

Tuolumne County Emergency Medical Services Agency
EMS System Policies and Procedures

Policy: EMS Aircraft Dispatch

#345.00

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Medical Director: _____

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EMS Coordinator: _____

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I. AUTHORITY

Division 2.5, California Health and Safety Code, Sections 1797.220 and; California Code of Regulations, Division 9, Chapter 8 et seq.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish policy and procedures for the dispatching of EMS aircraft in Tuolumne County.

III. DEFINITIONS

- C.A “Advanced Life Support” or “ALS” means any definitive prehospital emergency care role approved by the Tuolumne County EMS Agency, in accordance with state regulations, which includes all of the specialized services listed in H&SC § 1797.52.
- C.B “Advanced Life Support Rescue Aircraft” or “ALS Rescue Aircraft” means a rescue aircraft whose medical flight crew has at a minimum one attendant certified or licensed in advanced life support.
- C.C “Air Ambulance” means any aircraft specially constructed, modified or equipped and used for the primary purposes of responding to emergency calls and transporting critically ill or injured patients whose medical flight crew has at a minimum two (2) attendants certified or licensed in advanced life support.
- C.D “Air Ambulance Service” means an air transportation service which utilizes air ambulances.
- C.E “Air Ambulance or Air Rescue Service Provider” means the individual or group that owns and/or operates an air ambulance or air rescue service.
- C.F “Authorizing EMS Agency” means the local EMS agency which approves utilization of specific EMS aircraft within its jurisdiction.

- C.G “Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft” means a rescue aircraft which does not have a medical flight crew or whose medical flight crew does not meet the minimum requirements for BLS rescue aircraft.
- C.H “Basic Life Support” means those procedures and skills contained in the EMT-I scope of practice as listed in Title 22, CCR, Section 100063.
- C.I “Basic Life Support Rescue Aircraft” or “BLS Rescue Aircraft” means a rescue aircraft whose medical flight crew has at a minimum one attendant certified as an EMT-I with at least eight (8) hours of hospital clinical training and ten (10) hours of field clinical experience in the aeromedical transport of patients.
- C.J “Designated Dispatch Center” means an agency which has been designated by the local EMS agency for the purpose of coordinating air ambulance or rescue aircraft response to the scene of a medical emergency within the jurisdiction of a local EMS agency. The designated dispatch center for coordinating EMS Aircraft in Tuolumne County is the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Department Dispatch Center.
- C.K “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.

IV. POLICY

- D.A The dispatch of EMS aircraft for pre-hospital emergency medical services will be prioritized by levels of service (with exceptions for distance and mission type as outlined herein) with rotary wing air ambulances being utilized as the primary provider of service.
- D.B Any request for EMS Aircraft for transportation from the scene of a medical emergency in Tuolumne County shall be coordinated through the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Department Dispatch Center. Air Ambulance and Air Rescue Service providers shall not be contacted directly for EMS scene responses except by the designated dispatch center.
- D.C An ALS ground ambulance shall be dispatched to the scene of all medical emergencies regardless of the response of an EMS Aircraft. A ground ambulance need not be immediately dispatched when an extensive search or rescue is being conducted and the patient will remain inaccessible to ground ambulance personnel for a length of time. In the event that a BLS or Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft is utilized, an Air Ambulance or ALS ground ambulance shall be dispatched to rendezvous and transport the patient to an appropriate hospital.
- D.D Requests for rotary or fixed wing air ambulance services for the inter-facility transport of patients between acute care hospitals may be coordinated directly with an Air Ambulance Service provider.
- D.E Air Ambulance and Air Rescue Service providers shall not respond to scene requests without contacting the designated dispatch center to confirm the request.

- D.F Dispatchers at the designated dispatch center shall dispatch EMS aircraft according to approved EMS policies.

V. PROCEDURE

E.A Criteria for Requesting an EMS Aircraft Response

- 1.1 An EMS Aircraft response should be considered by ambulance or first response personnel for cases meeting the following criteria:
- a.a Travel time by ground ambulance to an appropriate hospital exceeds 30 minutes and;
 - a.b Patients meeting one or more of the following conditions:
 - (2)1 Trauma
 - (a)a Major Trauma Patients;
 - (a)b Head or Spinal injuries;
 - (a)c Burns of greater than 20% BSA;
 - (a)d Patients meeting pediatric trauma triage criteria.
 - (2)2 Medical
 - (b)a Cardiovascular instability;
 - (b)b Respiratory arrest;
 - (b)c Post resuscitation with return of pulses;
 - (b)d Any injured or ill patient in an area inaccessible to ground transport;
 - (b)e Any condition subject to the approval of a Base Hospital Physician.
 - (2)3 Multi-casualty incidents
 - (c)a Immediate or delayed patients.
- 1.2 EMS Aircraft should not be utilized for the following types of patients:
- b.a Cardiac arrest;
 - b.b Patients contaminated by hazardous materials;
 - b.c Patients who are violent or have behavioral emergencies;
 - b.d Stable patients (except wilderness responses in the absence of a ground ambulance.)

E.B Requests for EMS Aircraft

- 2.1 Any request for EMS Aircraft for transportation from the scene of a medical emergency in Tuolumne County shall be coordinated through the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center.
- 2.2 Requests for EMS Aircraft shall be from an appropriate public safety agency, ground ambulance provider or hospital.

