



2.11 SEARCH AND RESCUE HELICOPTER USAGE

2.11.1 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 2.11 Search and Rescue Helicopter Usage Policy
- 2.11 Search and Rescue Helicopter Usage Procedures
- 2.11 Search and Rescue Helicopter Usage Annex: Mandatory Approvals and Certification Requirements
- 2.11 Search and Rescue Helicopter Usage Preplan and Worksheet

2.11.2 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(1) Why was this policy revised?

This policy was revised to align EMBC protocols with current practices that have evolved with experience since the policy was last revised.

(2) Are GSAR groups now allowed to search from a helicopter?

Yes. If an RCMP helicopter is not reasonably available or appropriate for the assignment, EMBC may authorize a helicopter to conduct an initial search of the area. This policy is not intended to replace RCMP helicopter usage for initial or extended search operations.

(4) Are GSAR volunteers allowed to be on board a helicopter at night?

EMBC currently does not support GSAR Volunteers being engaged in night flight operations.

EMBC will be following a pilot program being undertaken with BC Wildfire Service, during summer 2019, to review the potential use of helicopters at night using night vision goggles (NVG).

An exception is made for situations where supporting operations are conducted by the RCMP and/or Canadian Armed Forces aircraft. A GSAR volunteer may participate in night operations if assistance is required by the RCMP or Canadian Armed Forces aboard their aircraft.

(5) Our local Air Carrier is often contracted (placed on minimums) by BC Wildfire Service (BCWS). Can we have the helicopter released?

If a SAR Manager is looking to utilize a helicopter that has been contracted by another agency (for example BCWS), the SAR Manager would contact the ECC and make the request providing the following information:



- a. The nature of the response;
- b. The expected duration of use of the aircraft; and
- c. The rationale for use.

The EMBC RDM or PDM will contact BCWS and, subject to BCWS requirements, seek the release of the aircraft.

If BCWS Operations do not permit a helicopter to be released, the RDM can support the sourcing of additional resources to help fill the request (other GSAR groups, RCMP, PEP Air, Canadian Armed Forces, etc.).

(6) It will take several flights to get crews into the search area. Can I get more than one helicopter?

Multiple aircraft can be considered however; SAR Managers should consider efficiency of a larger aircraft (type 2 medium duty – Bell 205, 212, 412), check for availability and discuss your requirements with the RDM.

(7) Is there a minimum travel distance for ground crews before helicopter transport is allowed?

Generally, if the travel time for ground crews is in excess of 2 hours, helicopter transport is considered. If other safety considerations such as weather conditions or daylight become a factor or if surface travel time would likely cause a negative outcome for the subject and/or rescuers, discuss with the RDM.

(8) What should a SAR Manager do if the only aircraft that is locally available is larger and greater cost than would be typically used (e.g. EC135, Bell 205, 212, 412)?

Consult the RDM prior to engaging.