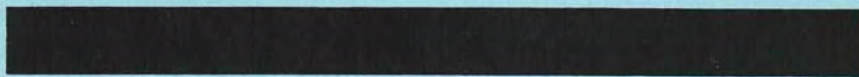


NORTH WALES POLICE AIR SUPPORT UNIT



PROFILE



A. Introduction

This document has been prepared to provide all personnel with the necessary information for the effective deployment of the helicopter.

The effectiveness of the helicopter rests with its speed of response and thus depends on its early deployment by ground units. It is up to those units to make the early decision to request Air Support and to thus maximise the benefits this resource can provide to Police operations.

THE HELICOPTER IS AVAILABLE AS A RESOURCE TO
ALL OPERATIONAL OFFICERS.

MAKE USE OF IT.

B. Air Support Unit - Background

In February 1992 the Police Authority approved the establishment of a North Wales Police Air Support Unit (A.S.U.) for a trial period of 12 months commencing in October 1992. This trial will allow for a comprehensive evaluation of the value of Air Support to North Wales, clarifying operational needs, identifying optimum working periods and assessing cost effectiveness.

A Working Party involving Divisional personnel and under the chairmanship of the Assistant Chief Constable has been established and will conduct the evaluation of the operation.

The A.S.U. is part of the Operational Support Division and will be staffed by an Inspector and four Constables trained as Air Observers.

The helicopter, maintenance and pilotage are supplied to the Force by a commercial company on contract ensuring that an aircraft is continuously available.

C. Operational Procedures

The A.S.U. will be operational for 7 days per week. The availability of the helicopter will vary and a number of different shift patterns are anticipated. These will be detailed daily by message switch to all Divisional offices.

Direct contact with the A.S.U., for all officers, will be by telephone utilising speed call number 2450.

There are NO restrictions on contacting the A.S.U., either direct to notify personnel of an incident or to arrange a pre-planned operation. Indeed operational periods will be adjusted to meet the requirements of pre-planned operations where deemed appropriate.

The A.S.U. flight office will also have VHF Radio contact with Headquarters Operations Room and Fax facilities.

The helicopter is available as a resource to assist all operational officers regardless of rank or department and the Call Out Procedures detailed below fully reflects this availability. At all times the A.S.U. will endeavour to provide effective support to those officer(s) requiring assistance.

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Call Out Procedures For Immediate Response Or Pre-planned Operations

1. Any officer, regardless of rank may request the assistance of the helicopter. This request does not require supervisory confirmation.
2. The request for the helicopter should be either DIRECT to the Air Support Unit on speed call number 2450 or VIA Headquarters Operations Room who will relay the request to the unit or to the helicopter if airborne.
3. The decision to deploy or to refuse the request will rest primarily with the Air Support Unit personnel, whether they be the Air Observers or the Unit Inspector, or with the Inspector Headquarters Operations Room. They are the officers best qualified to make the decision as they will be aware of the helicopter state, weather conditions, fuel, travelling speeds, distances etc., and they may be called upon to account for their decision.
4. All out of hours request for the helicopter will be directed to the Inspector Headquarters Operations Room.

Note: All requests for Air Support will be recorded to enable a full analysis of the demand for the helicopter. Should the request for Air Support be refused then the officer concerned will receive a memorandum explaining the reason for refusal.

Information Required

The ONLY responsibility placed on the officer requesting Air Support is to provide as much accurate information as possible.

This should include the following:

1. Type of incident and exact location. (Provide a map reference if possible).
2. Time Scale - when the incident commenced.
3. Full Description of Offenders / Missing Persons / Vehicles Property etc.
4. Any direction of travel and/or believed destination.
5. Details of Police Action to date (this will be particularly relevant in regard to Missing Person searches).

D. Aircraft and Equipment Specification

The helicopter to be operated by the North Wales Police Air Support Unit is the Aerospatiale AS 355 F1 Twin Squirrel.

