

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 8900.509

National Policy

Effective Date:  
4/24/19

Cancellation Date:  
4/24/20

**SUBJ:** OpSpec A021, Helicopter Air Ambulance (HAA) Operations

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- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** This document provides notification of changes to Operations Specification (OpSpec) A021, Helicopter Air Ambulance (HAA) Operations and the requirement for the reissuance of this OpSpec.
- 2. Audience.** The primary audience for this notice is the Flight Standards Safety Assurance offices' aviation safety inspectors (ASI). The secondary audience includes the Safety Standards and Foundational Business offices.
- 3. Where You Can Find This Notice.** You can find this notice on the MyFAA employee website at [https://employees.faa.gov/tools\\_resources/orders\\_notices](https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices). Inspectors can access this notice through the Flight Standards Information Management System (FSIMS) at <http://fsims.avs.faa.gov>. Operators can find this notice on the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) website at <http://fsims.faa.gov>. This notice is available to the public at [http://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies/orders\\_notices](http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices).
- 4. Background.** Section 302 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 amended the requirements for HAA data reporting currently contained in OpSpec A021. The amendment to OpSpec A021 reflects those changes. The current version of OpSpec A021 also contains references to regulatory compliance dates that have passed for Helicopter Terrain and Awareness and Warning Systems (HTAWS) and Flight Data Monitoring Systems (FDMS). This amendment removes the paragraphs with compliance dates for these items, as they are redundant to the regulation(s).
- 5. Guidance.** This notice contains the following:
  - The Sample OpSpec A021 template in Appendix A, which applies to Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulation (14 CFR) part 135 HAA operators.
  - The Sample OpSpec A021 template in Appendix B, which applies to 14 CFR part 121/135 combined certificate holders conducting part 135 HAA operations.

**6. Action.** This is a mandatory revision to OpSpec A021 with a compliance date of 30 calendar-days from the date of this notice. Principal Operations Inspectors (POI) having oversight of part 135 or part 121/135 certificate holders presently issued OpSpec A021 should communicate the requirement for the reissuance of this OpSpec with those certificate holders to preclude any delays in the reissuance.

**7. Disposition.** We will incorporate the information in this notice into FAA Order 8900.1 before this notice expires. Direct questions concerning the information in this notice to the Part 135 Air Carrier Operations Branch, AFS-250, at 202-267-8166.



Robert C. Carty  
Deputy Executive Director, Flight Standards Service

**Appendix A. Sample OpSpec A021, Helicopter Air Ambulance (HAA) Operations:  
14 CFR Part 135**

a. The certificate holder is authorized to conduct helicopter air ambulance (HAA) operations in accordance with 14 CFR Part 135 and this operations specification.

NOTE: Helicopter air ambulance (HAA) was previously known as Helicopter Emergency Medical Evacuation Services (HEMS or HEMES). These terms are used interchangeably.

b. Off Airport/Off Heliport Takeoff and Landing Operations. The certificate holder is authorized to conduct off airport/off heliport takeoff and landing operations provided the site to be used is adequate for the proposed operation. The certificate holder will consider the size, type of surface, surrounding obstructions, and if applicable, lighting. During night operations, lighting sources must provide adequate illumination of the takeoff/landing area and of any obstructions that may create potential hazards during approach, hovering, taxiing, and departure operations.

c. HAA Specific Flightcrew Member Training. The flightcrew must satisfactorily complete the certificate holder’s approved training program prior to commencing HAA flights.

d. Local Flying Areas. The certificate holder is authorized to designate, and following FAA approval, to use the local flying areas listed in Table 1 below. Local flying areas allow qualified pilots to use lower visual flight rules (VFR) operating minima depicted in Part 135, § 135.609. Local flying areas must meet the criteria contained in § 135.609.

(1) Local flying areas may be any shape, but must not exceed, 50 nautical miles from any single point designated by the certificate holder.

(2) Local flying areas need not be contiguous, however, any flight outside a local flying area must be operated in accordance with the non-local area minima depicted in § 135.609.

(3) Pilots may be qualified for more than one local flying area. Pilots who have not passed a knowledge test on a particular local flying area within the previous 12 calendar-months, regardless of operational experience in that area or Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning System (HTAWS) or Night Vision Imaging System (NVIS) qualification, must use the non-local area minima depicted in § 135.609 when operating in that area.

**Table 1 – Authorized HAA Operations**

Local Flying Area Base	Description	Coordinating Geographic FSDO (if outside the CHDO District)

e. Medical Personnel Training. The certificate holder is authorized to conduct FAA-approved medical personnel safety training and checking in accordance with § 135.621(b). Medical Personnel who have successfully completed this training and checking within the past

24 calendar-months are exempt from preflight safety briefings to the extent defined by the certificate holder.

○ f. Operations Control Center. In accordance with § 135.619, an Operations Control Center is not required. The certificate holder is prohibited from operating more than 9 HAA helicopters.

