





Administrative Policy		5201
Effective	April 1, 2018	Expires
		March 31, 2019
Policy: EMS Aircraft Operations, Equipment, and . . .	Approval: Medical Director Reza Vaezazizi, MD	Signed 
Applies To: PSP, EMT, AEMT, PM, MICN, BHP, EMS System	Approval: REMSA Director Bruce Barton	Signed 

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish policies for emergency medical service (EMS) aircraft operations, equipment, and personnel responding to incidents within Riverside County.

AUTHORITY

[California Health and Safety Code - Division 2.5: Emergency Medical Services \[1797. - 1799.207.\]](#)
[California Code of Regulations, Title 22. Social Security, Division 9. Prehospital Emergency Medical Services](#)

EMS Aircraft Operations, Equipment, and Personnel

The County of Riverside EMS Agency (REMSA) is responsible for the regulation of advanced life support services and for establishing policies and procedures for medical direction and control pursuant to Sections 1797.204, 1797.206, and 1797.220 of the California Health and Safety Code. REMSA is also responsible for designation and review of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) air medical services pursuant to Division 9, Chapter 8, Section 100276, et seq., of Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations.

Any aircraft seeking authorization to provide EMS in Riverside County will comply with all applicable Riverside County Ordinances and REMSA Policies, applicable sections of Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations, and pertinent F.A.A. regulations. Nothing in this policy supersedes or negates compliance with federal regulations. Exceptions to this authority are listed in Title 22, Division 9, Chapter 8, Article 2, Section 10300(c).

EMS Classification

EMS Aircraft

Any aircraft utilized for the purpose of prehospital emergency patient response and transportation. This includes Air Ambulances and all categories of Rescue Aircraft.

Air Ambulance

Any aircraft specifically constructed, modified, or equipped and used for the primary purposes of transporting critically ill or injured patients whose medical flight crew has a minimum of two attendants certified, authorized, or licensed to provide ALS care.

An Air Ambulance will:

- a. Have sufficient cabin space to accommodate two patients and two attendants with a clear view and full body access to either patient.

Air Ambulance services applying for a permit will provide and maintain proof of full accreditation by the Commission of Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS).

Rescue Aircraft

Any aircraft whose usual function is not prehospital emergency patient transport, but which may be utilized, in compliance with REMSA policies and procedures, for EMS transportation 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.

- a. ALS Rescue Aircraft means a rescue aircraft whose medical flight crew has at least one attendant accredited and/or licensed to provide ALS care.
- b. BLS Rescue Aircraft means a rescue aircraft whose medical flight crew has at least one attendant certified as an EMT.
- c. Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft means a rescue aircraft which does not have a medical flight crew.

Air Rescue Service

An aircraft using aircraft for medical emergencies, including rescue aircraft and air ambulances.

Requirements

EMS Aircraft Operations

1. EMS Aircraft Permits

Any EMS aircraft operators seeking to provide service in Riverside County, regardless of their base of flight operations, will have a permit to operate in accordance with the ordinance administered by the Riverside County Emergency Medical Services Agency.

- a. All Air Ambulance Service Providers working within Riverside County, regardless of their location of flight operations, must secure a written agreement with REMSA. This document is meant to ensure service consistent with REMSA policies and practices.

2. Unable To Respond

If for any reason, other than scheduled maintenance or being engaged in an emergency response activity, an authorized Air Ambulance Service Provider is not, or will not, be able to provide immediate response for an emergency prehospital transport, the provider must:

- a. Immediately notify the Riverside County Fire Department ECC by telephone.
- b. Inform the ECC of the expected down time.
- c. Notify the Riverside County Emergency Medical Services Agency by telephone within 72 hours of the occurrence.
- d. Submit a written Incident Report documenting this event to REMSA that will include:
 - i. Date and time of occurrence.
 - ii. Brief description of the circumstances preventing contracted compliance.
 - iii. Total down time for the aircraft before returning to full contractual obligations.
 - iv. Measures taken to ensure that this situation does not reoccur.
- e. Notify both the Riverside County Fire Department ECC and REMSA when the aircraft is back in service.

