

Private Heliports

Most of the Private Heliports in Minnesota are found at hospitals. While most people assume that these facilities are for the hospital to receive patients being transported from an accident site in reality only a small subset of the hospitals receive patients via helicopter. The majority of these facilities are for transport from one hospital to another hospital that can offer a higher level of care. A helicopter crash at one of these facilities could have devastating consequences for the community. Hospital heliports are required to meet the safety criteria required for a Private Heliport License and the Public Heliport Criteria.

Since the hospital is providing the landing site the hospital is required to obtain a private heliport license before helicopter transfers can be made at their facility. Hospitals considering establishing a heliport can utilize their architects or engineers to design the heliport. The Federal Aviation Administration Heliport Design Guide, Chapter 2 contains the majority of the criteria for designing a heliport. There are a few additional items that are contained in the Minnesota Rules 8800.1800 and 8800.2100.

Heliport owners should be aware that the required approach surfaces usually extend beyond their property boundaries. Objects that obstruct the approach surfaces must be removed before the facility can be licensed even if they are not on the owner's property. Identifying these objects in the design phase can help to reduce the overall cost of a project.

The design helicopter should be the largest helicopter expected to utilize the heliport. The heliport will safely accommodate any aircraft smaller and lighter than the design helicopter. MnDOT has chosen the Sikorsky S-76 as the design helicopter for hospital helipads. This aircraft is representative of the largest helicopter expected to utilize a hospital heliport. If the owner desires to accommodate a larger aircraft such as the Army's H-60 Blackhawk, those dimensions should be used for the design helicopter.

Heliport licensing follows the same process as other airport licensing. For questions concerning heliport licensing contact Mina Carlson at mina.carlson@state.mn.us or 651-279-4453.