

EMS AIRCRAFT - AUTHORIZATION

I. PURPOSE

To specify authorization requirements for EMS aircraft providers with operations based in Contra Costa County.

II. AUTHORITY

Division 2.5, California and Safety Code; Title 22. Division 9 and Chapter 8, California Code of Regulations.

III. AUTHORIZATION

The local EMS Agency is responsible for authorizing EMS aircraft used for EMS response within its jurisdiction. Normally, only EMS aircraft that meet the “air ambulance” classification standard shall be authorized by the EMS Agency to respond in Contra Costa County. However, any request by a public safety agency dispatch center shall constitute “authorization” to respond to that request only.

IV. AUTHORIZATION PROCESS

To become authorized in Contra Costa County, and EMS aircraft provider is required to:

- A. Submit a completed EMS Aircraft authorization form,
- B. Enter into a written contract with the County, and
- C. Pay the current EMS Aircraft Authorization Fee.

V. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

A. Services

1. Only an “Air ambulance” may be dispatched in response to an emergency medical aircraft request.
2. Aircraft may respond to emergency requests when and only when requested by a local public safety dispatch center.
3. A seamless “one contact number system,” approved by the EMS Agency, is to be used by local public safety dispatch centers when requesting EMS aircraft assistance.
4. An authorized provider shall assure that its dispatch center provides an accurate “estimated time of arrival” (ETA) in minutes and clock hours to the requester of each air ambulance request.
5. An authorized provider shall comply with all applicable Federal, State and local laws and regulations, and County EMS policies, procedures and protocols.

B. Dispatch and Communications

1. EMS aircraft dispatch centers shall be staffed and equipped to receive and process requests for EMS aircraft.
2. Dispatchers shall be adequately trained and prepared to process emergency medical requests.
3. Aircraft shall be equipped with County’s MEDARS radio system for communications with Sheriff’s Dispatch, on-scene ambulances, public safety agencies, and local base and receiving hospitals.



C. Staffing

1. Air ambulance staffing shall include a medical flight crew consisting of a minimum of two (2) attendants licensed in advanced life support, at least one (1) of which is a registered nurse or physician.
2. Air medical flight crewmembers and pilots shall maintain all required professional licensure.

D. Training and Orientation

1. Medical flight crewmembers shall be trained in aeromedical transportation as specified in Section 100302, California Code of Regulations, and maintain current professional licenses.
2. Medical flight crews and pilots shall be oriented and familiar with the local EMS system prior to responding to local emergency medical requests. Orientation shall include the following topics:
 - a. Terrain and weather considerations specific to the geographic area of the County.
 - b. Local EMS and public safety agencies.
 - c. Locations of and special operational information related to local hospitals and medical specialty centers, helipads, airports and pre-determined emergency landing sites.
 - d. Comprehensive communications inventory including frequency numbers, agency names and identifiers, PL codes, and any special communications procedures.
 - e. (Medical crew) Local medical control policies and procedures.

E. Medical Control

1. Local Medical Control Agreements shall be in place for paramedic crewmembers.
2. Providers shall assure compliance with local policies and procedures for medical control.
3. Registered Nurse crewmembers function within the Nurse Practice Act and shall be trained/qualified to provide advanced life support care within the local paramedic scope of practice at a minimum.

F. Documentation and Reporting

1. **Patients transported from within Contra Costa County:** Patient care reports (PCRs) shall be completed for all patient transports despite location of receiving facility. PCRs include the required patient care data elements, requesting party/agency, and times necessary to determine aircraft response time from initial notification, on-scene time, and hospital transport time. Copies of PCRs are left with the patient at the receiving hospital.
 - a. PCRs for all patients shall be sent to the EMS Agency within ten working days.
2. **Patients transported into Contra Costa County from another county:** Patient name, age, transport date/time, assessment, CRAMS/GCS, mechanism of injury and destination shall be sent to EMS within ten calendar days of the end of that month.

G. Quality Improvement

1. Medical treatment guidelines for medical flight crew shall be in place and shall have been approved by the County EMS Medical Director.
2. A comprehensive continuous quality improvement (CQI) program approved by the EMS Medical Director shall be in place and shall be overseen by a physician or a Registered Nurse.
3. Quality improvement information shall be supplied to the County upon request.



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4. County shall be notified of any events that could impact the credentials of air medical crewmembers.
5. Provider shall participate in County-related CQI activities.

H. Equipment and Supplies

1. EMS aircraft shall meet configuration and restraint standards for “air ambulance” according to Section 100306, California Code of Regulations.
2. Aircraft shall be stocked with full drug and solution inventories, and with basic, advanced life support and related specialty medical equipment and supplies at all times.

VI. MAINTENANCE OF AUTHORIZATION

1. County may inspect aircraft, facilities, equipment, policies and records relating to aircraft maintenance, dispatch, patient care, and personnel qualifications as pertain to local operations.
2. Provider shall adhere to all applicable FARs including FAR Part 91 and 135 (or their equivalent).
3. County may deny, suspend, or revoke an air ambulance authorization for failure to comply with applicable policies, procedures and regulations.