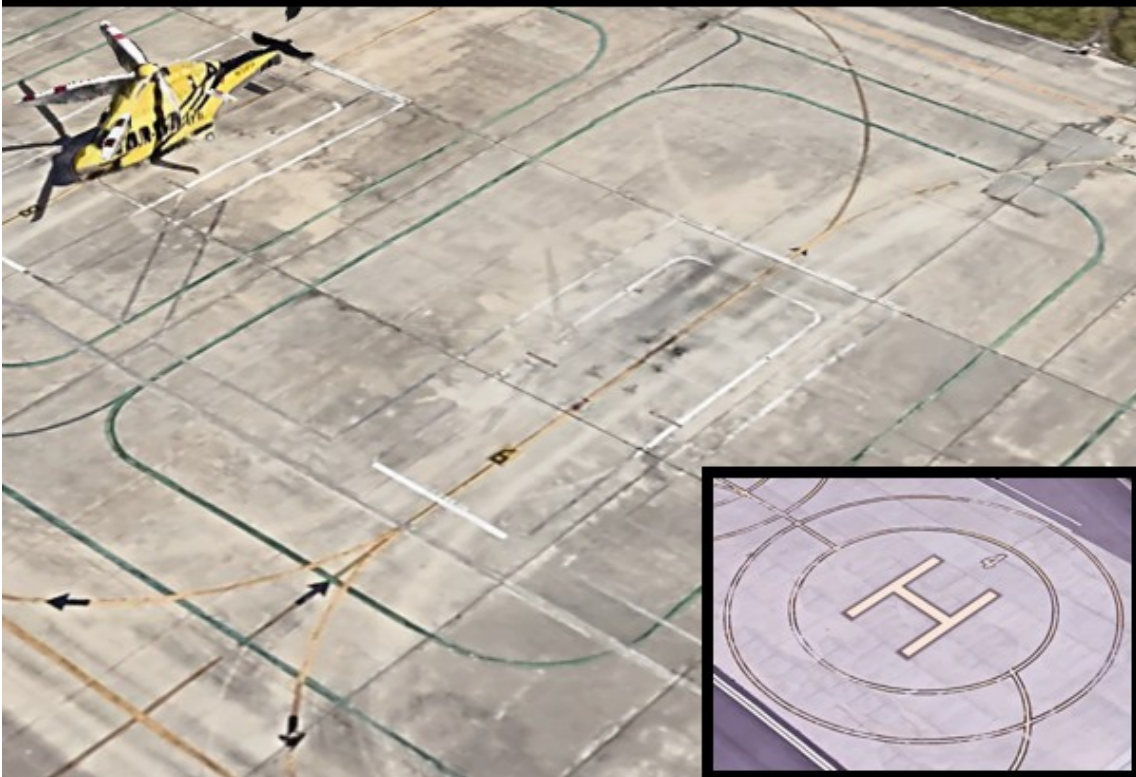


Helipads? What about em'? Helicopters are fascinating machines, but they present a very different set of hazards than fixed-wing aircraft. If you've worked around helicopters, you know that helicopter operations cannot be treated like standard ramp activity.

Rotor blast can be intense and tail rotors are extremely dangerous. Passenger movement, hand signals, wind awareness, safe approach distances, and turn-time procedures all require trained, confident ground staff. When helicopters are operating on your ramp, there is much less room for guesswork.

This helipad needs a markings makeover.



That is why having a dedicated helipad matters. If your ramp does not have a clearly marked helipad, it may be worth working with your airport authority and local FAA contacts to establish one. Without a dedicated helipad, helicopter operations may require a much larger safety zone, sometimes as much as 100' x 100'. Often, helicopter operations happen near buildings, poles, vehicles, and other obstructions.

That is where things can go wrong quickly. If a rotor strikes an obstruction, the helicopter can disintegrate rapidly. Debris can travel in every direction, and what looked like a routine operation can become a major incident almost instantly.

Helo ops near obstructions is hazardous to ground crew.



The takeaway is simple: if helicopters are coming onto your ramp, your team needs specific helicopter safety training and your facility needs a clear plan for where and how those operations will happen.

A strong place to start is FAA Advisory Circular 91-32B, *Safety In and Around Helicopters*. It is worth making sure every staff member who may work near helicopter operations reads it and understands it.

https://www.faa.gov/documentLibrary/media/Advisory_Circular/AC%2091-32B.pdf

This YouTube video shows how dangerous operations can be when conducted in spaces other than dedicated helipads:

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/ZHK-OU992eU>

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