DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES

CHAPTER 5 – EMS OPERATIONS

Section 300.000 Medical Helicopter Operations

To establish procedures for transporting sick or injured persons via helicopter to appropriate hospitals utilizing specialized medical skills, equipment, and personnel.

301.000 Operational Procedures

The Department crewmember with the highest level of medical training, on scene, shall be in charge of patient care and is responsible for assessing patient situations for helicopter transport unless directed otherwise by the Incident Commander.

A. Patient candidate requirements include:

- Any life threatening situation where speed is essential or access problems are present.
- Any multi system trauma supporting a "Load and Go", status.
- Any major medical and/or surgical illness with a deteriorating prognosis.
- Any pediatric patient requiring definitive surgical stabilization.
- Any neonate or perinate requiring emergency critical care.
- Major burns.
- High-risk mothers in crisis without imminent delivery.

B. Transport considerations that affect helicopter use are:

- ETA of the helicopter to the scene.
- Patient needs that the helicopter cannot accommodate (i.e., CPR, combative, etc.).
- Helicopter landing capabilities of the patient's destination.
- Patient refusal of helicopter transport.
- Patient size (i.e., obesity, over 6'2", etc.)
- Flying and scene condition (i.e., weather, accessibility, crowd control, etc).
- Ground transport time comparison.
302.000 Guidelines for Helicopter Utilization

Personnel on scene evaluate patient's needs

Determines that helicopter transport criteria are met

![Diagram](image-url)

A. The Incident Commander or a designated ground guide shall communicate with the helicopter pilot while enroute to the scene.

B. The Incident Commander shall be responsible for establishing and securing a landing area. Considerations for securing a landing area are:

- Minimum area of 75 feet x 75 feet during the day. Minimum area of 100 feet x 100 feet during the night.
- Surface area should be as flat as possible and not where the ground slopes more than 8 degrees.
- Free from obstructions (i.e., trees, power lines, utility poles, etc.)
- Secure and highlight all obstructions using vehicles, personnel, lights or other approved pilot aids.
- Remove loose debris and wet down a dusty landing area.

C. The Incident Commander will request an engine be dispatched to secure the landing site and
establish Landing Zone Sector.

D. The pilot is responsible for final judgment regarding suitability of flight conditions and landing areas.

E. The Landing Zone Sector Commander shall be responsible for establishing landing area security.

F. All personnel permitted within the landing area shall be aware of all emergency scene safety conditions. Safety considerations are:

- Assure sufficient main rotor blade clearance (i.e., uneven ground, windy conditions, dipping of blades, carrying long objects, etc.)
- Assure loose articles are secure due to wash gusts (i.e., helmets, sheets, medical supplies).
- Be aware of the fire extinguisher and the fuel shut off valve on the aircraft.
- Be aware of the loud noises that may impair communications around the aircraft.
- Be aware of the tail rotor system and always approach the aircraft from the front and in view of the pilot.
- Only duly trained personnel are authorized to approach the aircraft.
- Limit the number of personnel approaching the helicopter to the minimum number of personnel required.
- No one shall approach the aircraft until signaled by the pilot.
- Be aware that bright lights shall not be shined directly at the aircraft when landing or departing on night flights.