

APPROVED: SIGNATURE ON FILE IN EMS OFFICE  
Executive Director

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Medical Director

EFFECTIVE DATE 11/9/11  
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### EMS AIRCRAFT REQUEST/CANCELLATION

#### I. AUTHORITY

Division 2.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, Section 1797.220, California Code of Regulations, Title 22., Prehospital Emergency Medical Services, Chapter 8., Prehospital EMS Aircraft Regulations, Title 21, Public Works Chapter 2.5 Division of Aeronautics (Department of Transportation), Public Utilities Code Section 21662.1., and Federal Aviation Regulations

#### II. DEFINITIONS

Reference the EMS Aircraft Definitions Policy #441.00.

#### III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to specify the appropriate procedure to request and/or cancel the dispatch of an EMS aircraft.

#### IV. POLICY

- A. The EMS Agency shall designate a County Air Resource Center (C.A.R.C.) in each county to be the primary coordination point for all EMS Aircraft requests for all field emergencies. Unless otherwise specified, this center shall be the EMS Ground Ambulance Dispatch Center for the county.
- B. Each C.A.R.C. shall adopt a plan for requesting EMS aircraft that ensures that they are the primary coordination point for all EMS aircraft field requests in the county.
- C. Each C.A.R.C. shall install and utilize EMSsystem to track availability of EMS Aircraft.
- D. Each C.A.R.C. shall install and utilize a data system to document data requirements of this policy.
- E. Requests for EMS aircraft resources may be made:
  - 1. for field emergencies by medical or public safety personnel as identified in Section V (E.1), by contacting the applicable C.A.R.C.; or,
  - 2. for interfacility transfers from personnel at a licensed acute care hospital who shall call directly to the Air Ambulance Dispatch (A.A.D.) of their choice.

- F. When requested, each C.A.R.C. shall request the closest appropriate EMS aircraft.
    - 1. In the event two air ambulances are co-located or nearly co-located, the C.A.R.C. shall have a policy to rotate calls between those providers which must be approved by the Agency. If closest EMS Aircraft Provider is not available, the C.A.R.C. will request the next closest available provider.
    - 2. If an EMS Aircraft Provider has turned down the flight due to weather considerations, the C.A.R.C. shall notify other EMS Aircraft Providers requested to take the flight that another provider declined to respond based upon weather conditions.
  
  - G. The C.A.R.C. shall:
    - 1. maintain a master listing of all Regionally authorized EMS aircraft
    - 2. act as the communication coordination point between responding EMS ground units and the EMS Aircraft responding to the scene of the field emergency
    - 3. maintain records of all EMS Aircraft utilization within its jurisdiction
    - 4. have a method to determine the closest EMS Aircraft Provider to an incident
    - 5. have the capacity and check EMS system for current updates of the location of all authorized EMS aircraft as they are provided by the air ambulance providers.
  
  - H. The C.A.R.C. shall request EMS aircraft dispatch in conjunction with the dispatch of all appropriate first responders and ground ambulances by any of the following methods:
    - 1. Simultaneous Dispatch
    - 2. On Scene Request
    - 3. EMS unit request while en route to an emergency
  
  - I. Interfacility transfers utilizing EMS aircraft shall be requested/canceled by physicians or hospital personnel at either of the two acute care facilities initiating and receiving the patient transfer.
- V. Procedure
- A. When requested, each C.A.R.C. shall request the closest appropriate EMS aircraft provider and provide the necessary information as outlined in this policy.
  
  - B. The minimum data to be recorded by the C.A.R.C. for each EMS aircraft request shall include:
    - 1. Incident number
    - 2.. date requested
    - 3. time requested
    - 4. agency that requested service
    - 5. agency that canceled service

6. estimated time of arrival of aircraft

C. Required Information for Request of EMS Aircraft

1. The EMS Aircraft shall be requested by the C.A.R.C. as soon as the following essential information is received from the reporting party:
  - a. requesting agency
  - b. location
  - c. number of patients - if known
  - d. type of incident
  - e. extent of injuries or illness, if known
  
2. Before completing a call, dispatchers at the C.A.R.C. shall attempt to obtain the following information from individuals/organizations requesting EMS aircraft services and pass the information on to the responding EMS Aircraft.
  - a. Landing site information (if possible)
    - (1) coordinates
    - (2) landmarks identifiable from the air
    - (3) designated landing zones
    - (4) cross streets
    - (5) township
  - b. Terrain and obstacles
  - c. Weather conditions
    - (1) wind direction and speed
    - (2) visibility
    - (3) temperature
  - d. Responding EMS services (air or ground)
    - (1) ground frequencies and PLs on which they may be contacted

