

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

NTL No.2021-N03

Effective Date: 08/16/2021

NATIONAL NOTICE TO LESSEES AND OPERATORS OF
FEDERAL OIL AND GAS LEASES OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

Helideck Closures and Markings

Purpose

This Notice to Lessees and Operators (NTL) offers guidance on the recommended safety practice of visual signaling, helideck and facility identification markings, and notification of a helideck closure. This NTL replaces and supersedes NTL No. 2011-N08 Temporary Helideck Closures.

Authority

As required by 30 CFR 250.107(b), “you must immediately control, remove, or otherwise correct any . . . health, safety or fire hazard.”

When the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) “conducts an inspection, you must provide: (1) Access to all platforms . . . and (2) Helicopter landing sites and refueling facilities for any helicopters we use to regulate offshore operations.” 30 CFR 250.132(a).

When helicopter landing facilities are present on outer Continental Shelf (OCS) facilities, “you must display an additional identification sign that is visible from the air. The sign must use at least 12-inch letters and figures and must also display the weight capacity of the helipad unless noted on the top of the helipad.” 30 CFR 250.154(a)(2).

Background

Under certain conditions, a facility may prohibit the use of its helideck. There have been historical and recent incidents involving helicopters landing on temporarily or permanently closed (or out-of-service) helidecks on OCS platforms. Additionally, there have been incidents of misidentification of helidecks resulting in helicopter landings at the wrong facilities in part due to improperly marked or maintained helidecks.

In the interest of safety, many operators adhere to the updated Helicopter Safety Advisory Conference (HSAC) Recommended Practice (RP) No. 163, 2nd Edition (January 2020), “*Section 8.8 Closing Helidecks: A yellow ‘X’ marked over a red background diagonally from corner to corner across a helideck or heliport touchdown area is the universally accepted visual indicator that the landing area is closed and that helicopter operations are not permitted.*” Consistent with RP 163, BSEE recommends the following practice.

8.8.1 Temporary Closing: A temporary prohibited landing marker can be used for hazards of an interim nature. This marker could be made from vinyl or other durable material in the shape of a diagonal “X.” The marker should be a red background 13 feet (4m) square with the legs of the “X” 20 inches (0.5m) in width. This marker is designed to be quickly secured and removed from the deck using grommets and rope ties. Information regarding the duration, time, location, and nature of these temporary closings should be provided to and coordinated with nearby helicopter bases, and helicopter operators supporting the area. These markers must be removed when the hazard no longer exists. Example marking:

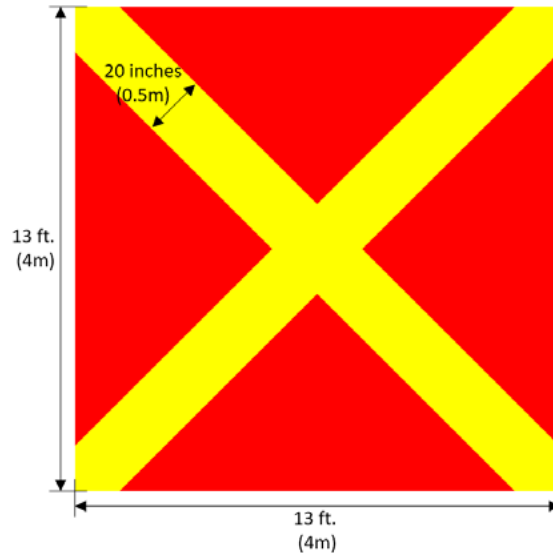


Figure 9: Illustration of Panel Used to Temporarily Close a Helideck

You should notify company aviation departments, helicopter operators or bases, and manned facilities of the pending temporary closure so the Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) system can be activated for the operation and the temporary helideck closure. Helideck Status lights should remain “ON” for manned facilities (see, HSAC RP 163, 7.5.1.5).

8.8.2 Permanent Closing: If a helideck is to be permanently closed, you should use the marking as prescribed in HSAC RP 163, 8.8, which should be painted on the landing area. A NOTAM should be issued when the helideck is closed and the Helideck Information Plate revoked.

The referenced HSAC RP may be viewed at <http://www.hsac.org>.

Guidance

Closed helidecks at an operator’s facility can affect the safety of helideck access or aviation fueling operations. Accordingly, BSEE highly recommends that you promptly publish a NOTAM. The duration, time, location, and nature of the temporary or permanent closure should be discussed as necessary with the aviation company supporting the installation. Publication of NOTAMs will ensure helideck closure notifications are widely distributed to all pilots flying in the area. Additionally, BSEE recommends that operators adhere to HSAC RP 163, 8.8, regarding the use of clearly visible markings related to temporarily and permanently closed helidecks. *Required helideck and facility identification markings must always be maintained and made clearly visible.* Finally, facilities must be operated in accordance with the

applicable regulatory standards in 30 CFR part 250.

Document Statement

BSEE issues NTLs as guidance documents in accordance with 30 CFR 250.103 to clarify and provide more detail about certain BSEE regulatory requirements and outline the information you provide in your various submittals. Under that authority, this NTL sets forth a policy on, and an interpretation of, a regulatory requirement that provides a clear and consistent approach to complying with that requirement. However, if you wish to use an alternate approach for compliance, you may do so after you receive approval from the appropriate BSEE office under 30 CFR 250.141.

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 Statement

This NTL provides clarification, description, or guidance of requirements for collection of information contained in 30 CFR part 250, Subpart K. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has approved the collection of information required by this regulation and assigned OMB Control Number 1014-0019. This NTL does not impose additional information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

Contacts

If you have any questions about helideck closures and markings, please contact one of the following BSEE Regional Aviation Managers.

Gulf of Mexico	Michael Hanson (504) 736-7588	michael.hanson@bsee.gov
Pacific	Brian Little at (805) 384-6308	brian.little@bsee.gov
Alaska	Michael Jordan at (907) 334-5312	michael.jordan@bsee.gov

S/ Stacey Noem

Stacey Noem, Chief
Office of Offshore Regulatory Programs
(OORP)
Bureau of Safety and Environmental
Enforcement