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IEP CHECKLIST

A SAFETY ASSURANCE COMPONENT OF YOUR SMS

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PART 91

FEBRUARY 2026

OPERATIONS 8.

Life Support / Survival Equipment (PART 91)

Life Support / Survival Equipment:

An Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE) or an aircraft survival equipment program's primary mission is to provide aircrew members and passengers with equipment and training that protects crewmembers as well as others aboard an aircraft, or assists in their safe egress, survival, and recovery during an accident or other emergency. A well ran program can make a positive impact to the safety of the organization.

SCALE OF 1-5

1 – Unsatisfactory
2 – Poor
3 – Meets Minimum Standards
4 – Excellent
5 – Best Practice

If your answer is not a 3 or better, you must record a finding that requires corrective action.

1. Are aircraft survival equipment records consistently kept organized and well maintained?

(FAR 91.417; IS-BAO 15.1.8; NBAA Management Guide 5.7; Equipment Manufacturer's Requirements)

(Equipment) Aircraft survival equipment records should be standardized and maintained in an organized fashion that makes it easy to identify and retrieve specific records. This not only allows for effective review, but it also eases the process of tracking data and reduces unintended errors and omissions. Any outdated material should be purged from the records. If records are kept electronically, there should be a backup system and, in all cases, records must be kept secure (either password protected if electronic or in locked fireproof file cabinets.)

1	2	3	4	5

2. If crewmembers fly with personal / individual survival equipment like survival vests, helmets, etc. are records for this equipment kept organized and well maintained.

(Equipment Manufacturer's Requirements; PRISM Best Practice)

(Equipment) If personal emergency equipment is authorized to be used during flight operations, records of the personal equipment used needs to be kept and maintained along with the company survival equipment records.

1	2	3	4	5

3. Are perishable items that may be in an Operators survival kit being replaced prior to the expiration date?

(PRISM Best Practice)

(Equipment) Any perishable items such as food bricks, granola bars, etc. should be removed and replaced prior to the items expiring. All perishable items will be properly documented and tracked in accordance with the survival and emergency equipment inspection program.

1	2	3	4	5

4. For operators required to, or who voluntarily elect to carry survival kits, are the contents in-line with required or recommended items and suitable for the environmental conditions that exist?

(FAR 91.509; NBAA Management Guide 4.2.13; NWCG Ch.9-Survival Equipment; ALSE Ch.2.5, 3, Apdx. 1, 2, 3; OGP 9.13)

(Equipment) The National Wildfire Coordinating Group Standards (NWCG) states that flight operations should ensure that proper and adequate survival equipment for the planned mission is aboard and available for all crewmembers and passengers. The survival kits need to be suitable for the environmental conditions that exist for the planned mission and should follow the requirements for in the ALSE (Interagency Aviation Life Support Equipment) document. Oil and Gas Producers (OGP) guidance should also be followed if applicable.

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5. For operators that perform overwater operations, are the aircrew and passengers provided inflatable Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) that are up to date with the current / annual inspections?

(FAR 91.509; NBAA Management Guide 4.2.13; NWCG Ch.9; ALSE Ch.2; OGP 9.13)

(Equipment) Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) must use a compressed gas cartridge located in the inflation chamber to inflate. The instructions for activating the inflation cartridge must be clearly accessible and marked. The PFD must have an oral inflation tube in the event that the cartridge(s) fail to inflate the inflation cells. Each PFD must include an approved survivor locator light and it is recommended that each PFD include a personal locator beacon/tracker.

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6. For operators that perform overwater operations, are all emergency exits in passenger compartments suitable for the purpose of underwater egress. (Push-out rubber mounted windows / quick release or jettison capable doors)?

(FAR 27.807; OGP 10.3.4)

(Equipment) OGP (Oil and Gas Producers) has identified that Push-out rubber mounted windows are the preferred standard for the purpose of underwater escape in an emergency. Emergency exits should never be blocked during flight operations.

