

AMSA EXTERNAL CONSULTATION

Draft *Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2026* is open for consultation until 04 May 2026

Who does this Marine Order apply to?

Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2016 (MO57) provides for safe vessel-helicopter operations, which includes:

- a. the transfer of goods or persons between a vessel and a helicopter,
- b. the loading or unloading of a vessel by a helicopter,
- c. the landing of a helicopter on a vessel or its taking off, and
- d. the refuelling of a helicopter on a vessel.

MO57 also gives effect to the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) *Guide to Helicopter/Ship Operations*.

This Marine Order applies to:

- regulated Australian vessels, and
- foreign vessels.

What are the key changes?

A summary of the main changes is:

- a. updating references to match the latest ICS *Guide to Helicopter/Ship Operations*,
- b. updating definitions and references to other marine orders to ensure they are current and accurate, and
- c. minor updates to formatting and terminology to improve clarity.

The reissued Marine Order is intended to come into effect on **1 October 2026** as the current MO57 sunsets on 1 October 2026.

The table below compares the current Marine Order 57 (2016) and the draft Marine Order 57 (2026).

All changes are **yellow highlighted** and deleted texts from the current MO57 are shown as ~~strikethrough~~.

Existing text of Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2016	New text as modified by draft Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2026 reissue	Notes on changes
<p>Division 1 Preliminary</p> <p>1 Name of Order 2 2 Purpose 2 3 Power 3 4 Definitions 3 5 Application 4</p> <p>Division 2 Safe arrangements</p> <p>6 Vessel arrangements 5 7 Owner's SMS responsibilities 5 8 Master's responsibilities for SMS instruction, equipment and training 6 9 Seafarers' responsibility to carry out SMS instructions 6 10 Determination of landing or winching area 6 11 Marking of obstacles in landing or winching area 7 12 Load information about deck surface 7 13 Communications 8</p>	<p>Division 1 Preliminary</p> <p>1 Name of Marine Order 2 1A Commencement 2 1B Repeal of Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2016 2</p> <p>2 Purpose 2 3 Power 3 4 Definitions 3 5 Application 4</p> <p>Division 2 Safe arrangements</p> <p>6 Vessel arrangements 5 7 Owner's SMS responsibilities 5 8 Master's responsibilities for equipment and training 6 9 Determination of landing or winching area 6 10 Marking of obstacles in landing or winching area 7 11 Load information about deck surface 7 12 Communications 8</p>	<p>Updated table of contents.</p>
<p>Division 1 Preliminary</p>		
<p>1 Name of Order This Order is <i>Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2016</i>.</p>	<p>1 Name of Marine Order This Order is Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2026</p> <p>1A Commencement This Marine Order commences on [insert date].</p> <p>1B Repeal of <i>Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2016</i> <i>Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2016</i> is repealed.</p>	<p>"Marine" added before the word "Order" for clarity.</p> <p>Title updated with intended issue year.</p> <p>Commencement date (planned for 1 October 2026) of the reissued order and repealed date of the current order added.</p>
<p>2 Purpose This Order provides for safe vessel-helicopter operations. <i>Note 1</i> Vessel-helicopter operations include the transfer of persons between a vessel and a helicopter and the loading or</p>	<p>2 Purpose (1) This Marine Order provides for safe vessel-helicopter operations. <i>Note 1</i> Vessel-helicopter operations include the transfer of persons between a vessel and a helicopter and the loading or</p>	<p>"Marine" added before the word "Order" for clarity</p>

