

Unlicensed Landing Areas

The Minnesota rules allow for the use of an unlicensed landing area for private or commercial operations for a period of less than 30 days. This means that aircraft may come and go as many times as they need for 29 days from the date they first land at the location, but on the 30th day operations must cease. Any site that will be used for 30 days **or more** from the first landing, even if only occasionally used, does not meet the conditions for an unlicensed landing area. If the area meets the criteria as a personal-use airport and is more than five miles from the nearest **public use** airport then that personal-use airport is not required to be licensed. All other airports must be licensed before operations begin. So if you intend to use a landing area for 30 days or more you must have a license before an aircraft lands there for the first time.

There are conditions for the use of unlicensed landing areas. The area must be suitable for the landing of the aircraft and in no way endanger persons or property. Further, adequate safeguards need to be in place to protect the safety of passengers and the public. If landing on water the aircraft must carry enough life preservers for the passengers and crew. The aircraft owner or operator must have the permission of the landowner to use the landing area and as with all airports the use of the landing area must not impose undue hazards upon adjoining property or its occupants or endanger the user or use of existing surface transportation or power and communication transmission lines.

Probably the most common use of an unlicensed landing area is a landing area for an EMS helicopter near an accident site.

Seaplane base licenses apply to the land area from which operations are conducted. So the landing of a seaplane on a lake does not start the counter for an unlicensed landing area. However if the aircraft stops at a dock or is beached on a lake then **that** becomes the first operation. So if there is a restaurant on a lake that you like to visit and when you land there you tie up at their dock, then the owner needs to establish a private seaplane base if they intend to permit the continued use of their dock by seaplanes.

For more information contact Michael Hartell at michael.hartell@state.mn.us or 651-485-3698.