The helicopter has the following specification:

Normal Cruise Speed: 150 mph.
Maximum Speed: 172 mph.
Flying Endurance at Cruise Speed: 2 hours 50 minutes - 440 miles.
Flying Endurance: 4.8 hours.
Passenger Load: 5 persons.
Normal Crew: Pilot and Two Observers.

As a consequence of the high flying speed (which amounts to over 2 miles per minute), all areas of the force are accessible within acceptable periods of time. The following details examples of approximate flying times from the Colwyn Bay area:

Rhyl, Llanwrst, Llandudno - 5 minutes

Bangor, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Holywell, Deeside - 10 minutes

Holyhead, Porthmadoc, Bala, Wrexham, Hawarden - 15 minutes

99% of the force area within 20 minutes

Communications Equipment

The helicopter will have the Call Sign NOVEMBER WHISKY ONE.

The following communications equipment will be installed on the helicopter:

A Northern Airborne Technology (N.A.T.) tactical communications system comprising 4 tactical radios capable of communication on V.H.F., (A.M. and F.M.) and U.H.F. band frequencies and scanning facilities. The system comprises four radios each having four separate banks and is capable of having 512 frequencies tuned in at any time. In addition to all Police frequencies the system will include Ambulance and Mountain Rescue Interface.

Over the scene of an incident the crew will monitor the WA V.H.F. channels plus divisional channels relating to that area. Should ground patrols wish to speak direct to the air crew they should use U.H.F. channel 88 on their divisional sets if available. However as indicated the air crew have facilities to communicate on all force U.H.F. channels.

Role Equipment:

The following equipment will be permanently carried on the helicopter:

Skycast	700 watt Public Address System.
Nightsun	30 million candle power searchlight.
Stabilised Binoculars	Allow the Police Observer to overcome the helicopter movement and vibration.
Stills Camera	
Video Camcorder	
Stretcher	To enable casualty evacuation.
Safety and First Aid Equipment.	

E. Operational Applications:

The following briefly summarises the most usual operational applications of Air Support. However this should NOT be seen as a definitive list and in reality the deployment and use of the helicopter is only restricted by the imagination of the officer making the request.

1. Search and Containment.

(i) Missing or Suspect Persons:

The helicopter is uniquely capable of conducting a search for missing or suspect persons rapidly over large areas of terrain. The use of the helicopter will greatly reduce the number of ground units required and in turn considerably increase the effectiveness of the search conducted by the ground units.

(ii) Crime searches:

The search of an area after the commission of a crime can quickly eliminate large areas for moving suspect or abandoned get away vehicles. Stolen vehicles, drugs etc., stored in isolated locations can be readily located from the air.

Aerial observation can also quickly locate a crime scene, which may have been difficult for ground units thus assisting with the rapid deployment of those units

2. Pursuits.

The use of a helicopter during a high speed pursuit will facilitate an increased probability of an arrest and minimise the danger to the general public and Police Officers alike. The helicopter will allow the pursuing ground units to back off with the associated reduction in speed. There are very few instances of the helicopter being out run.

The helicopter is also particularly useful during foot pursuits in view of the capability to establish perimeters for suspect containment.

3. Reconnaissance and Surveillance - Aerial Photography:

The helicopter can assume the role of either covert or overt surveillance depending on the needs of the operation. The high degree of visibility from a helicopter makes it an ideal tool in surveillance work with the helicopter being able to be flown at a sufficient distance from a target to avoid detection and yet still monitor the movement of persons and/or vehicles. This allows ground units to remain for longer periods out of view of the target(s).

4. Crime Management:

Almost all elements of crime management benefit from improved surveillance, for example :-

- (i) Drugs - assisting in controlling smuggling, illegal cultivation, sales and transportation:
- (ii) Robbery - rapid response to the scene and during pursuits; in providing intelligence information:
- (iii) High Burglary Areas - invaluable observation potential or crime prevention value:
- (iv) Vehicle Thefts - a serious problem in remote areas ideally suited to the capability of the helicopter to cover large areas of land:
- (v) Firearms Incidents - the rapid deployment of Tactical advisers, team leaders or a 4 man team has a life saving potential.