<p>unloading of a vessel by helicopter — see section 4, definition of <i>vessel-helicopter operation</i>.</p> <p><i>Note 2</i> A helicopter used in a vessel-helicopter operation is subject to civil aviation legislation administered by Civil Aviation Safety Authority.</p>	<p>unloading of a vessel by helicopter — see section 4, definition of <i>vessel-helicopter operation</i>.</p> <p><i>Note 2</i> A helicopter used in a vessel-helicopter operation is subject to civil aviation legislation administered by Civil Aviation Safety Authority.</p>	
<p>3 Power</p> <p>(1) The following provisions of the Navigation Act provide for this Order to be made:</p> <p>(a) subsection 112(1) which provides that the regulations may provide for the carriage of passengers;</p> <p>(b) subsection 112(4) which provides that the regulations may provide for the carriage on a vessel of cargo;</p> <p>(c) subsection 125(1) which provides that the regulations may provide for musters, drills, checks of machinery and equipment and other tests;</p> <p>(d) subsection 341(1) which provides that the regulations may provide for the imposition of penalties for a contravention of a provision of the regulations;</p> <p>(e) subsection 342(4) which provides that a Marine Order may provide for a matter by applying, adopting or incorporating, with or without modification, any matter contained in an instrument or other document as in force or existing at a particular time or from time to time.</p> <p>(2) Subsection 339(1) of the Navigation Act provides for regulations to be made prescribing matters required or permitted to be prescribed, or that are necessary or convenient to be prescribed, for carrying out or giving effect to the Act.</p> <p>(3) Subsection 342(1) of the Navigation Act provides that AMSA may make a Marine Order about matters that can be provided for by regulation.</p>	<p>3 Power</p> <p>(1) The following provisions of the Navigation Act provide for this Marine Order to be made:</p> <p>(a) subsection 112(1) which provides that the regulations may provide for the carriage on a vessel of passengers;</p> <p>(b) subsection 112(4) which provides that the regulations may provide for the carriage on a vessel of cargo;</p> <p>(c) paragraph 339(1)(a) which provides that the regulations may provide for the design and construction of vessels;</p> <p>(d) paragraph 339(1)(b) which provides that the regulations may provide for machinery and equipment to be carried on board;</p> <p>(e) paragraph 339(1)(g) which provides that the regulations may provide for saving of life at sea;</p> <p>(f) paragraph 339(1)(h) which provides that the regulations may provide for prevention, detection and extinguishment of fires at sea;</p> <p>(g) subsection 341(1) which provides that the regulations may provide for the imposition of penalties for a contravention of a provision of the regulations;</p> <p>(h) subsection 342(4) which provides that a Marine Order may provide for a matter by applying, adopting or incorporating, with or without modification, any matter contained in an instrument or other document as in force or existing at a particular time or from time to time.</p> <p>(2) Subsection 339(1) of the Navigation Act provides for regulations to be made prescribing matters required or permitted to be prescribed, or that are necessary or convenient to be prescribed, for carrying out or giving effect to the Act.</p> <p>(3) Subsection 342(1) of the Navigation Act provides that AMSA may make a Marine Order about matters that can be provided for by regulation.</p>	<p>“Marine” added before the word “Order” for clarity</p> <p>Addition of Navigation Act powers to further support the reissued Marine Order.</p>
<p>4 Definitions</p> <p>In this Order:</p>	<p>4 Definitions</p> <p>In this Marine Order:</p>	<p>“Marine” added before the word “Order” for clarity.</p>

