

Safetree Safety Alert

Post this alert on your workplace noticeboards – discuss it at safety or tailgate meetings.

Log hauling with aerial ropes/cables are a hazard to aircraft

The NZ Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) would like to raise the awareness to the forestry industry of the hazard cable extraction of logs can be to aircraft.

In June 2019 a helicopter flew through a valley where a hauler had been operating with its ropes hundreds of metres in the air only minutes beforehand. As the operation had not been formally notified, the pilot had no idea the hazard existed. It only because the crew was on a break and had lowered the cable (from its height of 180m) that a major helicopter accident did not occur.

Aircraft can be expected to be flying 150 metres above the ground and in some cases lower during helicopter and agricultural operations. In adverse weather conditions aircraft are more often found at low level, below cloud and at higher risk of ground hazards.

Under the Health and Safety at works Act 2015, PCBUs are required to take all reasonable and practical steps to manage safety risks arising from work activities. CAA recommends considering the following precautions as part of your site-specific hazard plan if you consider it could become a hazard to aircraft.

- Notify the Civil Aviation Authority. This is usually done via a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), providing advice of the type, location and height of the hazard to aircraft. See the [CAA's airspace hazards webpage](https://www.caa.govt.nz/airspace/airspace-hazards/) (<https://www.caa.govt.nz/airspace/airspace-hazards/> - Contact) for information about what hazards must be notified and the contacts to do so (including emailing airspacehazards@caa.govt.nz, or telephoning 04 560 9400).
- Identify local airports, helicopter, agricultural aircraft operators and aeroclubs and advise them of your activities.
- Consider publishing information about the operation in your local newspaper.
- Consider lighting, markers or other types of visible warning signs on the hazard.

Fire and emergency

If you see a fire in the local area, there may be helicopters responding and flying at unusually low altitudes. It is safest to stop hauling and lower the cable equipment until the situation can be determined.