

Tuolumne County Emergency Medical Services Agency
EMS System Policies and Procedures

Policy: EMS Landing Sites

#447.00

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Medical Director: _____

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EMS Coordinator: _____

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I. AUTHORITY

Division 2.5 of the California Health and Safety Code, Section 1797.220; Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 8; Pre-hospital EMS Aircraft Regulations, Title 21, Public Works Chapter 2.5 Division of Aeronautics (Department of Transportation), Public Utilities Code Section 21662.1 and 21662.5; and Federal Aviation Regulations

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. "Agency" means the Tuolumne County Emergency Medical Services Agency.
- B. "EMS Landing Site" means a site at or as near as practical to a medical emergency; a transfer point; or a site at or near a medical facility pre-selected and approved by an officer authorized by a public safety agency, (as defined in Section 21662.1 PUC), using criteria deemed reasonable and prudent by that public safety agency, used for the landing and taking off of EMS helicopters, but not designed exclusively for helicopter flight operations. PUC 21662.1(b) "Public safety agency" means any city, county, state agency, or special purpose district authorized to arrange for emergency medical services.
- C. "EMS Aircraft" means any aircraft utilized for the purpose of pre-hospital emergency patient response and transport. EMS aircraft includes air ambulances and all categories of rescue aircraft.
- D. "Heliport" means an area of land, water, or structure used or intended to be used for the landings and take-offs of helicopters and includes its buildings and facilities, if any, as approved by the State of California, Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics.
- E. "Helispot" means an area prepared or unprepared where the helicopter will be landing. Must have light source identifying boundaries for landing at night.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to specify the requirements for EMS landing site selection, scene safety and landing site training standards.

IV. POLICY

A. EMS Aircraft Landing Site Standards

1. EMS Aircraft landing sites shall conform to pertinent regulations and safety guidelines including; Federal Aviation Regulations 91.3, California Code of Regulations Title 21 Public Works Chapter 2.5 Division of Aeronautics (Division of Transportation) Code Section 21662.5, National EMS Pilots Association Landing Site Guidelines and EMS Landing Site Safety Standards.
2. Landing sites to be utilized by EMS Aircraft shall be selected based upon scene safety and logistics. These sites include:
 - a. Heliports and/or airports meeting Title 21 requirements;
 - b. Tuolumne County EMS Agency designated day and/or night Landing Sites;
 - c. Sites chosen at or near the scene of an incident (Helispots) during daylight hours which meet the National EMS Pilots Association Landing Site Guidelines.
 - d. Sites chosen at or near the scene of an incident (Helispots) during nighttime hours West of Highway 49 which meet the National EMS Pilots Association Landing Site Guidelines.

B. Landing Site Operations

1. Selection of an emergency Helispot shall be made by the "Incident Commander" (IC) of the incident, or be delegated by the IC to qualified personnel performing "Air Operations" (Helispot Manager) duties as specified in the Incident Command System.
 - a. The "Pilot in Command" of the air ambulance has ultimate authority to refuse to land at any site.
 - b. The Helispot manager has the authority to prevent an air ambulance from landing at any site.
2. The decision to complete a mission that requires an air ambulance, including landing at the incident, shall be based solely on safety.

3. Radio communications should be established between the Incident Commander and/or Helispot manager, if possible, during landing and take off.

C. Training Standards and Curriculum for Ground Personnel

1. The training curriculum for ground personnel as set forth in the National Emergency Medical Services Pilot's Association (NEMSPA) guidelines and is available from the local Air Ambulance service providers in an on-site training session.
2. Tuolumne County EMS first responder and ambulance provider agencies should participate in a landing site training session once every two (2) years.

V. PROCEDURE

A. The Incident Commander, or delegated Helispot Manager, should select an emergency Helispot using the following criteria:

1. Approach and departure angle of 6:1 (six feet horizontally for every foot of vertical obstruction) day; 8:1 night. Ensure that approach, departure and landing area is clear of overhead obstructions such as wires, trees and light poles, etc. Consider prevailing winds.
2. Minimum size of 60 X 60 feet day, to 120 X 120 feet night.
3. The surface must be a firm, relatively flat surface, free of debris. All gravel sand, dirt areas to be well watered.
4. At night a minimum of four flashing or steady burning lights should be used to mark boundaries of the Helispot. No lights should point in the direction of the aircraft.

B. Management of the landing site shall include adherence to the following guidelines:

1. Control pedestrian and vehicular traffic to immediate area. Deny access of all pedestrian and vehicular traffic to within 100 feet from the aircraft
2. Radio contact between helicopter and "Air Operations" personnel should include description of location, winds, surface, obstructions, and HAZMAT.
3. When the Helispot Manager is ready for the helicopter to land, the helicopter crew should be notified by radio, and the Helispot manager

should stand with back to the wind, arms outstretched pointing to the Helispot.

4. The Helispot Manager shall maintain the Helispot until the helicopter departs, and communicates to "Air Operations" they are clear of the Helispot.
- C. Helispots at higher altitudes should be given special consideration for density altitude limitations of the helicopter. The pilot in Command, after considering these limitations, will have final authority to decide if the Helispot is acceptable for safe landing.