<p>ICS Guide means the <i>Guide to Helicopter/Ship Operations</i>, 4th Edition (2008), published by Marisec Publications, London, on behalf of the International Chamber of Shipping.</p> <p>Note Information on purchasing or obtaining access to the ICS Guide is available from the AMSA website Marine Orders link at http://www.amsa.gov.au.</p> <p>helicopter operator means the person, organisation or enterprise making a helicopter available to a helicopter pilot for a flight.</p> <p>landing area has the meaning given by paragraph 4.1.1(a) of the ICS Guide.</p> <p>seafarer training, for a vessel–helicopter operation, means training in the kind of operation to be conducted and includes drills.</p> <p>SMS means safety management system.</p> <p>vessel–helicopter operation means any of the following operations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the transfer of a good or person between a vessel and a helicopter; the loading or unloading of a vessel by a helicopter; the landing of a helicopter on a vessel or the taking off of a helicopter from a vessel; refuelling of a helicopter on a vessel. <p>winching area has the meaning given by paragraph 4.1.1(b) of the ICS Guide.</p> <p>Note 1 Some terms used in this Order are defined in <i>Marine Order 1 (Administration) 2013</i>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigation Act. <p>Note 2 Other terms used in this Order are defined in the Navigation Act, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inspector master owner regulated Australian vessel seafarer. 	<p>ICS Guide means the latest edition of the <i>Guide to Helicopter/Ship Operations</i> published by the International Chamber of Shipping.</p> <p>Note Information on purchasing or obtaining access to the latest ICS Guide is available from the AMSA website Marine Orders link at www.amsa.gov.au.</p> <p>helicopter operator means the person, organisation or enterprise making a helicopter available to a helicopter pilot for a flight.</p> <p>landing area has the same meaning as in the ICS Guide.</p> <p>seafarer training, for a vessel–helicopter operation, means training in the kind of operation to be conducted and includes drills.</p> <p>vessel–helicopter operation means any of the following operations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> the transfer of goods between a vessel and a helicopter; the loading or unloading of a vessel by a helicopter; the going, or coming aboard a vessel, by individuals by a helicopter; the landing of a helicopter on a vessel or its taking off; the refuelling of a helicopter on a vessel. <p>winching area has the same meaning as in the ICS Guide.</p> <p>Note 1 Some terms used in this Marine Order are defined in <i>Marine Order 1 (Administration) 2013</i>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Navigation Act. <p>Note 2 Other terms used in this Marine Order are defined in the Navigation Act, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inspector master owner regulated Australian vessel seafarer. 	<p>The term “latest edition” is used to cater to future updates to the ICS Guide.</p> <p>Definition of vessel-helicopter operation is amended for clarity, better readability and accurately apply the head of power from the Navigation Act.</p>
<p>5 Application</p> <p>This Order applies to the following vessels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a regulated Australian vessel; and 	<p>5 Application</p> <p>This Marine Order applies to the following vessels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a regulated Australian vessel; and 	<p>“Marine” added before “Order” for clarity.</p>

<p>(b) a foreign vessel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) in an Australian port; or —— (ii) entering or leaving an Australian port; or —— (iii) in the internal waters of Australia; or —— (iv) in the territorial sea of Australia, other than in the course of innocent passage. 	<p>(b) a foreign vessel.</p>	<p>Amended to be in line with current drafting practice.</p>
<p>Division 2 Safe arrangements</p>	<p>Division 2 Safe arrangements</p>	
<p>6 Vessel arrangements</p> <p>(1) The master of a vessel may permit a vessel-helicopter operation to be conducted for the vessel only if there are in place for the vessel arrangements that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) provide for emergency evacuation of people from the vessel; and (b) do not interfere with the normal operations of the vessel; and (c) are at least as effective in ensuring safety as the arrangements recommended in the ICS Guide for the kind of vessel-helicopter operations to be conducted. <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) The arrangements mentioned in subsection (1) must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the equipment necessary for the safe conduct of the vessel-helicopter operation; and (b) seafarer training on non-emergency and emergency procedures for the vessel-helicopter operation. <p><i>Note</i> Seafarer training includes drills — see section 4, definition of seafarer training.</p> <p>(3) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(4) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1).</p> <p>Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p><i>Note</i> A person is not criminally responsible for an offence if the conduct constituting the offence is a reasonable response to an emergency — see Section 10.3 of the <i>Criminal Code Act 1995</i>. This may apply, for example, in medical or other emergencies where it is necessary to evacuate a person requiring urgent medical attention or embark medical or other emergency personnel.</p>	<p>6 Vessel arrangements</p> <p>(1) The master of the vessel must ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) before any vessel-helicopter operation commences — there are arrangements in place for its safe conduct; and (b) those arrangements are at least as effective as those recommended in the ICS Guide for the kind of vessel-helicopter operation to be conducted. <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) The arrangements mentioned in subsection (1) must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the equipment necessary for the safe conduct of the vessel-helicopter operation; and (b) seafarer training on non-emergency and emergency procedures for the vessel-helicopter operation. <p><i>Note</i> Seafarer training includes drills — see section 4, definition of seafarer training.</p> <p>(3) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(4) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1).</p> <p>Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	<p>Section amended for better readability, remove duplication and improve enforceability of responsibilities</p> <p>The note is removed as it is not standard practice to include, as it is a given under the appropriate legislation.</p>
<p>7 Owner's SMS responsibilities</p>	<p>7 Owner's SMS responsibilities</p>	<p>Amended to reflect that all the safety</p>

