ACS HELICOPTER MANEUVER SERIES · 1 OF 24

Traffic Patterns

Area of Operation III — Airport and Heliport Operations

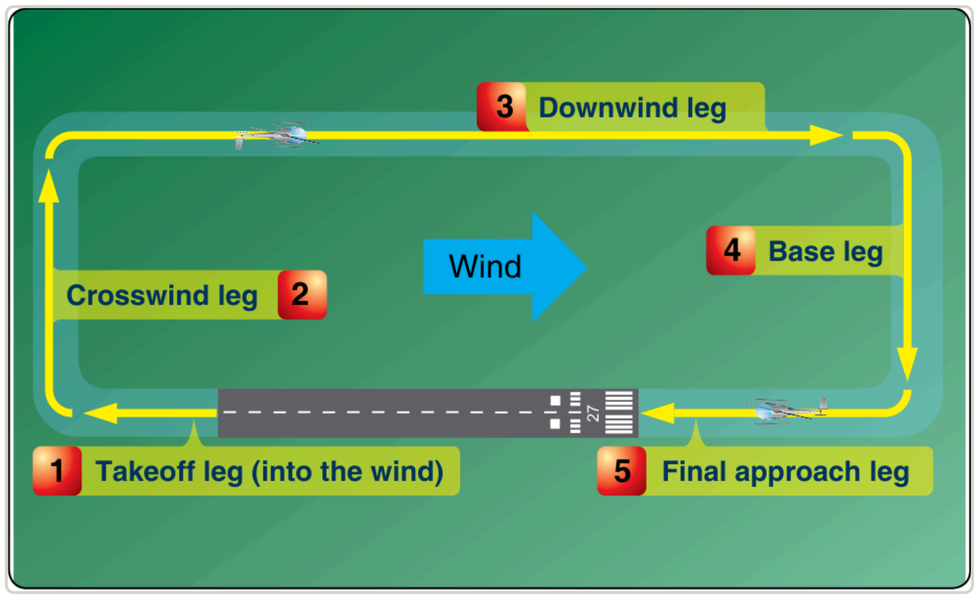
Private Pilot task PH.III.C **Commercial Pilot task** CH.III.C

Poster 01 of 24

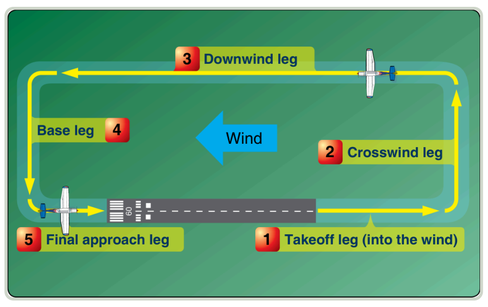
Objective. To determine the applicant exhibits satisfactory knowledge, risk management, and skills associated with traffic patterns. lighting. traffic, as appropriate.

HOW IT IS FLOWN

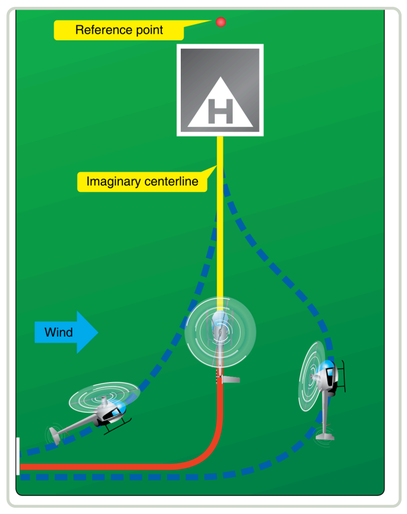
condensed from the FAA Helicopter Flying Handbook, Chapter 9 — Traffic Patterns, Approaches



HFH Figure 9-19. *A standard helicopter traffic pattern consists of right turns, has 5 designated legs, and is flown at 500' AGL.*



HFH Figure 9-18. *A standard fixed-wing traffic pattern consists of left turns, has five designated legs, and is flown at 1,000' AGL.*



HFH Figure 9-20. *Plan the turn to final so the helicopter rolls out on an imaginary extension of the centerline for the final approach path. This path should neither angle to the landing area, as shown by the helicopter on the left, nor require an S-turn, as shown by the helicopter on the right.*

1. A helicopter pattern is flown at 500–1,000 ft AGL, normally with right turns, to stay out of the flow of fixed-wing traffic (airplane pattern: left turns, 1,000 ft AGL).
2. Take off into the wind; turn crosswind (right) after 300 ft AGL or as needed to stay within reach of forced-landing areas.
3. At 500 ft AGL turn to parallel the takeoff path for downwind. Fly downwind at pattern altitude and distance.
4. When the landing point is about 45° behind the abeam position, turn base and begin the descent to about 300 ft AGL.
5. Turn final considering wind and obstructions; roll out on an imaginary extension of the approach centerline — no angling in, no S-turn (Figure 9-20).
6. Keep the landing area in sight. The approach angle should never be too high (base too close) or too low (landing area too far away).
7. At towered airports expect clearance direct to an approach point; at non-towered airports follow local procedures and announce call sign, position and intentions.

WATCH FOR — DRAWN FROM THE HFH DISCUSSION

- Mixing with the fixed-wing flow instead of avoiding it.
- Losing sight of the landing point.

SKILLS — THE STANDARD

the applicant exhibits the skill to:

	PRIVATE · ACS-15	COMMERCIAL · ACS-16
S1	Identify and interpret airport/heliport/helipad/landing area runways, taxiways, markings, signs, and	
S2	Comply with recommended helicopter traffic pattern procedures, as appropriate.	
S3	Correct for wind drift to maintain the proper ground track.	
S4	Maintain orientation with the runway/landing area in use, as applicable.	
S5	Maintain traffic pattern altitude, **±100 feet**, and the appropriate airspeed,	**±10 knots**.
S6	Maintain situational awareness and proper spacing from other traffic or avoid the flow of fixed-wing	

☐ Shaded rows are where the Commercial standard is tighter than Private. Unshaded rows apply to both certificates.

KNOWLEDGE

PH.III.C.K1–K4 · the applicant demonstrates understanding of:

- Towered and nontowered airport/heliport/helipad/landing area operations and restrictions.
- Traffic pattern for the current conditions.
- Right-of-way rules.
- Use of automated weather and airport/heliport information.

RISK MANAGEMENT

PH.III.C.R1–R3 · identify, assess and mitigate risk associated with:

- Collision hazards.
- Distractions, task prioritization, loss of situational awareness, or disorientation.
- Windshear and wake turbulence.

Standards: FAA-S-ACS-15 Private Pilot Helicopter and FAA-S-ACS-16 Commercial Pilot Helicopter (text reproduced from the current ACS). **References:** 14 CFR part 91; AIM; FAA-H-8083-2, FAA-H-8083-21, FAA-H-8083-25. **Figures and technique:** FAA Helicopter Flying Handbook, FAA-H-8083-21B — figures reproduced unmodified. Always confirm tolerances against the ACS in force on your checkride date and procedures against the R44 POH/RFM.

flyheliadk.com · (518) 634-6375
North Country Heli Flight · Harris Airport (83K), Fort Ann, NY
Hangar teaching series · 24 × 36 in