Safely Approaching and Aircraft (Fixed Wing and Rotary)**

I acknowledge the following:

- I have been provided with a copy of the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline described above.
- I have read Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline document.
- I agree with the Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline and recommend its approval by the committee developing the PPPG.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Block Capitals)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please return this completed form to:**

**Name:** Niamh Murphy  
**Contact Details:** Corporate Office  
National Ambulance Service  
Rivers Building  
Tallaght Cross  
Dublin 24  
email [niamhf.murphy1@hse.ie](mailto:niamhf.murphy1@hse.ie)

**Document Control No. 3 Signature Sheet:**  
*(to be attached to Master Copy)*

**Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:**

**NAS**

*I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the attached Policy, Procedure, Protocol or Guideline:*

<b>Print Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Area of Work</b>	<b>Date</b>