

	3202	EMS Aircraft Provider Policy
Nor-Cal EMS Policy & Procedure Manual	Pre-Hospital Providers	
Effective Date: 04/15/2020	Next Revision: 04/15/2023	
Approval: Jeffrey Kepple MD – MEDICAL DIRECTOR	SIGNATURE ON FILE	

## Authority

Health and Safety Code Division 2.5, Section 1797 et sec.; Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Division 9, Chapter 8; Title 21, Public Works Chapter 2.5 Division of Aeronautics (Department of Transportation), Public Utilities Code Section 21662.1, Title XVI, Article 7, Standardized Procedure Guidelines and Federal Aviation Regulations.

## Purpose

This policy is to specify the classification and authorization requirements for EMS aircraft providers in the Nor-Cal EMS region.

## System Operation

1. Any company, lessee, agency, provider, owner or 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 or stationed permanently or temporarily shall adhere to all federal, state, and local statutes, ordinances, policies, and procedures related to aircraft operations.
2. When in-service and available, personnel assigned to the aircraft must be “immediately available to respond”. Immediately available means that personnel assigned to the aircraft are in such a location that they can be physically aboard the aircraft within 5 minutes of receiving a 911 response request.
3. Nor-Cal EMS shall maintain an inventory of:
  - A. The number, type and capability of authorized EMS Aircraft.
  - B. Receiving Facilities with landing sites approved by the State Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division.
4. No person or organization will provide or hold themselves out as providing prehospital EMS Aircraft services in the Nor-Cal EMS region unless that person or organization has aircraft, which has been classified and authorized by Nor-Cal EMS.
  - A. The EMS Authority shall classify the California Highway Patrol, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the California National Guard. These providers are required to obtain authorization from Nor-Cal EMS to provide ALS services.
  - B. EMS Aircraft Providers based outside of the Nor-Cal EMS region who are assigned an Air Region within the Nor-Cal EMS area shall maintain a provider agreement with Nor-Cal EMS and comply with all EMS Aircraft policies.

## Classification Categories

1. An EMS aircraft will be classified as an Air Ambulance, a Rescue Aircraft, or an Auxiliary Aircraft. Rescue Aircraft will be further classified as ALS, or BLS based on level of medical flight crew credentials. Reclassification shall occur if there is a transfer in ownership or a change in the aircraft’s category.
2. Levels of Classification:
  - A. Air Ambulance: Any aircraft specifically constructed, modified, or equipped, and used for the primary purpose of responding to scene calls and Interfacility transfers.
  - B. Minimum staffing of an Air Ambulance shall be a combination of the following.
    - a. One (1) paramedic who is currently licensed in the state of California and is accredited with Nor-Cal EMS. Paramedics must obtain and maintain Flight Paramedic Certification (FP-C) or Critical Care Paramedic Certification (CCP-C) within (2) years of hire.
    - b. One (1) registered nurse (RN) who is currently licensed in the state of California. Registered Nurses must obtain and maintain Certified Flight Registered Nurse (CFRN) or Critical Care Registered Nurse (CCRN) within (2) years of hire.

Other air ambulance “out of the normal” staffing configurations that are acceptable for field emergencies:

- c. Physician & FP – C.
- d. Physician & CFRN, CCRN or CEN.

- e. A two-nurse team where each nurse has completed the onboard training, one of the nurses shall have at least one year experience in the aircraft.

The only exception to these minimum staffing requirements for an Air Ambulance is when the Air Ambulance is performing a highly specialized Interfacility transfer when the patient requires specialized technical staff and support (e.g., neonatal, cardiovascular, high risk perinatal, etc.). In these cases it is highly recommended that a single team member from the provider air ambulance, meeting the minimum staffing requirements above, accompany the specialty crews as a "safety officer" unless the specialty crews have completed the requisite air medical training as dictated by the provider air ambulance company.

