Interagency Aviation TECH BULLETIN

Subject: Modification in Weight Reductions for Helicopter Make and Models

Area of Concern: All Turbine Helicopter Operations

Distribution: All Turbine Helicopter Operations

Discussion: The National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC) asked two subcommittees, the Interagency Helicopter Screening and Evaluation Subcommittee (IHSES) and Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee (IHOPS), to create a clear and fair method for calculating helicopter weight reduction during performance planning, applicable to all turbine helicopter types. A weight reduction has been a requirement in load planning for many years. It is designed to incorporate a safety margin into the helicopter's load calculation to ensure safe operations. The weight reduction is required for all non-jettisonable loads. The weight reduction is optional as a mutual agreement between Pilot and Helicopter Manager when carrying jettisonable loads (HOGE-J) where the Pilot has total jettisonable control.

Evaluation Process

Multiple methods were considered and tested during pilot evaluations, audits, and safety support tasks, as well as with several helitack crews during fire season.

Conclusion

The Fixed Weight Reduction Method based on the maximum gross weight limit for takeoff and landing was chosen because it's simple, consistent, and ensures there’s enough performance available for operations.

- Type 3 Helicopter – 100 lb. reduction
- Type 2 Helicopter – 200 lb. reduction
- Type 1 Helicopter – 300 lb. reduction

Implementation (Beginning in Calendar Year 2026)

Upon an awarded or modified helicopter contract and/or agency approval, new helicopter weight reduction table will be added to procurement contracts, under:

- “Helicopter Services Hourly Flight Rate, Fuel Consumption, and Weight Reduction Chart” (Forest Service)
- “Helicopter Fuel Consumption and Weight Reduction Chart” (Department of Interior)

Pilot Action

Completing the *Interagency Helicopter Load Calculation (OAS-67 / FS 5700-17)* using the published instructions, pilots will use the listed reduction value for their helicopter model to determine the allowable payload.

Important Reminder

This change does not affect existing safety policies. Pilots and managers can still reduce payload or take other safety actions based on mission conditions (weather, terrain, etc.).

For questions, contact:

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