3. Communications

All aircraft will be capable of communicating with the ECC of the Riverside County Fire Department, EMS providers at the scene, and with designated Receiving Hospitals in Riverside County, per the REMSA Policy for Radio Communication Standard.

4. Patient Care and Responsibility

a. Communication

The Medical Flight Crew of the EMS aircraft will provide the Receiving and/or Base Hospital (as applicable) with information regarding the patient'(s)' status. This information should be provided as soon as possible, but at least five minutes prior to the patient'(s)' arrival to allow mobilization of necessary personnel, equipment, and supplies.

- b. The EMS Aircraft crew will be responsible for the treatment and transportation of the patient(s) they are assigned as soon as they are briefed on the patient(s) and/or accept the patient(s).
- c. A comprehensive record will be initiated for every patient that a member of the flight crew assumes primary medical responsibility for, whether or not the patient is transported by the EMS aircraft. The EMS aircraft crew will provide a copy of the patient care record to:
 - i. The receiving facility or agency to whom they relinquish the patient at the time the patient is delivered; and
 - ii. REMSA on a monthly basis.

5. Delivery/Distribution of Emergency Patients
 - a. Patients will be transported to the closest, most appropriate acute care hospital with a licensed helipad or a “designated landing zone” approved by the appropriate public safety agency or as directed by the Medical Group Supervisor, Transport Group Supervisor, or their designee.
 - b. EMS Aircraft may be sent to hospitals which are not the “closest” but which may be more appropriate given the specific scene situation, e.g. spreading out the patient group to decrease the possibility of overwhelming the closest hospital.

6. Report of Information to Law Enforcement

Each authorized EMS aircraft provider who receives a report from a private party of an injury or medical condition resulting from an aircraft accident, traffic collision, gunshot wound, knife wound, drug overdose, attempted suicide, child or elder abuse, domestic violence, felonious act, or other information of possible criminal activity, will immediately report the receipt of such report and the circumstances to the law enforcement agency with jurisdiction.

7. Communicable Disease Control

The Air Ambulance or Air Rescue Service Provider will have a written policy regarding the recognition and reporting of communicable disease exposure of their personnel. This policy will be consistent with guidelines developed by the Riverside County Department of Health. These guidelines are available to the provider upon request.

8. Air Ambulance or Air Rescue Aircraft Utilization
 - a. Air ambulances and/or air rescue aircraft may be utilized when:
 - i. Incident factors which result, or may result, in a prolonged response and transport time for the patient, e.g. very remote or rural locale which will cause a delay in the transport of the patient due to the scene topography; or
 - ii. Air transportation is the most expedient transportation available to transport the patient to the most appropriate medical treatment facility; or
 - iii. The incident has overwhelmed the on-scene ground transportation assets resulting in the necessity of using all available transport resources.

EMS Aircraft Equipment and Inspections

1. Inspections

Each Air Ambulance or Air Rescue Service Provider will cooperate with REMSA in connection with annual and random aircraft inspections of medical equipment, supplies, personnel, and records.

2. Air Ambulance Drug and Equipment List
 - a. A drug and equipment list will be approved by the Medical Director of the EMS aircraft provider and REMSA.
 - b. Any changes in the drug and equipment list must be submitted to REMSA at least 30 days prior to the effective date of change. The changes must be mutually agreed upon by REMSA and the EMS aircraft provider.
 - c. All equipment carried within or upon an air ambulance will be maintained in good working order.

3. Drug Inventory Control

A standardized written record for controlled drug administration and for daily checking will be maintained for the EMS aircraft and will be made available upon request for inspection by REMSA.