3. Rescue Aircraft: Any aircraft whose usual function is not prehospital emergency medical transport, but which may be utilized, in compliance with the policies of Nor-Cal EMS, for responding to prehospital emergency medical patient transport when use of an air or ground ambulance is unavailable or not immediately available.
4. ALS Rescue Aircraft: ALS rescue aircraft must have a medical flight crew with one (1) attendant certified or licensed in advanced life support. That provider must be a Paramedic with at least two (2) years' experience in the prehospital setting within the last three (3) years prior to working as a flight paramedic.
5. BLS Rescue Aircraft: BLS rescue aircraft must have a medical flight crew with a minimum of one (1) attendant certified as an EMT-I with at least eight (8) hours of hospital clinical training and whose field/clinical experience is in the aero medical transport of patients, as specified in Section 100074 (c) of Title 22, California Code of Regulations.
6. Auxiliary Aircraft: A rescue aircraft which does not have a medical flight crew, or whose medical flight crew does not meet the minimum requirements of a BLS rescue aircraft.

## Authorization Requirements

1. Comply with FAR Part 91 and 135 (or their equivalent) to maintain their authorization status.
  - A. Public Safety agencies are exempt from certification requirements but must document consistency with FAA requirements.
  - B. Nor-Cal EMS may request a copy of the enforcement and accident history of the operator from an FAA Flight Standards District Office that issues the certificate.
2. Meet the standards set in any applicable county ordinances within the Nor-Cal EMS region; some counties have ordinances which impose stricter standards for Air Ambulance providers.
3. CAMTS "Deemed Status": Air providers who have obtained a full CAMTS accreditation will be considered to have a deemed status and will not be required to go through an inspection by Nor-Cal EMS every three (3) years to meet authorization requirements.
4. Obtain and Maintain an EMS Aircraft Provider Agreement with Nor-Cal EMS while working in the Nor-Cal EMS region:
  - A. A provider agreement completes the authorization process for EMS Aircraft providers who meet the requirements. The agreement will address "regular", "occasional", or "sporadic" responses into the Nor-Cal EMS region and assurance of compliance with all local, regional, state and federal rules and regulations.
  - B. EMS Aircraft Providers shall be authorized by Nor-Cal EMS.
  - C. EMS aircraft providers shall comply with the Nor-Cal EMS Policies and Procedures for the level of services provided per the provider agreement. If a classification or EMS Aircraft provider agreement allows the level of an air service to vary, the provider shall communicate to the IC the current level of service being provided for every emergency response prior to landing.
5. Nor-Cal EMS, at its discretion shall have access to perform on-site inspections.
6. Nor-Cal EMS may deny, suspend, or revoke an EMS Aircraft Provider authorization for failure to comply with applicable policies, procedures, and/or regulations.
7. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit the occasional uses of EMS Aircraft Providers, which are classified and authorized within their local jurisdiction, during a disaster or extreme system saturation condition even if they are not authorized for service with Nor-Cal EMS.

## Application Process for Provider Agreement

1. Complete Application Process:
  - A. Submit completed application and non-refundable fee to Nor-Cal EMS.
  - B. Establish that all county ordinance requirements have been met.

- C. Submit a copy of the EMS Aircraft Provider's certificate of insurance. The EMS Aircraft Provider is required to notify Nor-Cal EMS thirty (30) days prior to reduction or change in its liability coverage. Public Safety agencies are exempt of certification requirement but must document their ability to assume liability for their actions.
  - D. Submit a digital copy of the EMS Aircraft Provider's Policies and Procedures.
2. Nor-Cal EMS shall review all submitted documentation and perform a site visit prior to initial operation, then on an as needed basis.
  3. Upon satisfaction of all requirements, Nor-Cal EMS shall enter into a written agreement with the EMS Aircraft Provider within sixty (60) days.

## Equipment and Supplies

EMS Aircraft Providers Shall Comply with the Nor-Cal EMS Standard Drug and Equipment. See policy [06-0201 Standard Drug and Equip List BLS Air Rescue](#) and policy [06-0203 Standard Drug and Equip List ALS Air Ambulance](#).

## Training and Orientation of Pilots and Crews

Medical flight crewmembers shall maintain current professional licenses and be trained in aeromedical transportation as specified in Section 100302, California Code of Regulations.

