

SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY

**TITLE: EMS AIRCRAFT MEDICAL CONTROL**

EMS Policy No. **4442**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for on-line medical control from the time the EMS aircraft arrives on scene until the patient has arrived at an acute care facility.

**AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.220; 1798 et seq.

**DEFINITIONS:**

- A. "EMS Agency" means the San Joaquin County Emergency Medical Services Agency.
- B. "Emergency Medical Services Aircraft" or "EMS Aircraft" means any aircraft utilized for the purpose of pre-hospital emergency patient response and transport. EMS aircraft includes air ambulances and all categories of rescue aircraft.
- C. "Medical Flight Crew" means the individual(s), excluding the pilot, specifically assigned to care for the patient during aircraft transport.

**POLICY:**

- I The medical direction and management of the emergency medical services (EMS) system shall be under the medical control of the medical director of the San Joaquin County EMS Agency.
- II On-line Medical Control for EMS Aircraft:
  - A. San Joaquin General Hospital is designated by the EMS Agency as the base hospital and disaster control facility (DCF) for the San Joaquin County.
  - B. On-line medical control for the scene of a medical emergency is vested in the base hospital physician on duty at San Joaquin General Hospital.
  - C. On-line medical control for a patient being transported by air ambulance shall transfer to the air ambulance's assigned base hospital (if applicable) at the time air transport commences.
  - D. Air ambulance provider's wishing to use an in-flight base hospital other than San Joaquin General Hospital shall submit a request for approval to the EMS Agency.
- III Off-line Medical Control for EMS Aircraft:
  - A. Medical flight crews shall adhere to the scope of practice and patient care policies of the classifying EMS Agency and provider medical director.
  - B. Operational policies including but not limited to EMS aircraft utilization, multi-casualty incident (MCI) management, patient destination, and trauma triage shall

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Approved: Signature on File  
Medical Director

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EMS Administrator

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- be conducted in accordance with the policies and procedures of the EMS Agency.
- C. A Certified Flight Registered Nurse (CFRN), while on-duty as part of a medical flight crew, may perform skills and administer medications beyond the scope of practice of San Joaquin County accredited paramedics, if those skills and medications have been developed by the air ambulance provider medical director and approved by the medical director of the EMS Agency.

**IV Patient Destination:**

- A. Patients being evacuated by air ambulance or ALS rescue aircraft shall be transported to a trauma center, pediatric trauma center, other specialty care center or helicopter receiving hospital in accordance with EMS Agency triage and destination policies.
- B. In the absence of conditions specified in section IV. C. of this Policy, patients being evacuated by BLS rescue aircraft or auxiliary rescue aircraft shall be transported to the nearest and most appropriate EMS landing site for rendezvous with air ambulance, ALS rescue aircraft or ALS ground ambulance for transport to definitive care.
- C. BLS rescue aircraft or auxiliary rescue aircraft may obtain permission from the base hospital physician at San Joaquin General Hospital to transport a patient directly to a hospital if:
  - 1) The base hospital physician determines that rapid transport is the prime therapeutic intervention for the patient and a delay in transport places the patient's life or limb in jeopardy; and
  - 2) The base hospital physician directs to which hospital to transport the patient.

**V Utilization Review and Quality Improvement:**

- A. Medical need is the basis for determination of the appropriateness of using EMS Aircraft. All patients transported by EMS Aircraft services must have either a serious illness or injury; or, can be best managed by air transport considering the availability of ground transport resources.
- B. Unresolved issues related to EMS Aircraft utilization shall be documented and referred to the EMS Agency.
- C. EMS Aircraft providers shall participate in the EMS Agency's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program, including but not limited to attendance at CQI meetings in San Joaquin County.

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**EMS Policy No. 4442**

**VI Patient Documentation:**

- A. EMS Aircraft service providers shall complete a Pre-hospital Care Report (PCR) form for each patient. A copy of the PCR shall be provided to the receiving hospital for placement in patient's medical record, one copy shall be provided to the EMS Agency, and one copy shall be kept by the provider.
- B. Copies of PCR shall be submitted to the EMS Agency on not less than a monthly basis for all transports originating in San Joaquin County including all prehospital and interfacility transports.

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