

Tuolumne County Emergency Medical Services Agency
EMS System Policies and Procedures

Policy: EMS Aircraft Classification and Authorization

#442.00

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EMS
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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 requirements and procedures for classifying EMS aircraft and authorizing EMS aircraft providers to operate in Tuolumne County.

III. DEFINITIONS

- 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.
- 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. "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.
- D. "Air Ambulance Service" means an air transportation service which utilizes air ambulances.
- E. "Air Rescue Service" means an air service used for emergencies including search and rescue.

- F. “Air Ambulance or Air Rescue Service Provider” means the individual or group that owns and/or operates an air ambulance or air rescue service.
- G. “Authorizing EMS Agency” means the local EMS agency which approves utilization of specific EMS aircraft within its jurisdiction.
- H. “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.
- I. “Basic Life Support” means those procedures and skills contained in the EMT-I scope of practice as listed in Title 22, CCR, Section 100063.
- J. “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.
- K. “Classifying EMS Agency” or “Classifying Agency” means the agency which categorizes EMS aircraft as an air ambulance, ALS rescue aircraft BLS rescue aircraft or auxiliary rescue aircraft. This agency shall be the local EMS agency in the jurisdiction of origin except for aircraft operated by the California National Guard, California Highway Patrol or California Department of Forestry which shall be classified by the State of California EMS Authority.
- L. “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.
- M. “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.
- N. “Jurisdiction of Origin” means the local EMS agency jurisdiction within which the authorized air ambulance service or rescue aircraft is operationally based.
- O. “Medical Flight Crew” means the individual(s), excluding the pilot, specifically assigned to care for the patient during aircraft transport.
- P. “Rescue Aircraft” means an 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, BLS rescue aircraft and Auxiliary rescue aircraft.

IV. POLICY

- A. The Tuolumne County EMS Agency is the sole agency responsible for classifying EMS aircraft operationally based in Tuolumne County except for EMS aircraft operated by the California National Guard, California Highway Patrol or California Department of Forestry which are classified by the State of California EMS Authority.
- B. The Tuolumne County EMS Agency is the sole agency responsible for approving the utilization of specific EMS aircraft, air ambulance service and air rescue service providers within Tuolumne County.
- C. No person or organization shall provide or hold themselves out as providing prehospital Air Ambulance or Air Rescue Service in Tuolumne County unless that person or organization has been authorized by the Tuolumne County EMS Agency to provide such services.
- D. No aircraft may be used as an EMS aircraft until that aircraft's type has been classified by a classifying agency.
- E. Air Ambulance and Air Rescue service providers including any company, lessee, agency (excluding agencies of the federal government), provider, owner, operator, who provides or makes available prehospital air transport or medical personnel either directly or indirectly or any hospital where an EMS aircraft is based, housed, or stationed permanently or temporarily shall adhere to all federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, policies, and procedures related to EMS aircraft operations, including qualifications of flight crews and aircraft maintenance.
- F. All Air Ambulance and Air Rescue Service Providers, except Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft Providers shall have a medical director who is a physician licensed in the State of California.

V. CLASSIFICATION OF EMS AIRCRAFT

- A. All EMS Aircraft operating in Tuolumne County shall be classified by the State of California EMS Authority, the Tuolumne County EMS Agency or by the local EMS agency in whose jurisdiction the aircraft are based.
- B. EMS aircraft classifications are limited to:
 - 1. Air Ambulance
 - 2. ALS Rescue Aircraft
 - 3. BLS Rescue Aircraft
 - 4. Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft
- C. The Tuolumne County EMS Agency shall classify aircraft within its jurisdiction in accordance with the requirements of Title 22,CCR, Chapter 8 et seq.

VI. AUTHORIZATION OF AIR AMBULANCE AND AIR RESCUE SERVICE PROVIDERS

- A. The Tuolumne County EMS Agency shall enter into a written agreement and integrate into the EMS system those EMS Aircraft Service Providers who request to be part of the Tuolumne County EMS System and who meet the requirements for authorization, as specified in this policy and applicable federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, policies, and procedures.
- B. In order to remain authorized, EMS aircraft service providers shall comply with the agreement authorizing service and adhere to all federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, policies, and procedures. The Tuolumne County EMS Agency may suspend revoke or deny the renewal of EMS aircraft service provider authorization for failure to adhere to applicable federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, policies, and procedures or failure to adhere to the requirements of their authorization agreement.
- C. Temporary authorization of EMS aircraft providers shall be deemed granted on a call-by-call basis under the following conditions:
 - 1. A request for service from the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center, made in accordance EMS policy, for air ambulance or rescue aircraft operated by the California Highway Patrol, California National Guard, California Department of Forestry or the federal government.
 - 2. A request for service from the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center made in accordance EMS policy, to air ambulance or air rescue services authorized by another local EMS agency but who have not been integrated into the day-to-day operations of the Tuolumne County EMS System.
- D. Air Ambulance Providers, ALS Rescue Aircraft Providers and BLS Air Rescue Providers must possess current accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS), formerly known as the Commission on Accreditation of Air Medical Services (CAAMS), to be eligible for and maintain authorization.