1	2	3	4	5

7. For operators that perform overwater operations, is consideration given to have Helicopter Emergency Egress Devices (HEED) bottles onboard and readily available?

(OGP 8.1.8)

(Equipment) A risk assessment should be completed for overwater operations to determine if an emergency breathing system should be provided to each occupant in order to provide them with enough time to perform an underwater egress in the event of ditching.

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8. For air tour operators that fly beyond the shoreline with single engine helicopters or multi-engine helicopters that do not have single engine capability, are fixed floats or an inflatable system installed and regularly inspected?

(FAR 136.11; OGP 10.3.3)

(Equipment) A helicopter used in commercial air tours over water and beyond the shoreline must be equipped with fixed floats or an inflatable flotation system adequate to accomplish a safe emergency ditching. It is recommended that the flotation gear be automatically inflated on contact with the water; however, at a minimum the helicopter must have an activation switch for the floatation system on one of the primary flight controls and the flotation system armed when the helicopter is over water.

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9. Are seat belts installed in the required locations? Do the seatbelts have appropriate certification?

(FAR 27.2, 29.2, 91.107; FAA AC 21-34; NWCG Ch.9; ALSE 4.2)

(Equipment) Each occupant's seat must have a combined safety belt and shoulder harness with a single-point release. Each pilot's combined safety belt and shoulder harness must allow each pilot, when seated with safety belt and shoulder harness fastened, to perform all functions necessary for flight operations. All installations must secure the occupant with a metal-to-metal buckle or latching mechanism. Occupants must wear lap belts and installed shoulder harnesses during all phases of flight unless there is a valid operational or safety requirement, which would cause the pilot-in-command to direct otherwise. There must be a means to secure belts and harnesses, when not in use, to prevent interference with the operation of the rotorcraft and with rapid egress in an emergency.

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10. Is an automated or semi-automated tracking system in place to ensure all survival and emergency equipment is inspected regularly under required inspection periods?

(FAR 91.409, 91.417, 91.513; IS-BAO 15.1.5, 15.1.8; NBAA Management Guide 5.7; Equipment Manufacturer's Requirements)

(Organizational) There should be establish procedures to track and schedule the required inspections of emergency equipment. The procedures including the established inspection cycles need to be documented to ensure emergency equipment is inspected and in accordance with established requirements. Record of each inspection needs to be properly documented. Any survival or emergency equipment that is expired should be properly removed and replaced.

1	2	3	4	5

11. Are required publications available and current for maintaining, inspecting, and installing specific survival equipment that the operator uses?

(FAR 43.13; IS-BAO 15.2; Equipment Manufacturer's Requirements)

(Organizational) When performing maintenance, inspecting, or installing specific survival equipment the methods, techniques, and practices prescribed in the current manufacturer's maintenance manual should be utilized. Prior to commencing work, personnel should ensure they have access to the appropriate manuals and procedures and that the information is current.

1	2	3	4	5

12. Is a list of all onboard emergency and survival equipment maintained to ensure that updated information is available for immediate communication with rescue coordination centers?

(IS-BAO 4.2; NBAA Management Guide 4.2.13)

(Organizational) The itemized list of onboard emergency and survival equipment should include at least the number of life rafts, pyrotechnics, medical supplies, water supplies, and the type of emergency portable radio equipment. The color of the life rafts should also be included and the frequencies for the emergency portable radio. This information should be in a form and location such that it can be made available without delay to rescue coordination centers so that the responders are fully informed as to what resources are available to those involved in the incident/accident.

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13. Has the organization established formal training on the use of the onboard survival equipment / individual aircrew survival equipment?

(FAR 91.505; IS-BAO 8.1.3.1[b]; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.4, 4.2.13)

(Training Programs) Flight crews should receive initial and recurrent training on the use of the onboard emergency and survival equipment. Crewmembers need to be familiar with the location of all emergency and survival equipment and understand the function of all emergency and survival equipment.

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14. Are aircrew personnel properly trained in techniques of survival for the specific environment(s) that the crew frequently operates in?

