



Hoist As You Fight



Sked Basic Rescue System

Recently, a UH-60L MEDEVAC aircraft crew had a fatal mishap while attempting to hoist an injured off-duty Soldier from rough terrain. This was in support of the local sheriff's office and coordinated through the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center.

Rescue personnel/first responders packaged the Soldier in a Sked Basic Rescue System while awaiting the helicopter's arrival. Upon arrival, the UH-60L crew lowered a hoist rider (HR) to vicinity of prepackaged Sked. Once ready, the HR connected the hook to the Sked and signaled to the hoist operator to raise it. During the hoisting, the Soldier slid out of the sked headfirst and fell to the terrain, sustaining fatal injuries.

This mishap reminds us just how dangerous a routine mission can become if we do not stay vigilant. Review STACOM Message 22-02 on page 7 to ensure proper packaging and security of Soldiers in the Sked Basic Rescue System. Additionally, evaluate the effectiveness of your unit's current training program. Are we ensuring every crewmember is trained and proficient on our issued equipment? This question is not just directed at how we employ the equipment from the ground to the helicopter, but also how to package an injured Soldier prior to hoist operations. Just like any load

we take onboard a helicopter, we must thoroughly inspect the load to ensure safety, security and serviceability to ensure it is employed correctly.

This all starts with our training program and the Army Aviation Rescue Hoist Standard Operating Procedures (located at Directorate of Training and Doctrine website - TSPs, UH-60 TSPs, Hoist Operations SOP dated 01 October 2021), which ensure risk mitigation is integrated into a unit's operations and established training requirements. There are several updates in the 2021 rescue hoist SOP versus the 2019 version that address changes to station training, currency and evaluations. It is too easy to focus on only one aspect of a hoist extraction without training on all phases of the mission — from packaging an injured Soldier and the crew coordination needed during the hoist to safely securing the casualty inside the aircraft. Even after ensuring the entire crew is ready, we have to train as we fight and employ our equipment the way we would with supported units and our partners to ensure they are an integrated part of the team. Nothing is done in a vacuum, and it takes a whole-crew approach to ensure everyone is trained and proficient to safely deliver Soldiers to the next level of care. ■

STACOM Message 22-02

Clarification of the Army Aviation Rescue Hoist SOP

This STACOM is intended to provide clarification of the Army Aviation Rescue Hoist Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), SKED Rescue System Employment, SKED Rescue System training requirements, and the Task – Perform Rescue Hoist Operations currency. Effective immediately, live SKED operations will not be conducted until Hoist Operators (HO) and Hoist Riders (HR) complete the training requirements detailed within this STACOM and appendix A to the Army Aviation Rescue Hoist SOP H-60 attached to this message. This STACOM will remain in effect until rescinded.

ISSUE: SKED Rescue System Employment.

DISCUSSION: The manufacturer does not include the proper method of securing the head flap of the SKED while conducting the horizontal lift method.

CLARIFICATION: The SKED Rescue System in combination with the SKEDCO Helitag Kit (Tagline) provides most common means of horizontal patient extraction. It is recommended that ACMs utilize the unit's SKED Rescue Systems and Taglines to ensure system airworthiness for patient and aircrew safety. The HR retains inherent responsibility for the SKEDs proper employment, configuration, rigging, and patient safety. Extra care must be taken to properly secure and tighten four cross straps, two foot straps, and a drag line to the second (chest) cross strap. The foot end of the SKED must be curled over the feet of the patient to secure patient's feet and provide a stable standing platform, as necessary. The head end of the SKED must be curled over the patient's head (edge positioned between the bridge of patient's nose and forehead) with dragline webbing slack taken out via two head grommets. The drag strap will be secured and tied to the second chest strap as a secondary safety. The Tagline shall be configured in the following manner: 300' x 7mm rope, screw link, weak link, screw link, V strap, and two aluminum locking carabiners. Proper attachment of the Tagline is the two grommets at the foot end of the SKED. When SKED is hoisted, enough tension must be applied on the Tagline as to prevent the spin and fore-aft oscillation. HR / Tagline operator should never apply extra tension as to pull the SKED out of its natural attitude. **A new weak link is required for each live patient extraction.**



ISSUE: Patient Extraction System training requirements.

DISCUSSION: Army Aviation Rescue Hoist SOP (H-60, UH-72, CH-47) Chapter 2 requires all ACMs, Rated and Nonrated, to undergo initial hoist qualification with all of the unit's extraction equipment. Army Aviation Rescue Hoist SOP (H-60, UH-72, CH-47) Chapter 3 requires all hoist qualified ACMs, Rated and Nonrated, to conduct at least one dummy or live lift utilizing unit's extraction equipment.

CLARIFICATION: All rescue hoist qualified HRs (Rated, Nonrated, Extractors, and Rescuers) are required to complete initial HR qualification utilizing all of the unit's extraction equipment identified by the Commander. Additionally, these ACMs will be evaluated annually on each piece of equipment, with a minimum of one utilized and evaluated in flight. The evaluation of these items does not have to occur all at once but must be completed prior to the annual hoist flight evaluation. Units will track and record hoist equipment evaluations on the DA Form 4507 series until the completion of the ATP year.

ISSUE: Rescue Hoist Operations Currency.

DISCUSSION: Army Aviation Rescue Hoist SOP Paragraph 2-3a (H-60), Paragraph 3a (UH-72), and Paragraph 2-4a (CH-47) identifies Hoist Currency as a single live lift every 90 days (RA) and 120 days (RC/NG). If currency is lapsed between 90 days (RA) / 120 days (RC/NG), no standardization personnel (SP/IP/SI/FI) are required to reestablish currency. If currency lapsed by 180 days or more, rescue hoist refresher training is required utilizing standardization personnel (SP/IP/SI/FI).

CLARIFICATION: Re-establishment of 90 day (RA) / 120 day (RC, NG) currency is not possible without utilizing standardization personnel (SP/IP/SI/FI). All hoist qualified ACMs are required to conduct at least one live lift every 90 days (RA) / 120 days (RC/NG) utilizing every type of unit's extraction equipment. Use of a live individual inside the SKED for Rescue Hoist Operations training purposes is prohibited. An SP/IP/SI/FI is required to evaluate ACM currency re-establishment with at least one lift utilizing unit's extraction equipment to ensure the task can be completed to the standard and based on ACMs proficiency. An ACM designated as both HO and HR must be current in each position. Performing duties as HO does not satisfy the same ACM HR currency requirements. Performing duties as HR does not satisfy the same ACM HO currency requirements. If 180 day refresher training is required, then such training shall be completed IAW the Army Aviation Rescue Hoist SOP.

If an ACM fails to maintain rescue hoist currency, or fails to undergo refresher training, and/or fails to undergo an annual hoist evaluation, the ACM must be restricted from performing rescue hoist operations until currency is reestablished, or refresher training is completed, and/or the annual evaluation is completed. Appropriate DA form 7122 and DA form 7120-3-R entries must reflect such restriction and task removal.

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