

Standards for offshore helicopter landing areas

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)

RPC rating: validated

The assessment is now fit for purpose following the CAA's response to the RPC's initial review. As first submitted, the assessment was not fit for purpose.

Description of the measure

The CAA has updated its guidance document on the standards for offshore helicopter landing areas on fixed and floating installations - to reflect developments in best practice. The amendments focus on:

- a revised scheme to improve firefighting services;
- specifications for a new helideck lighting scheme;
- revisions to the surface friction measurement requirements; and
- the introduction of a risk assessment process to determine the length and weight parameters for certain helicopters used on smaller installations.

The CAA states that about one third of representatives from the sector were involved with the development and consultation for these standards.

Impacts of the measure

Using data from the Helideck Inspection Agency, the assessment provides detail about the number of platforms affected. It is estimated that there are 201 platforms operating at any one time and, of these, 102 are unattended. Using industry data to support costings, the CAA estimates that a one-off purchase of improved firefighting services will be required for many of 102 unattended platforms. In order to provide a cost for these firefighting services, the CAA has applied three scenarios – a fully upgraded system; a scaled down version of the system; or no enhancements required to the current system - using data from industry to assess how many platforms will need to be improved. While the majority of the platforms have been assessed as not requiring further enhancements, 48 platforms have been identified as requiring upgrading, resulting in a one-off cost to business of £5.2 million.

The assessment explains that, if 191 installation are not to lose their night landing capability, they will need to comply with the new lighting scheme. Using data from industry, the CAA estimates a one-off cost of upgrading all of these installations of £20.8 million.

In relation to new surface friction requirements, the CAA estimates that compliance with a new annual test will cost £477,000 per annum across all of the 159 helidecks.

Finally, in respect of 43 helidecks, the assessment estimates a one-off cost of £1,498 from the two hour risk assessment process. In addition to the above costs, the CAA also estimates, after consultation with industry, one-off familiarisation costs of £5,487 to the 15 owners of the helidecks, resulting from the revised standards document.

The RPC verifies the estimated equivalent annual net direct cost to business (EANDCB) of £2.6 million. This will be a qualifying regulatory provision that will score under the business impact target.

Quality of submission

As initially submitted, the assessment did not:

- provide sufficient detail to support the calculations for the uptake, under the three scenarios described, of improved firefighting systems; or
- provide support for the assumption that only 25 per cent of the guidance document needed to be read; or
- provide evidence to support the assumption that the friction test will reduce the need for safety nets by 50%.

The revised assessment has addressed these issues: the CAA now states that familiarisation with the whole document will be required and that the reduction in the use of safety nets, following discussions with industry, is considered unquantifiable. The CAA has also provided the analysis of movements to and from helidecks upon which its assumptions about firefighting systems were based; these are clear, proportionate and appropriate. As a result, the EANDCB has changed from the CAA's initial estimate of £3.4 million to £2.6 million.

The assessment now contains more robust estimates, supported by evidence from industry, and is proportionate to the scale of the measure.

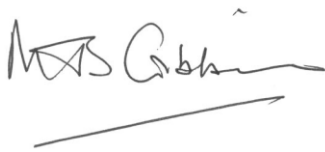
Departmental assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision (IN)
Equivalent annual net direct cost to business (EANDCB)	£3.4 million (initial estimate) £2.6 million (final estimate)

Business net present value	-£25.05 million
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RPC assessment

Classification	Qualifying regulatory provision (IN)
EANDCB – RPC validated ¹	£2.6million
Business Impact Target (BIT) Score ¹	£13 million



Michael Gibbons CBE, Chairman

¹ For reporting purposes, the RPC validates EANDCB and BIT score figures to the nearest £100,000.