- 2.3 In the event of a request for an EMS Aircraft response by Dodge Ridge Ski Patrol, the Designated Dispatch Center shall initiate an aircraft response, if the request meets the Criteria for Requesting an EMS Aircraft Response or Criteria for Simultaneous Dispatch. If the situation does not meet criteria for a aircraft response, the Designated Dispatch Center shall advise the responding ground ambulance of Ski Patrols request.

E.C EMS Helicopter Selection

- 3.1 The Designated Dispatch Center shall contact an approved Tuolumne County EMS Aircraft Provider and request a response from the closest available air ambulance or EMS rescue aircraft. Closest and available means an EMS Aircraft that has the shortest estimated response time to the scene and is fully staffed, fueled, supplied and prepared to immediately respond to a request.
- 3.2 The priority for dispatching EMS Aircraft shall be based on:
- b.a EMS Aircraft Classification;
 - (1)1 Air Ambulance;
 - (1)2 ALS Rescue Aircraft;
 - (1)3 BLS Rescue Aircraft;
 - (1)4 Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft.
 - b.b Response time to scene;
 - b.c Mission requirements including altitude and accessibility.
- 3.3 If there is more than one authorized EMS Aircraft Service Provider with equivalent estimated response time and mission capabilities currently available to accept a mission request, then mission requests by the designated dispatch center should be assigned on an equivalent rotational basis.

E.D EMS Aircraft Response

- 4.1 The Designated Dispatch Center shall alert the appropriate EMS Aircraft Service Dispatch Center and provide the following information:
- a.a Patient condition/type of incident;
 - a.b Landing Zone location or incident location;
 - a.c Ground unit contact and frequency;
 - a.d Notice of any additional aircraft operating in the area.
- 4.2 For calls located east of Highway 49 after dusk, EMS Aircraft shall be directed to the nighttime approved EMS Landing Site nearest the scene.
- 4.3 The EMS Aircraft Service or flight crew shall immediately notify the Designated Dispatch Center if unable to respond to the request or if there is a delay in liftoff.

- 4.4 EMS Aircraft Service Dispatch Center shall keep the Designated Dispatch Center informed of the status of responding aircraft including:
 - d.a Time Enroute;
 - d.b Time of arrival at scene;
 - d.c Time of depart from scene;
 - d.d Patient destination.

E.E Simultaneous Dispatch

- 5.1 The simultaneous dispatch of an EMS Aircraft and a ground ambulance shall occur when the presumptive patient condition meets the following:
 - a.a Pediatric Trauma Triage Criteria;
 - a.b Partial or full thickness burns of greater than 20% BSA;
 - a.c Head or spinal injuries with paralysis.
- 5.2 If the Designated Dispatch Center has reasonable cause to believe that the condition of the patient is critical, and the response of an EMS Aircraft is warranted but not listed under simultaneous dispatch criteria, the Designated Dispatch Center, with *the concurrence* of the responding ground ambulance, may simultaneously dispatch an EMS Aircraft.

E.F Procedure for Canceling EMS Aircraft

6.1 Cancellation by Flight Crew

- a.a The flight crew may cancel the flight for safety considerations (i.e. weather, fuel status, etc), if no patient is found, if the patient is not appropriate for air transport or if the patient is transferred to a ground ambulance or refuses service.

6.2 Cancellation of Scene Flights

- b.a All requests for EMS Aircraft cancellation shall be coordinated through the Designated Dispatch Center.
- b.b Scene flights may be cancelled by public safety agencies, ground ambulance agencies or other approved requesting parties who are involved with and at scene of the incident. If cancelled by an agency other than the original requesting agency, the designated dispatch center shall notify the original requesting agency of the cancellation.

VI. ATTACHMENT A

F.A Local listing of available EMS Aircraft Providers

Agency	Base	Type of Service	Special Mission Considerations	Telephone
Air Med Team	Columbia	Air Ambulance	Room for two stretcher patients	(800) 576-7828
Air Med Team	Modesto	Air Ambulance	Room for two stretcher patients.	(800) 576-7828
CDF 404	Columbia	BLS Rescue Aircraft	SAR Capable. Limited staffing and availability.	CDF ECC Ring-down
Medi-flight 1 Medi-flight 2	Modesto	Air Ambulance		(800) 692-5740
Inter-mountain Helicopter	Columbia	Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft	SAR Capable. Limited staffing and availability.	

F.B Out-of-Area Listing of EMS Aircraft Providers

Agency	Base	Type of Service	Special Mission Considerations	Telephone
REACH	Sacramento/ Lodi	Air Ambulance		(800) 338-4045
CalStar	Sacramento	Air Ambulance		(800) 252-5050
CalStar	S. Lake Tahoe	Air Ambulance		(800) 252-5050
CHP H-40	Fresno	ALS Rescue	SAR Capable	Merced CHP Ring-down
CHP H-20	Sacramento	ALS Rescue	SAR Capable	(916) 920-6210 or Merced CHP Ring-down
Military Rescue Aircraft	NAS Lemoore NAS Fallon Various	ALS/BLS Rescue Aircraft	OES Mission Number Required	Contact Scott Air Force Base (Chicago) at (800) 851-3051