5. Traffic Management:

The helicopter is uniquely able to provide an ideal platform to observe large stretches of road for a number of purposes without suffering from its operation being hampered by traffic congestion, for example:

- (i) Advice on traffic control and the deployment of emergency vehicles following a serious accident.
- (ii) The ability to assist in identifying road engineering problems.
- (iii) Identification of alternative routes for road traffic.
- (iv) The early identification of an accident scene assisting with the rapid response of ground units to the correct location.

6. Transportation:

The helicopter has the obvious ability to land and transport from almost any location. This ability may be associated with the need to transport key operational personnel and specialist equipment rapidly and directly to a major crime scene.

Examples of personnel and equipment may include:

- Dog handlers:
- Authorised Firearms Officers:
- Pathologist or Coroner:
- Weapons:
- Communications equipment:
- Crime Scene Equipment:
- Video and Camera Equipment:
- Thermal Imaging and Search equipment.

7. Command and Control:

The helicopter provides an incident commander with an unique vantage point from where he can observe and assess the incident, deploy efficiently and coordinate effectively.

This role is applicable to routine Police operations, Public Order situations and Major Disasters alike.

The helicopter can also provide a radio link where normal communications have broken down.

8. Medical intervention/evacuation:

The helicopter can provide a rapid response to any medical emergency or casualty evacuation particularly in remote rural areas.

The helicopter is able to reach victims, transport blood and other tissues in remote areas and evacuate seriously injured casualties direct to the most appropriate hospital.

9. Additional Applications.

(i) Route security:

Aerial support greatly enhances the effectiveness of the security operation in providing route security during a V.I.P. visit.

(ii) Crime prevention:

The application of the helicopter for crime prevention purposes may involve unacceptable expense. However target patrols over particular problem areas can have an excellent effect particularly in areas where conventional Police patrols are difficult or impossible.

(iii) Aerial Broadcast Messages:

Messages of an urgent nature can be broadcast to large areas of housing estates or large crowds of people in particularly short periods of time. This has obvious applications in potential chemical or flood emergencies as well as during public order situations.

(iv) Protection of the environment:

This use would include assisting the Fire Brigade to locate moorland fires or detecting sources of pollution in rivers and waterways.

(v) Aerial Cover:

Aerial cover for ground units during specific operations provides a third dimension to policing and can be applied to numerous situations.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

The following Questions and Answers have been included as they reflect the most common questions asked by operational personnel in regard to the use of the Helicopter and Air Support.

Q. WHO CAN CALL THE HELICOPTER OUT?

A. Any officer, regardless of rank may request the assistance of the helicopter. This request does not require supervisory confirmation.

Q. HOW DO WE CALL OUT THE HELICOPTER?

A. The request for the helicopter should be either direct to the unit on Speed Call Number 2450 or through Headquarters Operations Room who will relay the request to the unit or to the helicopter if airborne.

Q. WHO DECIDES TO DEPLOY THE HELICOPTER?

A. The decision to deploy or to refuse the request will rest primarily with the personnel on the Air Support Unit whether they be the Air Observers or the Unit Inspector, or with the Inspector Headquarters Operations Room. They are the officers best qualified to make the decision as they will be aware of the helicopter state, weather conditions, fuel, travelling speeds, distances etc. All out of hours request for the helicopter will be directed to the Inspector Headquarters Operations Room.

Q. IF IT IS CALLED OUT AND FOUND NOT TO BE REQUIRED WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT?

A. The responsibility for the deployment of the helicopter as stated above rests with the Air Observers, the Unit Inspector, or with the Inspector Headquarters Operations room.

