

Acronyms and Definitions

Acronyms

AGL	Above Ground Level
AMD	Aviation Management Directorate
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
DOI	Department of Interior
FSH	Forest Service Hand Book
FSM	Forest Service Manual
IA	Initial Attack
IHOG	Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide
IHOPS	Interagency Helicopter Operations Steering Committee
IHRG	Interagency Helicopter Rappel Guide
HERS	Helicopter Rappel Spotter
JHA	Job Hazard Analysis
Mic	Microphone
MTDC	Missoula Technology and Development Center
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NPS	National Park Service
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
IHREPC	Interagency Helicopter Rappel Equipment and Procedures Committee

IHRSC	Interagency Helicopter Rappel Subcommittee
SDTDC	San Dimas Technology and Development Center
SPH	Sound Protection Helmet (or Flight Helmet)
STC	Supplemental Type Certificate
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USDOI	United States Department of Interior
USFS	United States Forest Service

Definitions

Anchor: Means of attaching the rope to an object. For helicopter rappelling, the anchor is an approved “fail-safe” attachment point for the rappel ropes, tethers, or other devices to the helicopter.

Bight: A V-shaped bend in a rope that comes back on itself, but does not cross.

Booster Rappeller: A qualified rappeller from another exclusive-use rappel base. Booster rappellers are used to augment the rappel crew capability at the host base when there is demonstrated need, or anticipated need.

Challenge & Response: One party presents a question (challenge) and another party must provide a valid answer (response) to validate the action.

Descent Device or Descender: A metal device through which the rope passes; designed to create friction, as needed, during a rappel. Tension from the brake hand provides the device with friction to control the rate of descent or stop.

Direct Supervision: Direct supervision is defined as qualified spotter presence on board the helicopter during the rappel operation. The spotter may be a rappeller if the trainee has shown competency as a spotter trainee.

Feed or Feeding: The act of pushing or sliding a rope through a decent device.

Figure 8 Cargo Delivery Device: A device for inducing friction to a rope or letdown line. The shape of the device resembles the numeral “eight”. It is available with or without ears. Another name includes Rescue 8.

Fire Season: A season is continuous employment in a primary wildland fire position for a period of 90 days or more.

Glaze or Glazing: Heat generated during rapid rappels can overheat an area on a rope or webbing to the point of momentarily melting the nylon sheath fibers, which cool into a hard crystalline coating. When glazing occurs, it should be considered for rope or webbing retirement.

Gunner Strap: A restraint that keeps the rappeller tethered to the helicopter (typically Type II helicopters) during the period between removing their seat belt and hooking up to the Sky Genie. (Must conform to MTDC Drawing 984)

Lock-Off: A technique intended to temporarily attain a stationary position on the rope.

Non-Operational Rappel: Any rappel performed in a controlled environment where the purpose of the rappel is training or proficiency, and not operational in nature.

Indirect Supervision: Indirect supervision is defined as a qualified HERS at the base of operation for the departure and return of the helicopter and not on board the helicopter.

Internal Abrasion: Damage caused by internal friction from dirt and grit particles trapped between fibers inside a rope. Use of a rope filled with these particles can severely damage the rope from the inside out.

Operational Rappel: Any rappel performed for the purpose of accomplishing a task once the rappeller is on the ground. This may include rappelling fire fighters, search and rescue, or law enforcement personnel to perform a specific task.

Rappeller: A person trained and certified to rappel from a helicopter in accordance with agency specific policy and direction contained in the IHRG.

Rappel Check Spotter: A qualified rappel spotter that has a least three (3) seasons experience as a qualified rappel spotter and has been approved by an agency specific Helicopter Operations Specialist to provide oversight in the rappel program and evaluate spotter candidates.

Rappel Configured: Spotter and rappeller(s) have donned rappel and spotter gear. All personnel have performed necessary equipment and procedure checks and are in approved seating positions. Helicopter is configured with ropes and rigged descent devices. Cargo is packaged and secured with adequate letdown gear on board and in position for cargo deployment. Bucket, longline, remote hook, and additional fire fighting tools may or may not be on board, as environmental conditions, mission requirements, and helicopter performance dictate.

Rappel Equipped: Spotter and rappellers on board with all necessary equipment for initial attack and rappel operations. Essential cargo (bucket, longline, remote hook, additional fire fighting tools) will be on board as mission planning dictates.

Rappel Height(s): Rappels are generally categorized into three heights as follows:

Low = below 75 feet AGL **Medium** = 75 to 150 feet AGL **High** = above 150 feet AGL

Rappel Spotter: A person trained and certified, in accordance with agency specific policy and direction contained in the IHRG. They are responsible for directing and managing rappel operations, providing instruction for initial rappeller candidates, spotter trainees, certifying rappellers and ensuring compliance with the IHRG.

Rookie Rappeller: A qualified first year rappeller having less than one season of rappel experience on an exclusive use helicopter rappel crew.

Twisty Rope: A rope that twists into loops or “pig tails” below the Genie to the extent that it impedes a rappeller’s descent in a rappel, or interferes with their ability to unhook from the Sky Genie when a rappel is completed.

Veteran Rappeller: A qualified rappeller having one or more seasons of rappel experience on an exclusive use helicopter rappel crew.

Rappel Stick: Two rappellers deployed simultaneously from a helicopter.

Trainee: A designation attached to any position that denotes a person who successfully meets the training requirements, but has not been certified to perform operational missions in that capacity without direct supervision of a qualified rappel spotter.