



**UTTARAKHAND CIVIL AVIATION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**GOVERNMENT OF UTTARAKHAND**  
SAHASTRADHARA HELIDROME, DEHRADUN

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**Guidelines for Chardham Charter Helicopter Operations**

Effective From: July 2025

**Issued By:** Secretary Civil Aviation, Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA)

**Applicability:** All Licensed NSOP Holders Operating from Sahastradhara, Jolly Grant & DGCA-Approved Helipads

**1. Purpose of the Guideline**

The Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA) has developed these operational guidelines to establish a transparent, secure, and DGCA-compliant mechanism for the shortlisting and regulation of helicopter charter operators conducting Chardham, Dodham, Ekdham Yatra or charter services towards Chardham routes. These guidelines are applicable to all Non-Scheduled Operator Permit (NSOP) holders operating from Sahastradhara, Jolly Grant, or any other DGCA-approved helipad, and are designed to promote safety, equitable access, and effective operational control. Travel agents and intermediaries are excluded from operational roles and may participate only in supporting functions such as passenger handling and ticketing. They are strictly prohibited from accessing helicopter movement areas or influencing pilot decisions.

**2. Operator Shortlisting and Selection Criteria**

UCADA will undertake the shortlisting of operators based on defined eligibility and selection parameters. Up to six operators may be chosen from the pool of current or former shuttle operators, while the remainder will be selected from NSOP holders operating from DGCA-approved helipads. To qualify, an operator must have no blameworthy incidents or accidents in the preceding three years. Verified documentation, including Annual Surveillance Reports, Main Base Inspections, and Operational Base Inspection records, must be submitted. Operators with prior Chardham flying experience will be given preference. A refundable, interest-free registration fee in the form of a Bank Guarantee or Fixed Deposit endorsed to UCADA is required. Operators who are already operating shuttle services in addition to charters will be exempt from this fee. Noncompliance will result in forfeiture of the deposit.



### **3. Eligibility Requirements for Operators**

Each operator must ensure that the helicopters intended for Chardham use are endorsed under their NSOP by the DGCA at the time of registration. Additionally, a fully functional operational base must be maintained at Sahastradhara or any other DGCA-approved helipad. All pilots deployed for Chardham operations must possess a minimum of 1,500 hours of hill flying experience and present documented safety compliance records for the past two years. Only DGCA-approved aircraft types shall be permitted for use in these operations.

### **4. Operational Restrictions and Aircraft Limitations**

UCADA reserves the right to limit the number of aircraft per operator based on parking space constraints. All required permissions must be secured at least 24 hours in advance. Daily charter sortie limits will be enforced, taking into consideration aircraft capacity, prevailing weather conditions, and DGCA regulations. Special attention must be given to operational bottlenecks at Yamunotri, Gangotri, and Guptkashi. Night parking will be permitted only at designated helipads with prior clearance. A daily Foreign Object Debris (FOD) parade is mandatory around operational areas to ensure safety.

### **5. Operational Area and VIP Movement Restrictions**

Charter helicopter operations will be restricted to Guptkashi, Phata, and Sirsi helipads until specific allocations and supporting guidelines are established. For onward travel to Kedarnathji, charter operators must establish prior coordination with DGCA-approved shuttle operators, who will allocate the next available slot. Any delays exceeding 30 minutes must be reported to UCADA. **During lean period**, especially when shuttle Operators are not operating or operating in limited numbers, Charters may be permitted to go directly with prior clearance from UCADA. Direct flights will only be permitted after the pilot's qualifications and readiness have been verified. Operators bear the responsibility of ensuring pilot currency and qualification. All new pilots must undergo training in accordance with DGCA regulations.

### **6. Engagement, Communication, and Consortium Conduct**

UCADA will engage solely with licensed NSOP holders. Travel agents are not permitted to lead operational consortiums and may participate only in ticketing, administrative communication, and passenger services.

Any consortium formed must be led by an operator, with agents contributing only logistical and administrative support. A nodal officer appointed by UCADA will coordinate activities at Sahastradhara to streamline communication and compliance.





## **7. Ground Handling and Operational Coordination**

A joint ground handling framework will be established at Sahastradhara and Kedarnathji. All shortlisted operators are required to contribute trained manpower to a common team under the supervision of a UCADA-appointed ground handling supervisor. Ground handlers must have completed a one-day AvSec Awareness Programme and must be well-acquainted with helicopter operations and ground safety protocols. Additionally, one operations manager shall be deployed on a rotation basis at each of the following locations: Kedarnathji, Mandakani Valley (Phata, Sirsi, Guptkashi), Kharsali, and Jhala to oversee ground coordination and submit operational reports.

## **8. Weather Protocols and Operational Compliance**

All operators must comply strictly with the Sahastradhara operational guideline and DGCA-mandated weather regulations. Regardless of prior approvals, each takeoff must be reported to the UCADA Operations Team. Operators are expected to implement robust weather-related safety measures and respond appropriately to real-time meteorological developments in coordination with UCADA and DGCA protocols.

## **9. Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement**

UCADA will conduct regular oversight through the examination of sortie logs, maintenance records, operator and passenger feedback, and flight schedules. Any breach of the guideline will result in immediate suspension of operations, reporting to DGCA for further action, and potential cancellation of future helipad or flying slot allocations. In cases of serious noncompliance, UCADA may impose severe penalties including forfeiture of the registration deposit and, where applicable, initiate criminal proceedings.

## **10. Mandatory Documentation**

Operators must submit the following documents prior to selection:

- A valid NSOP with DGCA-endorsed helicopter models
- A current list of qualified pilots along with updated DGCA records
- Certificates confirming aircraft maintenance and airworthiness
- A signed undertaking confirming that the consortium is operator-led and DGCA-compliant
- Proof of wide public dissemination of the anti-corruption toll-free helpline number 1064

## **11. Periodic Review and Amendments**

This guideline will be reviewed periodically in light of DGCA circulars, feedback from field personnel, and recommendations from regulatory, security, and administrative agencies. Updates will be incorporated to enhance operational safety, regulatory compliance, and passenger experience.



## 12. **Penalties and Disciplinary Measures**

Operators found guilty of misconduct-including submission of false documents, bypassing regulatory protocols, influencing UCADA staff or pilots, breaching sortie caps, or engaging in unethical practices-shall be subject to immediate disciplinary action. UCADA reserves the right to confiscate the entire registration deposit without notice. Such actions will be reported to DGCA, and in severe cases, an FIR may be lodged against the operator or pilot concerned. Possible penalties include suspension or cancellation of the operator's NSOP, withdrawal of flying privileges, and permanent disqualification from Chardham operations.



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