## Orientation and Familiarity with the Nor-Cal Ems Region

1. Terrain and weather considerations specific to the geographic area of Nor-Cal EMS, especially in the primary response zone.
2. Local EMS and public safety agencies.
3. Locations of and special operational information related to local hospitals and medical specialty centers, helipads, airports, and pre-determined emergency landing sites.
4. Nor-Cal EMS Policies and Procedures.
5. Nor-Cal EMS Communications System, including frequency numbers, agency names and identifiers, PL tones, and any special communications procedures.

## Medical Control

1. Providers shall assure compliance with Nor-Cal EMS policies and procedures for medical control and treatment protocols.
  - A. Paramedics shall adhere to Nor-Cal EMS agency policies for medical control, including treatment protocols and scope of practice, when functioning as a part of the EMS System on a field emergency or when transporting a patient during an IFT.
  - B. If the Air Medical provider is CAMTS accredited, then the Flight Paramedic Unified Scope of Practice may be utilized if the appropriate crew configuration is being followed. Further, the required clinical care metrics will be reported to the LEMSA.
  - C. Flight nurses shall function within the Nurse Practice Act, their scope of practice shall be:
    - a. The Nor-Cal EMS ALS protocols, policies and procedures.
    - b. The Flight Provider Agency protocols, policies and procedures when by the Nor-Cal EMS Medical Director.
  - D. Ground ALS personnel may transfer a patient to the flight crew of an aircraft with lower level of care capabilities when it is determined that rapid transport is a prime therapeutic intervention for the patient.
2. When an EMS Aircraft is requested from outside the Nor-Cal EMS region, the medical flight crew may perform their scope of practice without further authorization, provided that:
  - A. Medical control is maintained in accordance with the policies and procedures of Nor-Cal EMS.
  - B. During a declared disaster, EMS aircraft providers shall participate in rescue operations as directed by local, regional or state authorities and their base policies and procedures.
3. When multiple aircraft are responding to an incident, communications shall be as follows:
  - A. Each aircraft will contact the primary communication center for that zone.
  - B. Air to air communications will be conducted on frequency 123.025.

## Documentation and Reporting

1. All EMS Aircraft providers and personnel shall meet documentation and reporting requirements in the Documentation/Retention policy.
2. All EMS Aircraft providers will utilize an electronic patient care reporting system approved by the Nor-Cal EMS IT department that supports the most current version of NEMSIS as per Health and Safety Code, Section 1797.227 for EMS data collection.
3. EMS Aircraft Statistics and metrics shall be tracked and submitted to Nor-Cal EMS upon request.

## Standards

1. Ensure that accurate ETE/ ETAs are given to prehospital personnel.
2. The quoted ETA/ETE and any updated ETA/ETE shall be included in the agencies flight log.
3. The pilot is in command of the EMS Aircraft and shall have full authority to abort or decline response to any request for service for any reason.
4. Each request for EMS Aircraft is to be considered a separate decision.
5. The specific reason(s) for declining or aborting the mission shall be reported to the Communication Center immediately.

## Air Ambulance Response Times

The following times shall be tracked on all scene responses and reported to Nor-Cal EMS upon request.

1. Call receipt to dispatch.
2. Dispatch to acceptance.
3. Acceptance to enroute.
4. Overhead scene (optional).
5. At scene.
6. Patient contact.
7. Enroute to the receiving hospital.
8. Arrival at the receiving hospital.
9. Back in-service.

## Multiple Providers in An Air Region

EMS Aircraft providers that are deemed co-located by Nor-Cal EMS shall rotate every 24 hours on an every other day basis. The Communications' Center will provide an answering point for all providers in the region and dispatch their own aircraft for first call rotation the entire 24-hour period. If the aircraft up on rotation is encumbered in any way, the 911 response request will be passed to the next closest aircraft provider. 911 response requests are **NOT** to be held for any reason. All 911 response requests will go to the closest provider.

## Out of Service Requirements

When an EMS aircraft provider places its aircraft out of service (i.e. maintenance, public relations, etc.) for any reason, the provider shall immediately up-date their status in EMResource and notify the local PSAP.

## Air Medical Advisory Committee

This committee will serve as an advisory committee to Nor-Cal EMS staff.