



ARTICLE VI. REQUIREMENTS: AIR TRANSPORT

Section 600: Prehospital Air Ambulance and Air Rescue Service

I. AUTHORITY:

Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5, Section 1797.204 and 1798. The local EMS agency shall plan, implement, and evaluate an emergency medical services system, in accordance with the provisions of this part, consisting of an organized pattern of readiness and response services based on public and private agreements and operational procedures. Title 22, Division 9, Chapter 8, Section 100276 - 100306.

County of Orange Ambulance Ordinance No. 3517 and applicable Contract City Ordinances, Section 4-9-14: Rules and Regulations (a) As to all sections of this Division except Section 4-9-13, the Health Officer* shall make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement this Division. Prior to adoption, proposed rules and regulations shall be submitted to the Orange County Emergency Medical Care Committee for comment.

II. APPLICATION:

This policy defines the role integration of air ambulance and air rescue service response to prehospital emergency medical incidents within Orange County.

III. DEFINITIONS:

"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.

"Air ambulance service" means an air transportation service which utilizes air ambulances.

"Air ambulance" or "air rescue service provider" means the individual or group that owns and/or operates an air ambulance or air rescue service.

"Air rescue service" means air service used for emergencies, including search and rescue.

"Coordinating Agency" means the OCEMS approved communication/dispatch center which maintains aircraft availability, notifies appropriate agencies/providers of air ambulance requests, and collects data as required.

"Emergency medical services aircraft" or "EMS aircraft" means any aircraft utilized for the purpose of prehospital emergency patient response and transport. EMS aircraft includes air ambulances and all categories of rescue aircraft.

"ETA - Estimated time of arrival" means the response time in minutes which is updated by direct communications between the air ambulance or air rescue pilot and the incident commander once direct communication is established.

"Incident commander" means the overall scene manager.

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"Medical flight crew" means those individuals, excluding the pilot, specifically assigned to care for the patient during aircraft transport and who are at least EMT-I certified.

"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.

"Requestor" means a prehospital care system participant or public safety dispatch agency or coordinating agency authorized to initiate a request for an air ambulance.

"Stand-by" means an air ambulance or air rescue is dedicated to the incident and will be prepared for immediate lift-off upon notification of activation.

III. CRITERIA:

A. T-100300. A designated Orange County air ambulance or rescue aircraft shall:

1. Be classified and authorized by the OCEMS in order to provide prehospital patient transport within the jurisdiction of the local EMS agency.
2. 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 [which] 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.
3. Meet all county ambulance ordinance licensure requirements.

B. T-100302. The medical flight crew of an EMS aircraft shall:

1. Have training in aeromedical transportation as specified and approved by the authorizing EMS agency including but not limited to:
 - (a) General patient care in-flight.
 - (b) Changes in barometric pressure, and pressure related maladies.
 - (c) Changes in partial pressure of oxygen.
 - (d) Other environmental factors affecting patient care.
 - (e) Aircraft operational systems.
 - (f) Aircraft emergencies and safety.
 - (g) Care of patients who require special consideration in the airborne environment.
 - (h) EMS system and communications procedures.
 - (i) The prehospital care system (s) within which they operate including local medical and procedural protocols.
 - (j) Use of onboard medical equipment.
2. Participate in such continuing education requirements as required by their licensure or certification.

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3. In situations where the medical flight crew is less medically qualified than the ground personnel from whom they receive patients, the more highly qualified ground personnel must accompany the patient during transport.
 4. EMS aircraft that do not have a medical flight crew shall not transport patients.
- C. T-100306. Space and Equipment: 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 and two (2) patient attendants.
 2. There is sufficient space for medical personnel to have adequate access to the patient in order to carry out necessary procedures including CPR on the ground and in the air.
 3. There is sufficient space for medical equipment and supplies required by State regulations or authorizing EMS agency policy.
 - a. Each EMS aircraft shall have adequate safety belts and tie-downs for all personnel, patient(s), stretcher(s) and equipment to prevent inadvertent movement.
 - b. 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. This requirement may be fulfilled through the utilization of appropriate kits (cases/packs) which can be carried on a given flight to meet the needs of a specific type of patient and/or additional medical personnel not usually staffing the aircraft.
 - c. Communications. In accordance with authorizing EMS agency policies, all EMS aircraft shall have the capability of communicating with:
 - (1) Designated dispatch center(s).
 - (2) EMS ground units at the scene of an emergency.
 - (3) Designated base hospitals.
 - (4) Receiving hospitals.
 - (5) Other appropriate facilities or agencies.
 4. All EMS aircraft shall utilize appropriate radio frequencies for dispatch, routing and coordination of flights. This excludes use of Med 1-8 and HEAR (155.340 MHz and 155.280 MHz) for these purposes.
 5. Radio equipment may be inspected to assure compliance with the requirements of the authorizing EMS agency

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IV. AIR AMBULANCE OR AIR RESCUE PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES:

The air ambulance service or air rescue provider shall:

- A. Provide for direct radio communication capabilities as designated by Orange County Communications.
 - biomedical frequencies,
 - fire coordination frequencies,
 - Hospital Emergency Administrative Radio (HEAR) frequency.
- B. Provide the current status on air ambulance or air rescue availability whenever requested by a public safety dispatch agency or coordinating agency.
- C. Collect, maintain and report data elements as defined by OCEMS.
- D. Participate in special studies as defined by the OCEMS.
- E. Provide current business-related information to Orange County public safety dispatch agency or the coordinating agency (e.g., address, telephone number; location, type and number of aircraft available).
- F. Pass an annual OCEMS inspection.

NOTE: Orange County Board of Supervisor's Minute Order of April 23, 1985, "The Medical Director of the Orange County Emergency Medical Service (OCEMS) program is authorized to administer the medical portion of the Orange County Ambulance Ordinance pursuant to Section 4-9-2, Subsection (n) of the Codified Ordinances of the County of Orange."

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