Helicopter RFFS Categories.

1. After the recent reclassification of helicopter categories by ICAO, the following guidance is issued to Licensed Heliport/Aerodrome Operators:

   a) Surface level (licensed) heliports are licensed against CAP 168, Appendix 8A and therefore, must be aligned with those requirements to accept helicopter flights pursuant to ANO Article 208.

   b) Predominantly fixed wing aerodromes that accept helicopter flights that are required (according to ANO Art. 208) to use a licensed aerodrome should apply the requirements of CAP168 Appendix 8A.

   c) There is the option however, for heliports and aerodromes detailed in paragraphs (a) and (b) above to either apply a type-specific critical area calculation (see Para 2 below) or adopt the broader default figures in Table II-6-1 found in ICAO Doc 9261 Heliport Manual, Part II Onshore Heliports, Chapter 6 Heliport Emergency Response, Section 6.2.4 Level and method of protection.

   d) Predominantly fixed wing aerodromes that accept helicopter flights that are not required to use a licensed aerodrome should declare the RFFS level of protection available for each helicopter RFFS category (e.g. HO/H1 helicopters are provided with RFFS 1*; H2 helicopters are provided with RFFS 2*; H3 Helicopters are provided with RFFS 3*).

   e) Aerodrome Operators should conduct a safety assessment covering their current RFFS provision for helicopter movements in line with their SMS.

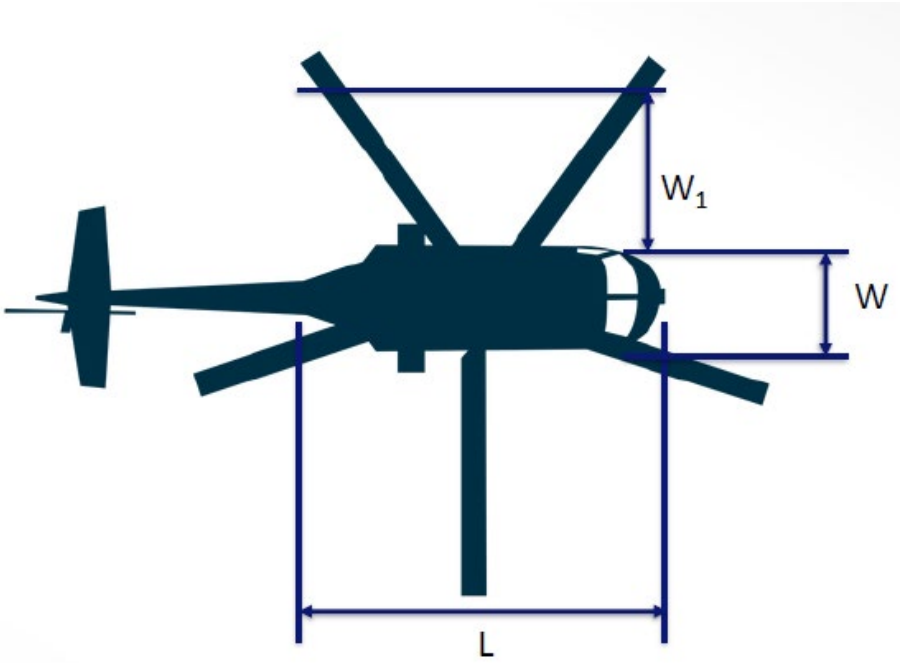
   f) The above will enable helicopter operators, as part of their risk assessment, to determine whether the RFFS level of protection provided is suitable for them.

   g) CAA will liaise with ICAO to clarify an apparent discrepancy between the figures provided in ICAO Doc 9261 – Heliport Manual and those resulting from a practical Critical Area calculation.

*RFFS level of protection as detailed in CAP 168 Appendix 8B

Helicopter RFFS Categories.

2. Helicopter Critical Area calculation



L = Fuselage Length

W = Fuselage Width

W_1 = Additional Width Factor (4m)

Example using an AW139 H2 helicopter:

L = 13.77m

W = 2.26m

W_1 = 4m

Critical Area = L x (W + W_1)

13.77 x (2.26 + 4) = **86.2002**

Multiplied by application rate (Example Performance Level C = **3.75**litres/min/m^2)

Application time = **2** minute*

86.2002 x 3.75 x 2 = 646.5015 litres

* Annex 14 Vol 2 states 1 minute application to bring fire under control

NB CAP 168 Table 8A.2 requires 800 litres of water for H2 helicopters.