

K-Block Helipad

Frequently Asked Questions

Where is the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) helipad?	<p>The RHH helipad is on the roof of K-Block, the new inpatient precinct.</p> <p>It is located on the Campbell Street side of K-Block.</p>
What is the helipad used for?	<p>The helipad is used for health care operations; not commercial uses. It delivers critically injured and unwell patients directly to the hospital so they can receive treatment as quickly as possible.</p> <p>The helipad may also be used to transport clinical staff to provide treatment off-site, to transport equipment and for training.</p>
How many landings are expected?	<p>One or two retrievals per day are anticipated.</p> <p>This will include scheduled patient transfers from other hospitals eg neonatal babies needing specialist care.</p>
What type of helicopter will land on the helipad?	<p>Rotorlift is contracted to provide helicopter services to aero-medical retrievals using a Bell 412EP and two BK117s twin engine aircraft, Instrument Flight Rules with night vision capability.</p>
What crew are on aeromedical retrieval helicopters?	<p>Crews consisting of an Ambulance Tasmania intensive care flight paramedic and a specialist retrieval doctor, Tasmania Police officer and pilot.</p> <p>For neonatal and some paediatric retrievals the Neonatal Emergency Transport Service (NETS) staff are involved.</p>
Is the helipad big enough for modern helicopters?	<p>Yes. The helipad design has been future-proofed.</p> <p>It has the capacity for helicopters much larger than those currently used by the aero-medical retrieval service.</p>
Is the helipad safe?	<p>Yes. It has been designed to meet the Civil Aviation Safety Authority's standards. The helipad has been successfully been commissioned and verified for use.</p> <p>The integrated fire safety system features passive fire suppression capability supplemented by a fire alarm and an active deck integrated fire-fighting system. It is also equipped with fire hydrants and hose reels for use by the Tasmanian Fire Service.</p> <p>The helipad has been designed to take into account site wind conditions, flight paths and the required helipad lighting and markings.</p>
Who controls the helipad?	<p>The helipad is maintained by the Tasmanian Health Service with access controlled by Ambulance Tasmania.</p>

How long will it take for a patient to get from the helipad to treatment?

Any patient journey from the helipad will take between three and five minutes.

All 12 K-Block lifts have a priority override function and the estimated time from the dedicated helipad lift to the lower ground level is less than 30 seconds.

For patients arriving in a helicopter, the most common clinical journey is from the helipad to the emergency department which is accessed by a corridor from K-Block's Lower Ground floor.

Will RHH staff meet helicopters?

RHH clinical staff will not normally be involved in helipad reception and patient unloading.

Patients will be transported to the receiving clinical area by the helicopter medical team.

What is the role of the heliport officer?

The heliport officer is employed by the Tasmanian Health Service.

They check the helipad and adjacent rooftops to make sure the areas are clear of equipment, personnel or other objects that may obstruct the helicopter landing.

They stay in contact with the helicopter via radio.

They activate lighting, allow access to the helipad lobby, delivery equipment if needed and accompany the helicopter medical team to the receiving clinical area.

How much noise will helicopters make?

Aeronautical engineering advice indicates that adjacent buildings will experience similar noise to the levels of emergency vehicles when they pass by with their sirens on.

For example:

- emergency vehicle siren noise experienced from inside a building is around 70 dB(A).
- helicopter noise experienced inside surrounding buildings is estimated between 65 – 70 dB(A).

The character of the noise will be different as sirens have a higher frequency which is more audible (as per their purpose) and the helicopter noise will be a low frequency rumbling.

The helicopter will hover above the helipad at around 35 feet, to ensure it can appropriately land. It will take between two and three minutes to land and shut down after this decision point. This is repeated when it is ready to leave.

Is there any risk to the hospital from wind from a helicopter?

Rotorwash is the wind gusts created by the downwash flow of air underneath a helicopter when it is arriving and departing.

K-Block has been designed to withstand the impact of the rotorwash from the helipad.

Rotorwash pressure that will be experienced by A-Block because of its location to the flight path, will be lower than the wind pressure buildings in Hobart are typically exposed to.

Will the helicopter blow out the windows of A-Block or other buildings?

No. The helipad has been evaluated for impacts on nearby buildings by both engineering studies and actual simulated testing of the flight path.

What equipment is kept on the helipad?

The helicopter lobby has storage space for clinical and personal protective equipment needed to support staff attending the arrival of a helicopter.

Examples of equipment include dirty linen skip, sharps container, trolley, neo-natal emergency transport cot legs (when a retrieval is underway), oxygen cylinders, hearing protection, high visibility wet weather gear and much more.

How will the RHH know if the helicopter is arriving?

The Ambulance Tasmania State Operations Centre will notify the Clinical Manager Integrated Operations Centre at the RHH of an incoming helicopter transfer.

At least 30 minutes notice will be provided to the RHH so staff can prepare for the arrival including the allocation of a bed in the receiving clinical area.

Updated 13 May 2020