Minimum Staffing Requirements

1. Minimum Staffing for Air Ambulances

Staffing for each air ambulance will be no less than:

 - a. One paramedic who is licensed in California and accredited to work in Riverside County and who possesses current CPR, ACLS, BTLS, or PHTLS, and PALS certification. The paramedic must have a minimum of two years of full-time experience as a paramedic in the prehospital setting within the last five years before working as a flight paramedic in Riverside County; and

- b. One registered Nurse (RN) who is currently licensed in California and who possesses current CPR, ACLS, BTLIS or PHTLS, and PALS certifications. The RN must have a minimum of four years of experience in an emergency department or critical care unit in the past five years before working as a flight nurse in Riverside.
 - c. All staff will have proof of successful completion of an REMSA approved Air Ambulance Attendant course.
 2. Alternative Staffing
 - a. A Physician licensed in the state of California with recent Emergency Department experience may be substituted for the paramedic, the RN, or both.
 - b. A Registered Nurse (RN) currently licensed in the state of California who possesses current CPR, ACLS, BTLIS or PHTLS, and PALS certification and has a minimum of four years of experience in an emergency department or critical care unit in the past five years may be substituted for the paramedic.
 - c. The required staffing may be met by utilizing a combination of any of the aforementioned categories of personnel.
 3. Medical Director

All Air Ambulance Service Providers will have a physician Medical Director who, by training and experience, is qualified in Emergency Medicine or the equivalent. The Medical Director will be responsible for the Supervision of the quality of the EMS aircraft patient care and the approval of medical policies, procedures, and protocols for the Air Ambulance Service Provider.
 4. Scope Of Practice
 - a. The paramedic will operate under policies, procedures, and protocols as established by REMSA in accordance with State Regulations and Guidelines.
 - b. Standardized procedures for Registered Nurses will be developed by the Medical Director of the Air Ambulance Service Provider, in accordance with the Nurse Practice Act. The procedures must be submitted to the REMSA Medical Director for review and mutual agreement prior to implementation.

EMS Aircraft Training

1. Medical Flight Crew

Medical Flight Crew training will be in accordance with Title 22, Chapter 8 (Prehospital EMS Aircraft Regulations), Article 3.
2. Continuing Education

The medical flight crew will participate in continuing education (CE) as required by licensure, certification, or employment.

Dispatch of EMS Aircraft

1. In order to provide for a uniform system of dispatch of EMS aircraft, and to prevent potential problems with the dispatch of more than one EMS aircraft, the Riverside County Fire Department is designated as the Coordinating Agency for the dispatch of EMS aircraft. Requests for an air ambulance or rescue aircraft will be made through the Emergency Command Center (ECC) of the Riverside County Fire Department located in Perris via telephone using the following telephone numbers:
 - a. 1-800-472-5697
 - b. 951-657-2161Radio contact can be made via the Riverside County Intercom System.
2. EMS Aircraft Requests
 - a. Notification from the scene EMS Aircraft transport will be initiated in the prehospital setting by the Incident Commander or an EMS provider, coordinating through the Incident Commander, or his designee, and will notify the Riverside County Fire Department ECC of the request for air transport. The individual making the request will notify the ECC regarding the following:

- i. Location of the incident, including (when available) longitude and latitude, and
 - ii. General type of call (i.e., multi-car TC, stabbing, MCI)
- b. ECC Information Relay

When a request for an EMS Aircraft is made, the ECC will relay to the air transport provider:

 - i. The above information, and
 - ii. Information regarding any other responding aircraft

Additionally, the ECC will request from the air transport provider:

 - i. An ETA

and report that information back to the ground provider.
- c. Additional Information

The initial request for an air provider will NOT be delayed pending any information additional to that outlined above. However, once the ETA is reported back to the ground provider, it is the ground provider's responsibility to provide, in a timely manner to the ECC, the following information:

 - i. Radio call sign and frequency of the ground contact, and
 - ii. Proposed landing zone (LZ)

Upon the ECC's relay of this information to the air transport provider, all further communications between ground and air will occur directly.