D. Simultaneous EMS Aircraft Dispatch Criteria

1. C.A.R.C.s or authorized EMS dispatch agencies shall simultaneously dispatch the closest ground ambulance and request that the closest air ambulance respond to those incidents within the simultaneous dispatch zone when the information received from the calling party indicates the incident involves a:
  - a. Gun shot wound
  - b. Stabbing to head, neck, or torso
  - c. Fall greater than 20 feet
  - \* d. Motorcycle accident
  - \* e. Auto vs. pedestrian
  - \*\* \* f. Motor vehicle accidents with high speed potential
  - g. Explosions
  - h. Electrocution
  - i. Multi-Casualty Incident
  - j. Industrial/Agricultural/Logging Accident with Major Injuries

\* Unless low speed and only minor injuries are specified.

\*\* Each county should identify their areas of high speed potential.

E. On Scene Request Criteria

1. An EMS aircraft and ALS ground unit shall be dispatched upon request of any on-scene fire or law enforcement agency, ambulance personnel, other first responders, , clinic, physician's office, or any public safety officer if any of the following conditions are present:
  - a. Potential life or limb threatening injuries where transport time to the appropriate medical facility would be significantly reduced by use of the helicopter.
  - b. Unavailability of an ALS ground ambulance.
  - c. Any other incident where additional ALS assistance is needed.
2. During any scene call in which a medical facility, clinic, or physician's office requests air transport to a destination not consistent with agency policy, the base hospital shall be contacted and approve the destination request.

F. En route Request Criteria

1. Responding emergency personnel that have knowledge of the scene or additional information beyond that provided by the C.A.R.C., may ask that an EMS aircraft be dispatched. After assessing the scene the emergency personnel shall immediately cancel or ask for a continued response by the EMS Aircraft.

G. Cancellation of EMS Aircraft

1. All EMS aircraft cancellations shall be coordinated by the C.A.R.C.
2. Cancellation of EMS aircraft service may occur due to:
  - a. Pilot Judgment: The pilot may cancel the mission due to weather conditions or pilot judgment. The Air Ambulance Dispatch shall immediately notify the C.A.R.C. of the reason for cancellation.

The C.A.R.C. shall request another EMS Aircraft if the reason for cancellation by the original pilot is due to:

- 1) lack of pilot's specific knowledge of unsafe conditions at the scene of the emergency
- 2) inclement weather en route to the emergency
- 3) inclement weather at the EMS Aircraft provider's base of operations

The C.A.R.C. shall inform the subsequent EMS aircraft provider(s) of the circumstances of the original mission cancellation. The C.A.R.C. shall relay all information concerning the cancellation and/or dispatch of another EMS aircraft to the Incident Commander,

- b. Poor weather conditions at the scene: The C.A.R.C. will not request additional EMS Aircraft if the reason for cancellation is due to inclement weather at the scene of an emergency.
- c. Lack of emergency medical need: The Paramedic, EMT, or recognized first responder working within the EMS system who cancels the assigned EMS aircraft because of lack of medical need shall be on scene and have

- knowledge of the patient's medical condition. Cancellation shall be effected by contacting the C.A.R.C. with information including the reason for cancellation and identification of the Air Operations Director, IC, or Medical Group Supervisor.
- d. Logistical and/or safety considerations: The Incident Commander (IC) or his designee may cancel the air ambulance when he feels that landing the helicopter would be unsafe, or there is no appropriate landing zone, or there is no patient. Alternate landing zones should be considered. Cancellation shall be effected by contacting the C.A.R.C. with information including the reason for cancellation and IC identification. The C.A.R.C. shall then call the A.A.D. to cancel the air ambulance.
3. C.A.R.C. Dispatchers will cancel an EMS aircraft mission only after documenting:
- a. Pilot Judgment: Verify from the pilot the reason for cancellation.
  - b. Lack of medical need: Verify from the EMS provider the following:
    - (1) The name of the agency canceling the mission.
    - (2) Confirm that the agency canceling the mission is on scene.
  - c. Logistical and/or safety considerations: Verify from the calling party the following information:
    - (1) The Incident Commander canceling the mission.
    - (2) The logistical and/or safety consideration why the mission is canceled.
    - (3) Verification as to whether a medical need still exists.
    - (4) Alternate landing sites.

WHENEVER THE DISPATCHER CANNOT COMPLETELY VERIFY THAT ALL CRITERIA FOR CANCELLATION ARE MET, THE MISSION WILL NOT BE CANCELED. C.A.R.C. Dispatchers, however, shall notify the A.A.D. of the dispatched EMS Aircraft that an unverified request for cancellation has been received. Cancellation of EMS aircraft will occur only when verified cancellations are obtained.

---END OF POLICY 445.00---