Loudoun County Emergency Medical Services Council, Inc.

EMS Policy #8

Utilization of Helicopters

Origin: 09/86
Revision: 03/10

This policy establishes a comprehensive set of guidelines governing the requests for, and utilization of, helicopters in the Loudoun County Fire-Rescue Service.

1. TWO (2) GENERAL USES FOR HELICOPTERS

A. Rapid evacuation of critically injured/ill patients.

B. Rescue operations, search and rescue operations, and fire suppression needs.

2. RAPID EVACUATION OF CRITICALLY INJURED/ILL PATIENT(S) FROM THE INCIDENT SCENE.

A. The decision to request the dispatch of a helicopter for transport of a critical patient rests with the highest certified Loudoun County Fire-Rescue EMS (EMT-B or higher) provider who has completed on-the-scene patient assessment and is rendering patient care.

1. Trauma patients: follow guidelines outlines in General Direcctive #5 Destination Determination.

2. For all other (non Trauma) patients, approval to transport from the scene by helicopter will be made by the Medical Control Physician at Loudoun Hospital Center.

B. The request for a helicopter from the incident scene will be made through LCFR Communications Division.

C. The following information will be provided by the LCFR Communications Division:

1. Nature/Situation

2. Location of patient/landing zone utilizing the map numbers and coordinates of the Loudoun County ADC Map Book.

3. On scene contact person/unit and radio channel frequency number.

D. In the event that neither service is immediately available, then the LCFR Communications Division will request the dispatch of a MedEvac Helicopter utilizing the “Call Down” list endorsed by the ALS Committee and approved by the Operational Medical Director.

3. RESCUE OPERATIONS AND/OR SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS AND FIRE SUPPRESSION NEEDS.

A. The Incident Commander in charge of an incident may request a helicopter through the LCFR Communications Division.

B. Medical Control Physician approval is not required to obtain a helicopter for this purpose.

C. The responsibility of the Communications Division is to locate the closest and/or fastest helicopter available that meets the needs requested. If a particular flight service has been contacted by the ECC and is found to be grounded dues to weather, the communications center will NOT call the next service to check availability. The dispatcher will notify the Incident Commander which, if any, helicopter is responding and its estimated time of arrival (ETA) at the scene.

D. Incidents involving helicopters will be assigned an alternate channel for operational communication needs.

E. The Dispatcher will attempt to set up direct communications with the helicopter and the Incident Commander. The Incident Commander will coordinate and maintain radio silence during the landing and departure of a helicopter.

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