<p>(1) The owner of a vessel must ensure that the arrangements for the vessel mentioned in subsection 6(1) are included in the vessel's safety management system. Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1). Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	<p>(1) The owner of a vessel must ensure that the arrangements for the vessel mentioned in section 6 are recorded in the vessel's safety management system. Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1). Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	<p>arrangements in section 6 needs to be included in the SMS.</p>
<p>8 Master's responsibilities for SMS instruction, equipment and training</p> <p>(1) The master of a vessel must ensure that: (a) the vessel's seafarers are given instructions about their responsibilities for the implementation of the vessel's safety management system; and (b) the equipment mentioned in paragraph 6(2)(a) is accessible and maintained in working order; and (c) the seafarer training mentioned in paragraph 6(2)(b) is carried out. Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1). Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	<p>8 Master's responsibilities for equipment and training</p> <p>(1) The master of a vessel must ensure that: (a) the equipment mentioned in paragraph 6(2)(a) is accessible and maintained in working order; and (b) the seafarer training mentioned in paragraph 6(2)(b) is carried out. Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1). Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	<p>Instructions about the SMS to the seafarers is removed as it is too broad and the enforcement of a penalty provision for this may be unsuccessful.</p>
<p>9 Seafarers' responsibility to carry out SMS instructions</p> <p>(1) A seafarer must carry out the instructions mentioned in paragraph 8(1)(a) that are given to the seafarer. Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1). Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>		<p>This section is removed as it is not applicable because 8(1)(a) of the current order is removed. Please see the notes on changes (column 3) in section 8.</p>
<p>10 Determination of landing or winching area</p> <p>(1) The owner of a vessel must: (a) determine the location and size of a landing or winching area for a vessel that is, to the extent that is practical, in accordance with the dimensions and obstacle free zones recommended in the ICS Guide for the kind of area; and</p>	<p>9 Determination of landing or winching area</p> <p>(1) The owner of a vessel must ensure that: (a) before any vessel-helicopter operation commences — the location and size of a landing or winching area for a vessel is determined; and</p>	<p>This section is reworded for clarity and to remove duplication.</p>