VII. MEDICAL FLIGHT CREW

- A. The minimum staffing levels for a medical flight crews are:
 - 1. Air Ambulance:
 - a. Two (2) attendants licensed as paramedics in the State of California and accredited by the classifying EMS Agency or;

- b. One (1) attendant licensed as a paramedic in the State of California and accredited by the classifying EMS agency and one (1) registered nurse licensed in the State of California who is trained and authorized to function as a flight nurse by the Air Ambulance Service Provider's Medical Director.
 - 2. ALS Rescue Aircraft: one (1) attendant licensed as paramedic in the State of California and accredited by the classifying EMS Agency.
 - 3. BLS Rescue Aircraft: one (1) 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.
 - 4. Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft: No medical flight crew or a flight crew which does not meet the requirements for BLS rescue aircraft.
- B. All Air Ambulance and Air Rescue Service Providers shall ensure that all medical flight crews are provided with training in aeromedical transportation including:
- 1. General patient care in-flight.
 - 2. Changes in barometric pressure and pressure related maladies.
 - 3. Changes in partial pressure oxygen.
 - 4. Other environmental factors affecting patient care.
 - 5. Aircraft operational systems.
 - 6. Aircraft emergencies and safety.
 - 7. Care of patients who require special considerations in the airborne environment.
 - 8. EMS system and communications.
 - 9. The Tuolumne County EMS System including local medical and operational policies and protocols.
 - 10. Use of onboard medical equipment.
- C. Medical flight crews shall adhere to the treatment policies and protocols of their classifying EMS agency and EMS Aircraft Service Provider.
- D. All flight nurses, at a minimum, shall be trained to the "Air Medical Crew National Standard" and the training standards adopted by the Commission on Accreditation of Air Medical Services.
- E. Flight nurses may perform skills and administer medications, which are beyond the classifying agency's paramedic scope of practice, when those additional skills and medications have been approved by the EMS Aircraft Service Provider's medical director.

VIII. SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

- A. All EMS Aircraft shall be configured so that:

1. There is sufficient space in the patient compartment to accommodate one (1) patient on a stretcher and one (1) patient attendant. Air ambulances shall at a minimum have space to accommodate one (1) patient on a stretcher and two (2) attendants.
 2. There is sufficient space for medical personnel to have adequate access to the patient in order to carry out necessary procedures including cardiopulmonary resuscitation on the ground and in the air.
 3. There is sufficient space for medical equipment and supplies required by the authorizing EMS agency.
- B. Each EMS aircraft shall have adequate safety belts and tie-downs for all personnel, patient(s), stretcher(s), and equipment to prevent inadvertent movement.
- C. Each EMS aircraft shall have on-board equipment and supplies commensurate with the scope of practice of the medical flight crew as specified by the classifying EMS agency. The requirement may be fulfilled through the use of appropriate kits (cases/packs) which can be carried on a given flight to meet the needs of the patient and/or additional medical personnel not usually staffing the aircraft.
- D. All EMS Aircraft shall have the capability of communicating with the following agencies on frequencies specified by those agencies:
1. Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center
 2. Tuolumne County Ambulance (field communications)
 3. Tuolumne County Fire Department (field communications)
 4. Sonora Community Hospital
 5. California Highway Patrol, Tuolumne Division (field communications)
 6. City of Sonora Fire Department
- E. EMS Aircraft Providers shall have a mechanism for returning non-expendable medical equipment (i.e. back boards and traction splints) transported with the patient back to their proper owner.

IX. MEDICAL RECORDS, QUALITY ASSURANCE, PROGRAM EVALUATION

- A. EMS Aircraft Service Providers shall provide patient care and flight data to the Tuolumne County EMS Agency in a format specified by the agency. Records and data shall be submitted for each scene and inter-facility transfer mission requested by or flown in Tuolumne County.

- B. Air Ambulance Providers shall provide to the Tuolumne County EMS Agency, in a format specified by the agency, hospital emergency department outcome data and hospital discharge data for all patients transported from Tuolumne County.
- C. Upon request EMS Aircraft shall provide information and records to the Tuolumne County EMS Agency for quality assurance and investigative purposes. These records may include dispatch data, dispatch tapes, medical records, medical and operational policies, records demonstrating personnel training and qualifications.
- D. EMS Aircraft Providers shall participate in the Tuolumne County EMS Agency's Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement programs. Participation may include the attendance of EMS Aircraft Service Provider personnel at meetings in the county.

X. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

- A. EMS Aircraft Service Providers authorized to provide service in the Tuolumne County EMS system shall provide at its own expense and maintain at all times insurance with insurance companies licensed in the State of California and shall provide evidence of such insurance to the Tuolumne County EMS Agency. The Types and amount of coverage for such insurance shall be determined by the County Risk Manager and specified in the providers agreement authorizing service.