



COUNTY OF VENTURA HEALTH CARE AGENCY		EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	
Policy Title: Air Unit Program		Policy Number 1200	
APPROVED: Administration:	 Steven L. Carroll, EMT-P	Date: December 1, 2013	
APPROVED: Medical Director:	 Angelo Salvucci, M.D.	Date: December 1, 2013	
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- I. **PURPOSE:** The Ventura County Emergency Medical Services agency recognizes the need for air transport of patients in certain circumstances. This policy will establish minimum standards for the integration of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) aircraft and personnel into the local EMS prehospital patient transport system as a specialized resource for the transport and care of emergency medical patients.
- II. **AUTHORITY:** Health and Safety Code Section 1797.200 and California Code of Regulations Division 9, Chapter 8, Section 100300.
- III. **POLICY:**
EMS aircraft must be authorized by Ventura County (VC) EMS in order to provide prehospital patient transport within Ventura County. Authorized air unit service providers will comply with this and other VC EMS Policies and Procedures relating to provision of air transport for emergency patients.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**
The following definitions will be used when referring to air units in the VC EMS system.
 - A. Advanced Life Support (ALS) means those procedures and skills contained in the Paramedic Scope of Practice as listed in VC EMS Policy 310.
 - B. Basic Life Support (BLS) means those procedures and skills contained in the EMT-I scope of practice as listed in VC EMS Policy 300.
 - C. Medical Flight Crew means the individual(s), excluding the pilot, specifically assigned to care for the patient during aircraft transport.
 - D. Emergency Medical Services 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.
 - E. 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.

- F. Rescue Aircraft means an aircraft whose usual function is not prehospital emergency patient transport but which may be utilized, in compliance with VC 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.
1. Advanced Life Support Rescue Aircraft means a rescue aircraft whose medical flight crew has at a minimum one attendant certified or licensed in advanced life support.
 2. Basic Life Support Rescue Aircraft means a rescue aircraft whose medical flight crew has at a minimum one attendant certified as an EMT-I .
 3. Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft means a rescue aircraft which does not have a medical flight crew, or whose medical flight crew does not meet the minimum requirements established in CCR Title 22 Section 100283.
- H. Air Ambulance Service means an air transportation service which utilizes air ambulances.
- I. Air Rescue Service means an air service used for emergencies, including search and rescue.
- J. Air Ambulance or Air Rescue Service Provider means the individual or group that owns and/or operates an air ambulance or air rescue service.
- K. Classifying EMS Agency means the agency which categorizes the EMS aircraft into the groups identified in CCR Section 100300(c)(3). This shall be VC EMS in Ventura County and, for aircraft operated by the California Highway Patrol, the California Department of Forestry or the California National Guard , the EMS Authority.
- L. Designated Dispatch Center means an agency which has been designated by VC EMS for the purpose of coordinating air ambulance or rescue aircraft response to the scene of a medical emergency within Ventura County.
- M. Rescue Incident: An incident where the use of the helicopter is the most appropriate method of locating, reaching, and/or extricating the victim.
- V. PROCEDURE:
- A. VC EMS Policies and Procedures for medical control shall apply to air unit service providers and medical flight crews. This includes approval by the VC EMS Medical Director of provider Medical Director medical control policies and procedures.
 - B. The VC EMS Policies and Procedures for record keeping, quality assurance, and continuous quality improvement shall apply to EMS aircraft operations in Ventura County.

- C. VC EMS shall:
1. Classify EMS aircraft.
 - a. EMS aircraft classifications shall be limited to the following categories:
 - 1) Air Ambulance.
 - 2) Rescue Aircraft.
 - a) Advanced Life Support Rescue Aircraft.
 - b) Basic Life Support Rescue Aircraft.
 - 3) Auxiliary Rescue Aircraft
 - b. EMS Aircraft classification shall be reviewed at 2 year intervals.
Reclassification shall occur if there is a transfer of ownership or a change in the aircraft's category.
 2. Maintain an inventory of the number and type of authorized EMS aircraft, the patient capacity of authorized EMS aircraft, the level of patient care provided by EMS aircraft personnel, and receiving facilities with landing sites approved by the State Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division.
 3. Establish policies and procedures to assure compliance with Federal, State and local statutes.
 4. Develop written agreements with air unit service providers specifying conditions to routinely serve the County.
- D. Representation of provision of air unit transport services
No person or organization shall provide or hold themselves out as providing prehospital Air Ambulance or Air Rescue services unless that person or organization has aircraft which have been classified by VC EMS or in the case of the California Highway Patrol, California Department of Forestry, and California National Guard, the EMS Authority.
- E. Operation of State or Federal aircraft in Ventura County
A request from a designated dispatch center shall be deemed as authorization of aircraft operated by the California Highway Patrol, Department of Forestry, National Guard or the Federal Government.
- F. Responsibilities of Ventura County Sheriff's Office (VCSO) Air Unit
1. Respond to all requests for dispatch per VC EMS policies.
 2. Respond to all scenes when ground personnel determine the need for air transport meets VC EMS policies.
 3. Consider requests for interfacility transfers from hospitals within Ventura County when use of an air or ground ambulance is inappropriate or unavailable.

- G. Medical Flight Crew Less Qualified than Ground Personnel.
In situations where the medical flight crew is less medically qualified than the ground crew personnel from whom they receive patients, they may assume patient care responsibility when the care required is within scope of practice of flight crew or a higher medically qualified person joins crew.
- H. Mutual Aid
If air transport services are needed and VCSO SAR is not available, VCSO/VCFD mutual aid procedures will be activated.
- I. Addressing and Resolving Formal Complaints
Formal complaints will be directed to the Medical Director and Administrator of the Ventura County Emergency Medical Services Agency.
- J. Integration of aircraft into prehospital patient transport system
In order to be integrated into the prehospital patient transport system, an air transport service will have a written agreement with VC EMS.