<p>(b) before a vessel-helicopter operation commences — document any divergence from the recommendations in the ICS Guide on determining a landing or winching area.</p> <p>(2) However, in an emergency the master instead of the owner may make the determination mentioned in paragraph (1)(a).</p> <p>(3) The master must ensure that any divergence from the recommendations in the ICS Guide on determining a landing or winching area for a vessel-helicopter operation is clearly communicated to the helicopter pilot before the vessel-helicopter operation commences.</p>	<p>(b) the area is, to the extent that is practical, in accordance with the dimensions and obstacle free zones in the ICS Guide for the kind of area; and</p> <p>(c) any divergence from the recommendations in the ICS Guide for determining a landing or winching area is documented.</p> <p>(2) However, in an emergency the master instead of the owner may make the determination mentioned in paragraph (1)(a).</p> <p>(3) The master must ensure that:</p> <p>(a) before any vessel-helicopter operation commences — any divergence from the recommendations in the ICS Guide on determining a landing or winching area for a vessel-helicopter operation is identified; and</p> <p>(b) the divergence is clearly communicated to the helicopter pilot.</p>	
<p>44 Marking of obstacles in landing or winching area</p> <p>(1) The master of a vessel must ensure that any obstacle within the landing or winching area is clearly marked if it does not comply with the recommendations for obstacles in the ICS Guide.</p> <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1).</p> <p>Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	<p>10 Marking of obstacles in landing or winching area</p> <p>(1) The master of a vessel must ensure that:</p> <p>(a) before any vessel-helicopter operation commences — any obstacle within the landing or winching area is clearly marked; and</p> <p>(b) the marking is at least as effective as the arrangements for marking of obstacles mentioned in the ICS Guide.</p> <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1).</p> <p>Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	<p>This section is amended to provide clarity to the requirement of markings.</p>
<p>42 Load information about deck surface</p> <p>(1) The owner of a vessel on which a helicopter is likely to land must ensure that there is available on the vessel information relating to the ability of any deck surface of the vessel to withstand the static and dynamic loads imposed by a helicopter landing on that surface.</p> <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p><i>Note</i> The information mentioned in this provision is generally provided by, or based on criteria provided by, the recognised organisation carrying out the vessel's surveys.</p> <p>(2) The master of a vessel must ensure that any information mentioned in subsection (1) that is provided by the owner is given:</p>	<p>11 Load information about deck surface</p> <p>(1) The owner of a vessel must ensure that:</p> <p>(a) before any vessel-helicopter operation commences — there is information relating to the static and dynamic loads imposed by a helicopter landing on the deck; and</p> <p>(b) that information is readily available.</p> <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p><i>Note</i> The information mentioned in this provision is generally provided by, or based on criteria provided by, the recognised organisation carrying out the vessel's surveys.</p> <p>(2) The master of a vessel must ensure that any information mentioned in subsection (1) is given:</p> <p>(a) to the pilot of each helicopter landing on the vessel; and</p>	<p>Amendments are made for clarity and better readability.</p>

<p>(a) to the pilot of each helicopter that may land on the vessel; and</p> <p>(b) if requested by an inspector — to the inspector; and</p> <p>(c) if requested by any other person with an interest in the safe operation of a helicopter on the vessel — to the person.</p> <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p><i>Note</i> The master may organise for the agent of the owner of the vessel to provide the information.</p> <p>(3) The master of a vessel must not authorise the pilot of a helicopter to land on any deck surface that cannot withstand the static and dynamic loads imposed by a helicopter landing on that surface.</p> <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(4) An offence against subsection (1), (2) or (3) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(5) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1), (2) or (3).</p> <p>Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	<p>(b) if requested by an inspector — to the inspector; and</p> <p>(c) if requested by any other person with an interest in the safe operation of a helicopter on the vessel — to that person.</p> <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p><i>Note</i> The master may organise for the agent of the owner of the vessel to provide the information.</p> <p>(3) The master of a vessel must not authorise the pilot of a helicopter to land on any deck surface that cannot withstand the static and dynamic loads imposed by a helicopter landing on that surface.</p> <p>Penalty: 50 penalty units.</p> <p>(4) An offence against subsection (1), (2) or (3) is a strict liability offence.</p> <p>(5) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1), (2) or (3).</p> <p>Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.</p>	
<p>13 Communications</p> <p>The master of a vessel must, when preparing for and conducting a vessel-helicopter operation, communicate to the helicopter operator or helicopter pilot any information necessary for the safe conduct of the operation, including the details of the landing or winching area.</p> <p><i>Note</i> The ICS Guide contains comprehensive advice on information exchange.</p>	<p>12 Communications</p> <p>The master of a vessel must:</p> <p>(a) before any vessel-helicopter operation commences — communicate to the helicopter operator or helicopter pilot all information necessary for the safe conduct of the operation; and</p> <p>(b) ensure the information includes the details of the landing or winching area.</p> <p><i>Note</i> The ICS Guide contains comprehensive advice on information exchange.</p>	<p>Amendments are made for clarity and better readability.</p>