○ f. Operations Control Center. The certificate holder may operate 10 or more helicopters eligible for HAA operations providing it adequately staffs and operates an Operations Control Center compliant in all respects with § 135.619(a)-(h).

g. Class G VFR ceiling and visibility minima relief. The certificate holder may, at their discretion, apply § 135.609 NVIS Class G VFR ceiling and visibility minima when the helicopter is properly certificated for NVIS and the flightcrew is compliant in all respects with operations specification A050.

h. The certificate holder, if authorized to conduct HAA operations under instrument flight rules (IFR), is authorized to conduct those operations under the provisions of § 135.611 and § 135.613.

i. In compliance with Title 49 of the United States Code (49 U.S.C.) § 44731, Collection of Data on Helicopter Air Ambulance Operations, all Part 135 certificate holders utilizing this operations specification shall, as mandated by the U.S. Congress, report the following flight operations data to the FAA in their **Helicopter Air Ambulance Mandatory Flight Information Report**:

- The number of helicopters that the certificate holder uses to provide helicopter air ambulance services and the base locations of the helicopters.
- The number of flights and hours flown during which helicopters operated by the certificate holder were providing helicopter air ambulance services.
- The number of patients transported and the number of patient transport requests for a helicopter providing air ambulance services that were accepted or declined by the certificate holder and the type of each such flight request (such as scene response, inter-facility transport, organ transport).
- The number of accidents, if any, involving helicopters operated by the certificate holder while providing air ambulance services and a description of the accidents.
- The number of hours flown under instrument flight rules by helicopters operated by the certificate holder.
- The number of hours flown at night by helicopters operated by the certificate holder.
- The number of incidents, if any, in which a helicopter was not directly dispatched and arrived to transport patients but was not utilized for patient transport.

Reports shall be submitted for each calendar-year on a template provided by the FAA. Reports shall be submitted not later than 30 calendar-days following the close of the calendar-year.

## Appendix B. Sample OpSpec A021, Helicopter Air Ambulance (HAA) Operations: 14 CFR Part 121/135

a. The certificate holder is authorized to conduct helicopter air ambulance (HAA) operations in accordance with 14 CFR Part 135 and this operations specification.

NOTE: Helicopter air ambulance (HAA) was previously known as Helicopter Emergency Medical Evacuation Services (HEMS or HEMES). These terms are used interchangeably.

b. Off Airport/Off Heliport Takeoff and Landing Operations. The certificate holder is authorized to conduct off airport/off heliport takeoff and landing operations provided the site to be used is adequate for the proposed operation. The certificate holder will consider the size, type of surface, surrounding obstructions, and if applicable, lighting. During night operations, lighting sources must provide adequate illumination of the takeoff/landing area and of any obstructions that may create potential hazards during approach, hovering, taxiing, and departure operations.

c. HAA Specific Flightcrew Member Training. The flightcrew must satisfactorily complete the certificate holder's approved training program prior to commencing HAA flights.

d. Local Flying Areas. The certificate holder is authorized to designate, and following FAA approval, to use the local flying areas listed in Table 1 below. Local flying areas allow qualified pilots to use lower visual flight rules (VFR) operating minima depicted in Part 135, § 135.609. Local flying areas must meet the criteria contained in § 135.609:

(1) Local flying areas may be any shape but must not exceed 50 nautical miles from any single point designated by the certificate holder.

(2) Local flying areas need not be contiguous, however, any flight outside a local flying area must be operated in accordance with the non-local area minima depicted in § 135.609.

(3) Pilots may be qualified for more than one local flying area. Pilots who have not passed a knowledge test on a particular local flying area within the previous 12 calendar-months, regardless of operational experience in that area or Helicopter Terrain Awareness and Warning System (HTAWS) or Night Vision Imaging System (NVIS) qualification, must use the non-local area minima depicted in § 135.609 when operating in that area.

**Table 1 – Authorized HAA Operations**

Local Flying Area Base	Description	Coordinating Geographic FSDO (if outside the CHDO District)

e. Medical Personnel Training. The certificate holder is authorized to conduct FAA-approved medical personnel safety training and checking in accordance with § 135.621(b). Medical Personnel who have successfully completed this training and checking within the past 24 calendar-months are exempt from preflight safety briefings to the extent defined by the certificate holder.

○ f. Operations Control Center. In accordance with § 135.619, an Operations Control Center is not required. The certificate holder is prohibited from operating more than 9 HAA helicopters.

○ f. Operations Control Center. The certificate holder may operate 10 or more helicopters eligible for HAA operations providing it adequately staffs and operates an Operations Control Center compliant in all respects with § 135.619(a)-(h).

g. Class G VFR ceiling and visibility minima relief. The certificate holder may, at their discretion, apply § 135.609 NVIS Class G VFR ceiling and visibility minima when the helicopter is properly certificated for NVIS and the flightcrew is compliant in all respects with operations specification A050.

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- The number of helicopters that the certificate holder uses to provide helicopter air ambulance services and the base locations of the helicopters.
- The number of flights and hours flown during which helicopters operated by the certificate holder were providing helicopter air ambulance services.
- The number of patients transported and the number of patient transport requests for a helicopter providing air ambulance services that were accepted or declined by the certificate holder and the type of each such flight request (such as scene response, inter-facility transport or organ transport).
- The number of accidents, if any, involving helicopters operated by the certificate holder while providing air ambulance services and a description of the accidents.
- The number of hours flown under IFRs by helicopters operated by the certificate holder.
- The number of hours flown at night by helicopters operated by the certificate holder.
- The number of incidents, if any, in which a helicopter was not directly dispatched and arrived to transport patients but was not utilized for patient transport.

Reports must be submitted for each calendar-year on a template provided by the FAA. Reports must be submitted not later than 30 calendar-days following the close of the calendar-year.