

No. 98-02

Subject:

Helicopter Rotor Wash

Distribution:

All DOI Helicopter Activities

Discussion:

Helicopter main rotors generate rotor wash producing high velocity winds (vortices). These vortices extend from the center of the helicopter outward in all directions, to a distance approximately three times the diameter of the rotor. While the strength of the vortices is governed by several variables, the basic factor is weight. As the weight of the helicopter increases, the strength of the vortices increases proportionately. This inherent operational hazard can result in injury to ground personnel or equipment damage.

Recommendation:

Beware! Keep helicopter-operating areas free of Foreign Object Damage (FOD) debris and ensure ground crews comply with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements.

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