

Subject: EMS Aircraft Services
Service Request/Dispatch Center Guidelines

Associated Policies:

- I. Authority and Reference (incorporated herein by references)
 - A. Division 2.5 of Health and Safety Code
 - B. California code of Regulations, Title 22
 - C. North Coast EMS Policies and Procedures
 - D. County Ambulance Ordinances

- II. Purpose
 - A. To enhance consistent communication with designated dispatch centers when requesting EMS Aircraft. Specific information is required to aid in safe patient transports to appropriate facilities.

- III. Request for EMS Aircraft Services:
 - A. Determination of Need for prehospital EMS aircraft
 1. In general, consideration should be given to requesting a prehospital EMS aircraft whenever the patient's condition appears to be life or permanent disability threatening and total ground transport time exceeds thirty minutes.
 2. A ground ambulance will always be dispatched to a scene in the event an EMS aircraft is dispatched to a scene.
 3. A prehospital EMS aircraft shall be dispatched (if available) when requested by trained EMS personnel, certified or accredited within the NCEMS region, who determine that a prehospital EMS aircraft is essential for rapid transport regardless of any specific medical considerations.
 4. In the event a bystander attempts to dispatch a prehospital EMS aircraft, the dispatching agency will function as incident command and authorize request based on information provided by bystander.
 - B. Before dispatching an EMS aircraft, authorized personnel should consider the medical condition of the patient, the necessity for an EMS aircraft response, the area and access for a landing site, and the safety of the EMS aircraft and pre-designated personnel. EMS aircraft utilization should only involve medical necessity and is only appropriate when the benefits outweigh the risks to both patient and rescuers.
 - C. Ground contact and radio frequency information should be provided to the appropriate dispatch center.
 - D. Landing zone information should be provided to the appropriate dispatch center and EMS Aircraft Services that may respond within the North Coast EMS Region.

- IV. Dispatch Guidelines
 - A. Dispatch Procedures for Ground Personnel:

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1. Request Pathway - Single Point of Contact:
A single point of contact for dispatch of EMS aircraft is essential to ensure appropriate and efficient use of this resource. The single point of contact shall coordinate with on scene Incident Command or the Medical Team Leader. First responder, public safety, EMS personnel, or their dispatchers should not request EMS aircraft providers directly.
- B. Designated Dispatch Centers for the NCEMS region are as follows:
 1. Del Norte County - Del Norte Sheriff's Department Communications who then contacts Cal Fire Communications Fortuna.
 2. Humboldt County- Cal Fire Communications Fortuna.
 3. Lake County- Cal Fire Communications Napa.
- C. Information to be provided to dispatch center. Personnel should indicate as much information as is practical, including:
 1. Type of incident and patient condition/severity.
 2. Number of patients and rescuers to be transported.
 3. Location of helispot, including latitude/longitude, elevation if available
 4. Condition of helispot, including size of spot and surface material
 5. Visibility and ceiling
 6. Temperature with general description of weather, wind direction/speed
 7. Need for specialized equipment, i.e. hoist, short haul, winch, etc.
 8. Need for additional resources, i.e. staffing to assist in patient care, more than one aircraft etc.
 9. Obstructions/possible aircraft hazards in the area
 10. Tentative destination of patient if known.
- V. Proximity of Transport
 - A. In general, the closest available ALS aircraft will be dispatched. In extreme cases, personnel requesting an EMS aircraft should/may indicate "ALS priority". However, if ALS aircraft is unavailable or ETA is excessive, BLS Rescue Aircraft may be dispatched. Ground ambulances should always rendezvous at a landing site which is toward, not away, from the receiving hospital.
 - B. ALS ground personnel enroute to a scene, where they have reason to believe that EMS aircraft transport may be necessary (i.e. based on scene Incident Commander report), may request the appropriate dispatch center to contact aircraft providers for a "status check" to prepare for the quickest possible

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dispatch in the event it is needed. The appropriate dispatch center may also request EMS aircraft to “standby” if needed.

VI. EMS Aircraft Cancellation Policy

A. EMS aircraft response may be cancelled by the on-scene EMS personnel with the highest medical certification or licensure in communication with the Incident Commander when it is determined that:

1. Ground ambulance transportation is more appropriate.
2. Scene becomes unsafe for EMS aircraft landing (i.e. weather, topography etc.)
3. Patient(s) is declared deceased by highest medical authority on scene
4. Other circumstances determined by the Incident Commander and the highest medical authority on scene or the Base Hospital physician that aircraft helicopter transportation is no long necessary.
5. A patient refuses medical aid and/or transportation by EMS helicopter.
6. Cancellations by either the Incident Commander or the base hospital emergency physician should be after consultation with the person on-scene with the highest medical certification or licensure.
7. Cancellations will be routed through the original dispatcher.

Approved :  Date: 7/24/20

Approved as to Form:  Date: 7/24/20