



Australian Government
Australian Maritime Safety Authority

AMSA MO 2026/[number]

Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2026

I, Kaylene Dale, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, make this Order under subsection 342(1) of the *Navigation Act 2012*.

2026

[DRAFT ONLY — NOT FOR SIGNATURE]
Chief Executive Officer

CONSULTATION DRAFT

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Division 1 Preliminary

1 Name of Marine Order

This Order is *Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2026*.

1A Commencement

This Marine Order commences on [insert date].

1B Repeal of *Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2016*

Marine Order 57 (Helicopter operations) 2016 is repealed.

2 Purpose

- (1) This Marine Order provides for safe vessel-helicopter operations.

Note 1 Vessel-helicopter operations include the transfer of persons between a vessel and a helicopter and the loading or unloading of a vessel by helicopter — see section 4, definition of *vessel-helicopter operation*.

Note 2 A helicopter used in a vessel-helicopter operation is subject to civil aviation legislation administered by Civil Aviation Safety Authority.

3 Power

- (1) The following provisions of the Navigation Act provide for this Marine Order to be made:
- (a) subsection 112(1) which provides that the regulations may provide for the carriage on a vessel of passengers;
 - (b) subsection 112(4) which provides that the regulations may provide for the carriage on a vessel of cargo;
 - (c) paragraph 339(1)(a) which provides that the regulations may provide for the design and construction of vessels;
 - (d) paragraph 339(1)(b) which provides that the regulations may provide for machinery and equipment to be carried on board;
 - (e) paragraph 339(1)(g) which provides that the regulations may provide for saving of life at sea;
 - (f) paragraph 339(1)(h) which provides that the regulations may provide for prevention, detection and extinguishment of fires at sea;
 - (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;
 - (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.
- (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.
- (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.

4 Definitions

In this Marine Order:

ICS Guide means the latest edition of the *Guide to Helicopter/Ship Operations* published by the International Chamber of Shipping.

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.

helicopter operator means the person, organisation or enterprise making a helicopter available to a helicopter pilot for a flight.

landing area has the same meaning as in the ICS Guide.

seafarer training, for a vessel–helicopter operation, means training in the kind of operation to be conducted and includes drills.

vessel–helicopter operation means any of the following operations:

- (a) the transfer of goods between a vessel and a helicopter;
- (b) the loading or unloading of a vessel by a helicopter;
- (c) the going, or coming aboard a vessel, by individuals by a helicopter;
- (d) the landing of a helicopter on a vessel or its taking off;
- (e) the refuelling of a helicopter on a vessel.

winching area has the same meaning as in the ICS Guide.

Note 1 Some terms used in this Marine Order are defined in *Marine Order 1 (Administration) 2013*, including:

- Navigation Act.

Note 2 Other terms used in this Marine Order are defined in the Navigation Act, including:

- inspector
- master
- owner
- regulated Australian vessel
- seafarer.

5 Application

This Marine Order applies to the following vessels:

- (a) a regulated Australian vessel; and
- (b) a foreign vessel.

Division 2 Safe arrangements

6 Vessel arrangements

- (1) The master of the vessel must ensure that:
 - (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.
Penalty: 50 penalty units.
- (2) The arrangements mentioned in subsection (1) must include:
 - (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.

Note Seafarer training includes drills — see section 4, definition of *seafarer training*.

- (3) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.
- (4) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1).
Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.

7 Owner's SMS responsibilities

- (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.
- (2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.
- (3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1).
Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.

8 Master's responsibilities for equipment and training

- (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.
- (2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.
- (3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1).
Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.

9 Determination of landing or winching area

- (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
 - (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
 - (c) any divergence from the recommendations in the ICS Guide for determining a landing or winching area is documented.
- (2) However, in an emergency the master instead of the owner may make the determination mentioned in paragraph (1)(a).
- (3) The master must ensure that:
 - (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
 - (b) the divergence is clearly communicated to the helicopter pilot.

10 Marking of obstacles in landing or winching area

- (1) The master of a vessel must ensure that:
 - (a) before any vessel–helicopter operation commences — any obstacle within the landing or winching area is clearly marked; and

- (b) the marking is at least as effective as the arrangements for marking of obstacles mentioned in the ICS Guide.
Penalty: 50 penalty units.
- (2) An offence against subsection (1) is a strict liability offence.
- (3) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1).
Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.

11 Load information about deck surface

- (1) The owner of a vessel must ensure that:
 - (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
 - (b) that information is readily available.Penalty: 50 penalty units.

Note 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.

- (2) The master of a vessel must ensure that any information mentioned in subsection (1) is given:
 - (a) to the pilot of each helicopter landing on the vessel; and
 - (b) if requested by an inspector — to the inspector; and
 - (c) if requested by any other person with an interest in the safe operation of a helicopter on the vessel — to that person.Penalty: 50 penalty units.

Note The master may organise for the agent of the owner of the vessel to provide the information.

- (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.
Penalty: 50 penalty units.
- (4) An offence against subsection (1), (2) or (3) is a strict liability offence.
- (5) A person is liable to a civil penalty if the person contravenes subsection (1), (2) or (3).
Civil penalty: 50 penalty units.

12 Communications

The master of a vessel must:

- (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
- (b) ensure the information includes the details of the landing or winching area.

Note The ICS Guide contains comprehensive advice on information exchange.

Note

1. All legislative instruments and compilations of legislative instruments are registered on the Federal Register of Legislation under the *Legislation Act 2003*. See www.legislation.gov.au.