



THE PREMIER SAFETY STANDARD
IN THE AIR TOUR INDUSTRY



TOPS
Tour Operators Program of Safety

Who We Are

MISSION: The Tour Operators Program of Safety (TOPS) works as a collaborative team to develop air tour safety standards and recommended practices that are progressive, best-in-class and exceed regulatory standards.

- Incorporated in 1996, TOPS was formed from the vision of air tour operators looking to hold the helicopter sightseeing industry to a higher, self-imposed safety standard, above and beyond that required by the FAA.
- Today, as members of TOPS, the most respected air tour operators across the country have collaborated to design the premier safety standard in the air tour industry.



Member Operators

- Blue Hawaiian Helicopters (Hawaii)
- Coastal Helicopters (Alaska)
- Hawaii Helicopters (Hawaii)
- NorthStar Helicopters (Alaska)
- Papillon Grand Canyon Helicopters (Arizona & Nevada)
- TEMSCO Helicopters (Alaska)




Raising the Safety Benchmark

- TOPS members comply with the Program of Safety Standards, a specification that outlines safety outcomes above and beyond those required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- Each member must pass an annual independent audit to remain in compliance.
- As a result of their voluntarily commitment to the TOPS standards, members offer the flying public a higher safety requirements.



Going Above and Beyond!

TOPS goes beyond the requirements of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) for Part 91 and Part 135 operations, under which air tours are conducted. The following table illustrates some of the TOPS safety requirements that exceed FAA regulations.

REQUIREMENT	 TOPS Tour Operators Program of Safety	PART 135	PART 91
Required Safety Management System (SMS)	✓	NO	NO
Designated Safety Manager	✓	NO	NO
Annual safety audit	✓	NO	NO
Human factors & aeronautical decision-making training	✓	NO	NO
Specialized ground support personnel training	✓	NO	NO
Pilot Requirements of 1,000 hrs. flight time and typical terrain experience	✓	NO	NO
Minimum enroute altitude of 500 feet above ground level	✓	NO	NO
Minimum of 1 mile visibility	✓	NO	NO
Maximum angle of bank (30) and pitch (10) with smooth transitions	✓	NO	NO
Maintenance factory training requirement	✓	NO	NO

What to Expect

- When you choose to fly with a TOPS member operator, you can rest assured that you are flying with an air tour operator who truly puts safety as their number one priority.
- The FAA allows air tour operators to provide “tour” flights under two different levels of rules, Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) Part 91 and Part 135 (named for the section in the FAA rules the aircraft operators must follow).
- All TOPS member operators are certified under Part 135, which is the highest level of FAA oversight for the air tour industry.



Rising Tide Program

“There are safety issues that affect us all, and it’s important that the tour operator community works together to address them. Through the Rising Tide Program, our Part 135 operators will work with smaller operators to improve safety, training, operations, and maintenance.”

TOPS General Operations Manual template for Part 91 operators that will enable them to demonstrate an acceptable level of safety, eventually to become a TOPS regular member.



Contact Us

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Safety Is TOPS!



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