

ICAO Action

The aims and objectives of ICAO, as outlined in Article 44 of the *Convention on International Civil Aviation*, “are to develop the principles and techniques of international air navigation....” Accordingly, the focus of ICAO provisions is on international aviation operations. Annex 6 — Operation of Aircraft, Part III — *International Operations — Helicopters* provides Standards and Recommended Practices for the international operation of helicopters. However, these provisions specifically exclude helicopters engaged in aerial work. The reasons for this exclusion include the wide range of aerial work activities that helicopters may undertake, e.g. survey, aerial application, search and rescue, construction, etc. Also the flexibility of the helicopter enables it to operate in a range of operational environments, involving varying degrees of risk. For these reasons, it is deemed that the operational restrictions on helicopters engaged in aerial work operations should be left to individual States to define.

It was noted from the report that the landing site concerned did not qualify as a suitable landing area due to the close vicinity of an obstacle (a 25-metre high antenna mast). Moreover, the report acknowledged that the landing area did not comply with the company’s Operations Manual. Still, the extract from the operator’s Operations Manual contained in Appendix 5 of the referred accident report clearly defines standards for helipads when operating away from base. Such specific operational requirements, adequately revised and defined by the State regulatory body, seems to be more appropriate for helicopter aerial work operations than a general requirement designed for universal application.