

What is an Air Ambulance?

An air ambulance is an aircraft specifically used for the treatment of a patient who has been seriously injured or is critically ill. An air ambulance is primarily used in emergency situations where transport of the patient by standard land ambulance would not be timely or safe. Another instance where an air ambulance may be used is when a patient must be transported from one location to another and standard, conventional air travel is not feasible.

An air ambulance is looked at as an operating room in the air, or a flying critical care unit. Each air ambulance is specially staffed with an experienced flight crew that is highly trained to fly medical missions. On board the air ambulance aircraft you will find trained pilots and flight crew, as well as, medical staff that can safely care for critically ill or injured patients. The medical staff may be a nurse trained and experienced in CCU care, a qualified doctor capable of treating severe trauma injuries, or a specialized team of doctors and nurses that meet the specific needs of the patient.

Each air ambulance carries with it specialized medical tools and equipment that can handle nearly any emergency that may arise. Some examples of standard equipment found on an air ambulance includes ventilators, ECG equipment, CPR equipment, stretcher, medication, and other important tools that enable the crew to care for the patient.

The medical equipment is properly cleaned and tested before each and every flight. The standards patients expect from their doctor, ER or ICU are carried out inside and onboard the air ambulance.

The plane may vary dramatically depending on its designated mission. Some air ambulances are helicopters. Such aircraft are typically used to transport patients from the scene of an accident to a local hospital in the nearest big city that is equipped to handle the injuries. Choppers are air ambulances that can be used to retrieve patients from remote areas where conventional ambulances are unable to reach.

In other instances, small prop planes or jets are the preferred aircraft for longer trips. Jets are the best aircraft for trips over distances of 500 miles, because such planes allow for less fuel stops and speedier travel times. Like an ambulance on the ground, the goal of an air ambulance is to get the patient to the destination as safely and speedily as possible. Jets are capable of flying at higher altitudes which allow for the greatest comfort and speed.

Patients who may need the use of an air ambulance require constant medical

monitoring. Some patients may include cardiac patients, respiratory patients, NICU situations, patients with multiple IV drips, or critical trauma patients.

Any patient with any illness or injury that the doctor deems unsafe to fly by conventional means will be able to get a doctor's permission to fly in an air ambulance to the desired destination unless very specific medical reasons exist to avoid such methods of transportation. Frequently, travel by air ambulance is deemed safe and can truly save lives.