

Consider Safety First When Choosing an Air Ambulance

Times of stress often leave people feeling drained and unable to think clearly. When you or a loved one are suffering from medical conditions, stress levels are high. It is important to think of safety first when deciding on which air ambulance company to use. Here are some suggestions to help you put safety first in the decision.

Don't let the stress and circumstances cloud your mind. Research the air ambulance service thoroughly before making the decision to use their services. Learn about the company and their history. Find out what certifications the pilot and flight crew must possess. Do the pilot and other crew members meet all FAA requirements and certifications? Is the pilot required to have flight-simulator training? If so, how often.

Some companies will permit only a single pilot to fly the aircraft. Although this is not deemed unsafe, it is a good idea to fly with an air ambulance service that offers two pilots in the cockpit.

Inexperienced pilots may not have the hours and background to safely transport patients on a medical mission. Locate an air ambulance company that uses pilots solely dedicated to medical missions that require numerous hours of flight time.

Ask about the company's safety record. Although most companies who offer air ambulance services have excellent safety records, you can never be so sure. Find out for yourself. Do your homework to make sure the company follows the strictest guidelines in the industry.

Find out if the air ambulance company is a member of CAMTS. This means that the company is certified by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Services. Membership varies throughout the industry, but with no federal standards in place, it is a way to be certain that minimum competency and safety standards are being met. To receive certification, the company commits to being evaluated on educational standards, safety, equipment, staffing, maintenance, Communication, and administration.

When considering an air ambulance transportation service, find out if the company employs a medical director. This person should be a licensed physician trained in all the areas of critical care and emergency treatment. This person should be available for consultation during a transport if questions should arise. Also, to encourage quality control, this individual will review the circumstances of the transport to ensure that all medical protocols were followed correctly.

This person oversees the training of medical staff and is responsible for the actions of the medical team during the transport. A company with such a person on staff has a lot at stake, so quality and standards will be high in such a case.

How many medical professionals accompany the patient during transport? In many situations, an air ambulance service may only send out one medically trained person on each flight. In some instances, this is safe for patients, but if an emergency should occur, it is best to have a minimum of two medically trained personnel on hand to completely handle the emergency situation. The trained staff should have experience in emergency treatment and critical care. In specialized cases, more members should accompany a patient and the number of the team increases. This is true in cases that require a respiratory therapist, for example.

Investigating air ambulance services may seem overwhelming at the time, but knowing that the patient's needs should come first is important. Safety of the patient is evident in companies that strive for excellence. Check out the air ambulance company and their safety record for an indication of the company's quality and level of experience before making the final decision.