

PF Olsen Toolbox Safety Alert 38

Date: July 2021	Focus Group: Helicopter Use – Establishment
Topic: Working with helicopters	Issued by: Nic Steens

Background and Incident: While recovering empty seedling pods with a helicopter, the grapple was not set properly in the loop of the strop. After take-off, the strop slipped off the grapple hook and the empty pod fell to the ground.

Injury Details: No injuries – fortunately this incident occurred away from where any ground workers were planting.

Risk Awareness: Working around or with aircraft requires strict conformance with best practice. The work involves several serious risks ranging from electric shock (static electricity build-up), load security (falling objects), objects lifting in the rotor-wash (up to 4kg or more) and people coming into direct contact with the rotor blades.

Safe Behaviours: The Civil Aviation Authority of NZ (CAA) has published guidance that covers most aspects of [Safety Around Helicopters](#). Also, the Competenz ‘[BPG – Working With Helicopters](#)’ is a valuable resource for forestry operations – in particular pages 6 and 12 that discuss loading operations. Fortunately, incidents are few and far between. Nonetheless, the BPG makes an excellent point in the ‘Operational Hazards’ section saying ‘inexperienced people tend to rush when working with helicopters’, which can lead to mistakes. Everyone, including the pilots are encouraged to ‘slow down’ and run ‘double checks’ of systems, processes and the work as it is being done.

For Site Manager:

Print and complete the following:

1. Discuss with employees/operators:
2. Place on site notice board or in file:

Site Manager: _____ **Date:** / /
(initials)