(PRISM Best Practice)

(Training Programs) Flight crews should be trained in proper survival techniques for specific environments that they frequently operate in. If operations are conducted overwater, are flight crews trained on proper techniques for water survival? Flight crews should understand how to properly use the available emergency and survival equipment to increase their chances of survival and understand that the survival functions and use of equipment may differ for each specific environment. For example, water survival will require different equipment and survival techniques compared to mountainous terrain or the desert.

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15. For operators who perform overwater operations; is consideration given to send aircrew members to Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) and making this part of the aircrew training program?

(IS-BAO 8.1.3.7; OGP 8.1.8, 12.4.5.1)

(Training Programs) This recommended practice focuses specifically on the consideration that pilots must give to overwater flight in a helicopter that is beyond autorotational glide distance from land. A helicopter with functional and undamaged floats may stay upright on the water long enough for its occupants to get out of the helicopter before it submerges, but if a float or floats are damaged, or inoperative, the occupants will likely have to egress the aircraft underwater. Helicopter underwater training provides the opportunity to practice egressing the aircraft in conditions that are not optimal, including being upside down and in the dark. Experiencing these conditions in a controlled environment provides the opportunity to plan for this situation and be able to know how to unbuckle their seatbelt by feel, handle their life vest and how to find the exit by following a pre-designated plan. The training also provides an opportunity for improvement of situational awareness and risk management when flying in a hostile overwater environment.

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16. For operators that perform overwater operations, are the passenger adequately briefed and are flotation devices either worn or in conspicuously marked locations and easily accessible?

(FAR 91.509, 91.519; IS-BAO 13.8.1.2, 13.8.1.3; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.8, 4.2.13; OGP 9.5, 9.13)

(Program/Procedures) Before each takeoff, the pilot in command of an aircraft carrying passengers shall ensure that all passengers have been orally briefed on ditching procedures and the use of required flotation equipment if the flight involves extended overwater operations. There should be procedures in place to ensure that the available emergency equipment is properly depicted on passenger briefing cards and placards are positioned to indicate the location of the emergency equipment.

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17. Does the aircrew use seat belts appropriately and inform passenger of the proper use during passenger briefings.

(FAR 91.105, 91.107, 91.519, 136.7; AC 91-32B; IS-BAO 13.6.2, 13.8.1.2, 13.8.1.3, 13.8.3; NBAA Management Guide 4.1.8; NWCG Ch.9; ALSE 4.2; OGP 9.5.3)

(Program/Procedures) During takeoff and landing, and while enroute, each required flight crewmember shall keep the safety belt fastened while at the crewmember station. Each passenger shall be briefed on when, where, and under what conditions it is necessary to have his or her safety belt and, if installed, his or her shoulder harness fastened about him or her. Make sure all passengers understand how to fasten and unfasten their seatbelt.

1	2	3	4	5

18. If aircrew members are part of a flight while doors are removed and who need to move about the cabin to accomplish their mission, are they wearing an approved auxiliary restraint harness / tether?

(NWCG Ch.9; ALSE 2.4)

(Program/Procedures) Some missions where doors are open or removed may benefit from the use of a secondary restraint. If aircrew members will be leaning into the shoulder restraint, then a secondary restraint provides additional protection in the event that the seat belt release mechanism is accidentally opened.

1	2	3	4	5

19. For operators under contract for firefighting, are procedures in place to properly fit, issue, maintain and inspect fire resistant clothing, approved flight helmets, leather boots & fire resistant flight gloves to aircrew? Are procedures in place to ensure all crewmembers have their required PPE prior to each flight?

(NWCG Ch.9; ALSE Ch.2)

(Personal Protective Equipment) The proper use and maintenance of equipment used in helicopter operations by ground, flight, and air crew personnel is essential to safety. Flight crews must wear the required PPE for flight operations which can be found in the ALSE (Interagency Aviation Life Support Equipment) document. Exceptions or additional PPE requirements for all occupants are determined by flight mission and physical location; these requirements and exceptions can be found in Chapter 9 of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Standards (NWCG).

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