

# EL DORADO COUNTY EMS AGENCY

## FIELD POLICIES

Effective: July 1, 2009

Reviewed: N/A

**Revised: July 2012, 2016, 2018**

Scope: BLS and ALS Personnel



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EMS Agency Medical Director

## EMS AIRCRAFT

### AUTHORITY:

Division 2.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 1797.220, California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Prehospital Emergency Medical Services, Chapter 8., Prehospital EMS Aircraft Regulations, Title 21, Public Works Chapter 2.5 Division of Aeronautics (Department of Transportation), Public Utilities Code Section 21662.1., and Federal Aviation Regulations.

### PURPOSE:

The purpose is to establish policy for emergency medical service aircraft operations, equipment and personnel responding to incidents within El Dorado County.

### CLASSIFICATION:

#### EMS Aircraft

Any aircraft utilized for the purpose of prehospital emergency patient response and transport. EMS aircraft includes air ambulances and all categories of rescue aircraft.

#### Air Ambulance

Any aircraft specially 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 a minimum of two (2) attendants certified or licensed to provide advanced life support care.

Air Ambulance services operating within El Dorado County will provide proof of accreditation by The Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS). A national independent commission dedicated to improving the quality of patient care and safety of the transport environment for services providing rotor wing, fixed wing and ground transport systems.

#### Rescue Aircraft

Any aircraft whose usual function is not prehospital emergency patient transport but which may be utilized, in compliance with local EMS policy, for prehospital emergency patient transport when use of an air or ground ambulance is inappropriate or unavailable. Rescue aircraft includes:

ALS Rescue Aircraft - The medical crew has a minimum of one attendant certified or licensed to provide ALS care.

BLS Rescue Aircraft – The medical crew has a minimum of one attendant certified as an EMT.

Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft - Does not have a medical flight crew.

**POLICY:****Request and Response**

Upon request for medical response, the requested air ambulance agency and its designated dispatch center shall immediately notify the requester of their status:

- Available - The aircraft will lift off as soon as is safely possible, aircraft dispatch will give ETA to scene.
- Committed - The aircraft dispatch center will give an estimate of when the aircraft will be available for another mission.
- Delay - The aircraft dispatch center shall inform the requester of the nature of the delay, maintenance or weather, etc. and give an ETA when service will be available.
- Unavailable - The aircraft is not in service due to maintenance, weather, or other reason for an indeterminate time period.

**No air ambulance shall respond to the scene of an emergency without formal request from an El Dorado County designated dispatch center.**

The designated dispatch centers for El Dorado County shall dispatch the closest air ambulance at the request of the Incident Commander. The designated dispatch centers may also dispatch an air ambulance whenever the patient condition may be ascertained and presents with one or more of the following:

- Unresponsive
- Spinal cord injury
- Significant head, neck, or chest injury
- Burns > 15% surface area
- Any other incident where the designated dispatching agency deems it beneficial to the patient(s), or responding emergency personnel

**Aircraft Utilization**

**Transport via Air Ambulance is the preferred method of air transport for critical patients.**

Aircraft may be utilized under the following circumstances:

- Incident factors that may result in prolonged response and transport time, e.g. very remote or rural location.
- Air transport is the most expedient transportation available to transport patient to the most appropriate facility.
- The incident has overwhelmed the ground transportation assets.
- ALS Air Rescue helicopter may be utilized when transport would be in the patient's best interest. Consideration must be given to the need for higher-level medical procedures (RSI, surgical cric, chest tube, etc.) vs. speed of transport to definitive care by an Air Rescue helicopter.
- Simultaneous response of a rescue helicopter and an air ambulance is permissible with the ALS rescue helicopter being utilized as the first responder.
- For interfacility transfers the selection of a specific EMS aircraft is at the discretion of the transferring physician/Facility.

**For patients requiring RSI, the patient's weight in kilograms and the anticipated need for RSI should be relayed to the air ambulance crew as soon as possible in order to facilitate preparation of medications while en route to the scene.**

**On-Line Medical Control**

On-line medical control for the scene of a medical emergency where both ground and EMS aircraft personnel are present shall be conducted by the base station contacted by the ground unit(s).

Once the transfer of patient care has been accomplished between the ALS ground unit and the EMS aircraft personnel the EMS aircraft crew will assume the responsibility for the care of the patient.

The flight crew shall notify the receiving facility of the patient's condition and the estimated time of arrival.

**LANDING ZONE SCENE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Select accessible site
- Determine proper size 100' X 100'
- Walk perimeter looking for wires or hazards
- Observe for drones operating in the area
- Evaluate ground slope
- Determine wind direction
- Establish latitude/longitude
- Wet down dusty areas
- Mark L.Z. for identification
- Secure loose equipment and perimeter
- Remain on radio frequency -For landing/departure
- Evaluate environmental conditions for snow, dust, grass, sand
- Maintain own safety first, and at all times

