

KITTITAS COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES				
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SUBJECT: AIR AMBULANCE TRANSPORT

I. STANDARD

A system of Air Medical response to provide safe and expeditious transport of critically ill or injured patients to the appropriate hospital, including designated/categorized health care services.

II. PURPOSE

- A. To define the criteria for alerting, requesting and transporting patients by Air Ambulance.
- B. To provide guidelines for EMS personnel initiating the request for an emergent Air Ambulance response to the scene or landing zone.
- C. To comply with the South-Central Region Patient Care Procedure #7 guidelines and the Washington Administrative Code for EMS and Trauma Systems (246-976) while addressing specific County needs.

III. PROCEDURE

A. Alert

- 1. Air Ambulance may be alerted for possible response by dispatch personnel, the highest-level EMS certified ground personnel, fire and law enforcement agencies utilizing Addendum A *State of Washington Pre-hospital Helicopter Transport Decision Algorithm* (attached), Addendum B *Air Ambulance Response Times for Kittitas County*, and Addendum C *Air Ambulance Landing Zones-Kittitas* for decision making.
- 2. The Air Ambulance Service Communication Center, at the time of the initial call in addition to on-scene information, will attempt to identify the designated Medical Control facility for the location of the scene if appropriate.
- 3. For patients with penetrating gunshot wounds to the head (unless DOA suspected) groin, buttocks, abdomen or chest (not meeting the TTP):
 - a. Ground ambulance transport time to the nearest designated facility is not a condition for activation of Air Ambulance unless stabilization is needed.

Most recent amendments are in **bold**.

Recommended: 11/7/1996

Last amended: 3-31-15 & DOH approved 5-18-15, Minor rev. 1-2018

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4. EMS personnel may request that the appropriate/available Air Ambulance service be launched based on availability and appropriate ETA. Activation should be cancelled, as soon as possible, when patient's condition or circumstances dictate.

B. Response

1. Request for Air Ambulance may be initiated through the appropriate emergency dispatch agency for the area or the Incident Commander.
2. The dispatching agency will provide the Air Ambulance with the correct radio frequency to use for contacting EMS ground units or Incident Command.
3. At launch time, the Air Ambulance communication center will inform the flight crew as to the nearest appropriate designated/categorized health care service as determined by ground EMS crew.
4. While in route, the flight crew will make contact with the Incident Commander or designated Medical Control facility for the area if appropriate, to obtain preliminary patient information and provide ETA to the scene.
5. The Kittitas Valley Healthcare landing pad can be used as an approved landing zone for helicopter rendezvous and the ED may be bypassed if:
 - a. Arrival time of the Helicopter is before or near the arrival of the ground ambulance to the facility; and
 - b. Patient's condition is stable enough to warrant bypassing ED evaluation.

Note: ED Staff should be notified of intentions.

C. Transport

1. The flight crew will transport the emergent patient per the State of Washington Trauma, Cardiac, and Stroke Triage Destination Procedures by identifying the most appropriate health care service if not provided by Incident Commander or ground EMS crew.
2. The transport of the patient to the most appropriate health care service may be changed due to the following:

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- a. Diversion by facility to another receiving facility based on patient condition report from the flight crew and the facility’s availability of appropriate resources or
 - b. Patient/Family preference, if appropriate to clinical condition, or
 - c. Weather precludes flying to the designated/categorized facility
3. The Air Ambulance will make radio contact with the receiving designated/categorized facility as soon as possible.

D. Other

1. Documentation standards shall include the name of the EMS personnel on-scene and receiving air ambulance crew whenever possible. The rationale for transporting the patient to a facility other than the designated/categorized facility shall be documented.
2. Due to the central location of Kittitas County, ground ambulance transport is often faster than air ambulance transport to most facilities, unless there are extenuating circumstance at the scene. **EXTREME CAUTION** shall be used when activating an Air Ambulance service to assure that there is a true benefit to the critical patient either in higher level of needed medical care or in a reduction of transport time to definitive care.
3. **Blood product consideration (to be continued)**

IV. DEFINITIONS

Medical Control Facility – A hospital facility used by EMS personnel for medical direction for their service area.

Air Ambulance Service - "Ambulance service" means an agency licensed by the secretary to operate one or more ground or air ambulances.

Washington State Trauma Triage Destination Procedures

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/530143.pdf>

Addendums:

- “A”: “State of Washington Pre-Hospital Helicopter Transport Decision Algorithm”
 “B”: Approximate Air Medical Service Response Times to Kittitas County
 “C”: Kittitas County Air Ambulance Landing Zones

Most recent amendments are in **bold**.

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