



Aviation Group Client Update

Date: March 3, 2014

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FAA ISSUES FINAL RULES ON HELICOPTER AIR AMBULANCE, COMMERCIAL HELICOPTER, AND PART 91 HELICOPTER OPERATIONS

On [February 21, 2014](#), FAA issued a Final Rule that addresses helicopter air ambulance, commercial helicopter, and general aviation helicopter operations with the purpose of increasing safety. The majority of the Final Rule takes effect on **April 22, 2014**, although compliance with information reporting requirements will not take effect until approved by the Office of Management and Budget. The Final Rule increases requirements on part 91 helicopter operators, part 135 helicopter operators, and part 135 helicopter air ambulance operators.

For part 91 helicopter operators, the weather minimums in Class G airspace have been increased.

For part 135 helicopter operators, the following areas are affected:

- Helicopters must be equipped with radio altimeters;
- Helicopters operating over water must carry additional safety equipment;
- Alternate airport weather minimums are increased; and
- Pilots must be tested on flat-light, whiteout, and brownout conditions and must demonstrate competency in recovering from instrument meteorological conditions.

For part 135 air ambulance helicopter operators, the following areas are affected:

- Flights carrying medical personnel onboard must be conducted under part 135;
- Air ambulance medical personnel must be given safety briefings or safety training;
- Certificate holders of ten (10) or more helicopters must establish operations control centers (OCC) and require alcohol and drug testing of those staffing personnel;
- Helicopters must be equipped with HTAWS and flight data monitoring systems;
- Operations in uncontrolled airspace must be conducted under visual flight rule (VFR) weather minimums;
- Operations to airports that lack weather reporting capabilities may be conducted under instrument flight rules (IFR); and
- Pilots in command must hold an IFR pilot rating and must identify and document the highest obstacle along a planned route of flight.

If you have any questions or would like further information regarding this Final Rule, please contact our office.

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