Q. IS THERE ANY CRITERIA FOR US TO CONSIDER BEFORE WE CALL FOR AIR SUPPORT?

A. None - If you believe that the helicopter can assist you whether for immediate response or pre-planned operations then make the request.

Q. WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE REQUIRED WITH A REQUEST FOR AIR SUPPORT?

A. Provide as much accurate information as possible which should include the following:

Type of incident and exact location. (Provide a map reference if possible).

Time Scale - when the incident commenced.

Full Description of Offenders / Missing Persons / Vehicles Property etc.

Any direction of travel and/or believed destination.

Details of Police Action to date (this will be particularly relevant in regard to Missing Person searches).

Q. HOW SMALL A TASK WILL THE AIRCRAFT RESPOND TO?

A. This depends on a number of factors which will be assessed by the Unit personnel in deciding to respond. If the helicopter is airborne in your area it could respond to almost any incident. If you believe the helicopter can be of assistance then request Air Support.

- Q. HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO ARRIVE?
- A. The helicopter flies at over two miles per minute. Obviously response times will be subject to a number of factors such as location at the time of request, weather etc. This is one of the matters the personnel will assess when the request is made. Do not delay any request, the effectiveness of the helicopter rests with its speed of response which in turn relies on an early deployment.
- Q. HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET THE HELICOPTER AIRBORNE?
- A. Less than 5 Minutes.
- Q. WILL OFFICERS ON THE GROUND HAVE ANY RADIO CONTACT WITH THE HELICOPTER.
- A. Yes, either via existing V.H.F. channels, or a dedicated V.H.F. channel 138, controlled by Headquarters Operations Room, or via U.H.F. channels.
- Q. WILL THE HELICOPTER CARRY CASUALTIES TO HOSPITAL?
- A. Yes, when the medical personnel consider that the time factor in travelling by road would be life threatening.
- Q. WILL THE AIR OBSERVERS EXECUTE AN ARREST?
- A. Yes, if no ground units are available or require assistance then they will of course effect an arrest assuming the helicopter is able to land.
- Q. WILL THE HELICOPTER BE AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY?
- A. No, budgetary considerations prevent this although it will be operational 7 days per week. It is intended to vary the operational period to cover the busiest periods and the availability of the helicopter will be published daily by message switch to all divisional offices. In fact almost none of the existing Air Support units are available 24 hours a day, for example Merseyside are available 20 hours for 5 days and 10 hours for 2 days.
- Q. WHAT HAS THIS COST US. COULD THE FORCE HAVE MORE POLICE OFFICERS IF THE HELICOPTER TRIAL IS CANCELLED?
- A. The helicopter trial was approved by the Police Authority as an addition to the full budget proposals for 1992/93 which in turn were approved in full. The helicopter trial has NOT affected the number of Police Officers which is set by the Home Office. The Chief Constable applied for an additional 30 officers in 1992/93 and the Home Office approved only 17 all of whom are to be appointed.

SAFETY INFORMATION

LANDING

Area of landing must be clear of spectators and animals. After landing, all persons should be kept at least 50 yards from the helicopter.

APPROACH

- a. Always approach the helicopter from the 12 o'clock position but never enter the rotor disc area until the pilot has signalled the 'okay' by the 'thumbs-up' signal, or you are accompanied by a member of the crew.
- b. Remove headgear and loose clothing.
- c. Crouch when entering the rotor disc area, but never enter or leave the rotor disc area when engines are starting or stopping.
- d. Obey instructions given by the air crew at all times.
- e. If the helicopter has landed on a slope, approach should always be made from the downward side.
- f. The tail rotor is potentially dangerous, **NEVER** approach or depart the helicopter from the rear.

***DO NO APPROACH THE HELICOPTER UNTIL
YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO DO SO BY
THE PILOT OR A MEMBER OF THE AIR CREW.***

SAFE APPROACH AREA

