

# Heliport Permitting

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## California Heliport Definitions (page 1 of 2)

As described in CCR 3527, nonexempt heliports in California fall into three categories, Public-Use, Special-Use, and Personal-Use. These heliports are defined as:

**Public-Use** - A heliport that is open for aircraft operations to the general public and is listed in the current edition of the FAA's Airport/Facility Directory.

**Special-Use** – A heliport not open to the general public, access to which is controlled by the owner in support of commercial activities, public service operations and/or personal use.

Commercial activities offer a facility, service or commodity for sale, hire, profit, or any other business purpose.

Examples of commodities for sale are: food, lodging, entertainment, real estate, petroleum products, parts and equipment. Examples of services are: flight training, charter flights, maintenance, aircraft storage and tie-down.

Examples of a facility used for a business purpose are: facility used for the transport of persons for a corporate business purpose and a facility used to transport persons for compensation or hire. **Personal-Use** – A heliport limited to the noncommercial activities of an individual owner or family and occasional invited guests.

Public-Use and Special-Use heliports normally require a State Heliport Permit, unless exempted as "grandfathered" or otherwise. Personal-Use heliports may be exempt from State Heliport Permit requirements, provided they are located in unincorporated areas and also meet the requirements of Article 5 of the CCR (see below).

Under Article 5 of the CCR (CCR 3560), many design elements of Personal-Use heliports are at the discretion of the owner. However, the Department requires at least the following:

- 1) FATO dimensions adequate to enable aircraft to operate safely, considering heliport location and the performance data of the most demanding aircraft to utilize the heliport.
- 2) The closest point of each FATO shall be at least 80 feet from the heliport property line.
- 3) If the heliport is identifiable as a heliport from the air, it shall be marked with the letters "PVT" in accordance with CCR 3554(a)(3). If a heliport lighting system is installed, it shall illuminate the required markings. The Department shall determine whether or not the heliport is identifiable from the air if there is a dispute.

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## California Heliport Definitions (page 2 of 2)

Additionally, the following definitions help determine whether a proposed helicopter landing area is exempt from State Heliport Permit requirements:

**Temporary Helicopter Landing Site** - A site, other than an emergency medical service landing site at or near a medical facility, which is used for landing and taking off of helicopters and:

- 1) is used or intended to be used for less than one year, except for recurrent annual events, and
- 2) is not marked or lighted to be distinguishable as a heliport and
- 3) is not used exclusively for helicopter operations.

**Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Landing Site** - A site used for the landing and taking off of EMS helicopters that is located at or as near as practical to a medical emergency or at or near a medical facility and

- 1) has been designated an EMS landing site by an officer authorized by a public safety agency, as defined in PUC 21662.1, using criteria that the public safety agency has determined is reasonable and prudent for the safe operation of EMS helicopters (a copy of the written authorization must be provided to the Department) and

- 2) is used, over any 12-month period, for no more than an average of 6 landings per month with a patient or patients on the helicopter, except to allow for adequate medical response to a mass casualty event even if that response causes the site to be used beyond these limits, and

- 3) is not marked as a permitted heliport as described in CCR 3554, and

- 4) is used only for emergency medical purposes.

**Emergency Use Facility** - An area for accommodating helicopters in support of emergency public safety agency operations, but is not used as a heliport for any other purpose.

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