

EMS AIRCRAFT

Purpose

- To provide policy for integrating dispatch and utilization of aircraft into the Marin County EMS system as a specialized resource for prehospital response, transport, and care of patients. Aircraft utilization provides a valuable adjunct to the Marin County EMS System by minimizing the time to definitive care in prescribed circumstances

Related Policies

- Emergency Medical Dispatch Policy, 4200
- Prehospital/Hospital Contact Policy, 7001
- Trauma Triage and Destination Guideline Policy, 4613

Authority

- California Administrative Code, Title 22, Divisions 2.5 and 9

Applicability

All aircraft providing prehospital patient transport within the Marin County EMS System must be authorized by the EMS agency in their county of origin, or by the EMS Authority, or by a United States Government agency

Policy

- A. The patient's condition, available ground resources, incident location in relation to receiving facility and call circumstances will be evaluated by caregivers in the field to determine if air transport is appropriate
- B. The type of aircraft to be requested will be determined by the Incident Commander and/or the County Communications Center based on provider availability, response time criteria and nature of the service needed. See Appendix A

Procedure for Aircraft Dispatch

- A. Aircraft will be dispatched simultaneously with ground units for specific circumstances as follows:
 - Area of the call is inaccessible to ground unit(s) or ground access is compromised;
 - Air assistance may be needed with rescue activities; or
 - Ground transport time to the hospital is > 30 minutes and the applicable Emergency Medical Dispatch Protocol (policy #4200, Appendix A) recommends simultaneous dispatch
 - Reported traumatic injury and Level III Trauma Center is on trauma diversion
- B. Aircraft Dispatch may also occur in the following manner:
 - Upon request of the responding unit while en route to the scene
 - Upon request of on-scene personnel following patient assessment

Procedure for Aircraft Use

- A. Consider use of an EMS aircraft where:
 - A patient meets Trauma Triage Tool anatomic or physiologic criteria and the time closest facility is a Level II Trauma Center
 - Ground transport time is greater than 30 minutes
- B. Procedural Considerations
 - EMS aircraft should not transport patients in cardiac arrest. Aircraft crew shall have discretion to transport patients receiving CPR in certain situations (refractory VF, unsafe scene conditions, hypothermia, etc)
 - Marin County Communications Center will notify law enforcement and fire agencies with jurisdiction over the landing zone
 - The EMS aircraft may be cancelled by the on-scene Incident Commander
- C. Medical Control
 - Treatment decisions will be made according to medical control policies and procedures governing the provider agency having responsibility for care

General and Related Procedures

- A. Marin County EMS personnel may accompany a patient in an EMS aircraft during transport if all the following conditions are met:
 - Personnel have been providing care for the patient prior to arrival of the aircraft and
 - EMS aircraft crew will complete a PCR as required by policy/procedure within their county of origin and forward a copy to Marin County EMS Agency
- B. Patient care reports will be kept as follows:
 - Marin County personnel will complete a Marin County PCR as per policy/procedure, and when known, forward it to the receiving hospital
 - EMS aircraft crew will complete a PCR as required by policy/procedure within their county of origin, and forward a copy to Marin County EMS Agency
- C. The following times, when available, will be relayed to and reordered by Marin County Communications Center:
 - ETA at time of original dispatch request
 - When airborne, en route to scene
 - Arrival at and departure from scene
 - Destination hospital
 - Arrival at receiving hospital
- D. As part of the Quality Improvement Program, the EMS Agency will review all aircraft dispatches
- E. Aircraft may be utilized by acute care hospitals for interfacility transfers
 - Hospitals will contact EMS aircraft providers directly
 - The hospital requesting an EMS aircraft will notify the Marin County Communications Center of aircraft activity so fire and law enforcement agencies can be notified of the probably aircraft landing site
 - Hospitals shall notify the Marin County EMS Agency of interfacility transfers by EMS aircraft on a monthly basis

APPENDIX A

Provider List and Classification Definitions

Provider Name	Classification	Function	Staffing	Location
Stanford University Hospital Helicopter (LIFEFLIGHT)	Air Ambulance	Medical	Pilot Flight Nurses (2)	Palo Alto
Global Medical Response- REACH (CON AIR 1)	Air Ambulance	Medical Fire	Pilot Flight Nurse Paramedic	Concord
Global Medical Response- REACH (CON AIR 2)	Air Ambulance	Medical Fire	Pilot Flight Nurse Paramedic	Concord
Sonoma County Fire (SOCO 1)	Air Ambulance	Medical Fire	Pilot Flight Nurse Paramedic	Santa Rosa
Sonoma County Sheriff's Department Helicopter (Henry 1)	ALS Rescue	Law Long-line Rescue Medical	Pilot Paramedic EMT	Santa Rosa
California Highway Patrol Helicopter (H-30)	ALS Rescue	Law Medical	Pilot Paramedic	Napa
U.S. Coast Guard Helicopter	Auxiliary	Long-line Rescue Water Rescue	Pilot (2) EMT Rescue Swimmer	San Francisco Airport

Classification Definitions

- A. **Air Ambulance** means any aircraft specifically constructed, modified, or equipped and used for the primary purpose of responding to emergency calls and transporting critically ill or injured patients whose medical flight crew has at a minimum two attendants certified or licensed in advanced life support
- B. **Rescue Craft** means an aircraft whose usual function is not prehospital emergency medical transport but which may be utilized for prehospital emergency patient transport when use of an air or ground ambulance is inappropriate or unavailable
- C. **ALS Rescue Aircraft** means a rescue aircraft that is equipped to provide ALS service, staffed with a minimum of one ALS medical flight crew member
- D. **Air Rescue Service** means an air service used for emergencies including search and rescue
- E. **BLS Rescue Service** means a rescue aircraft whose medical crew has, at a minimum, one attendant certifies as an EMT-1
- F. **Auxiliary Aircraft** is a rescue aircraft which does not have a medical flight crew or whose flight crew does not meet the minimum requirements of a BLS Rescue Aircraft