

STATE OF OHIO HEMS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

INTRODUCTION:

In June 2008, a catastrophic mid-air collision near Flagstaff, AZ resulted in the death of two patients, five rotor-wing crewmembers and the destruction of two aircraft.

In order to mitigate the potential of this occurrence in our state, the Ohio Association of Critical Care Transport (OACCT) has elected to develop this document, and the Air Medical Providers (AMPs), providing helicopter EMS, who are OACCT members agree to its content, in an effort to enhance safety amongst and between helicopters operating in the same geographical region.

This communication plan is intended to supplement current FAA regulated procedures, such as ATC contact and airport advisories, and not to alter or replace them.

PURPOSE:

1. To reduce traffic conflicts and enhance safety near hospital helipads and scene locations.
2. To standardize communication procedures for all aircraft intending to taking off or land at a scene or hospital helipad.

PROCEDURE:

1. When arriving or departing from a hospital helipad or scene it is essential that pilots and crews remain alert, look for other traffic, and exchange traffic information when approaching or departing a scene or hospital helipad. To achieve the greatest degree of safety, it is essential that all aircraft transmit/receive on a common frequency identified for the purpose of landing zone (LZ) advisories. Use of the appropriate common frequency, combined with visual alertness and application of the following operating practices, will enhance safety of flight into and out of all such LZs. 123.025 is the accepted common frequency unless the LZ is located within the boundaries of an air traffic area or Class B, C, or D airspace.
2. No less than 10 nautical miles out; report area of LZ, altitude, location relative to the LZ, landing or over flight intentions, and the name of the LZ. For Example: "Columbus downtown traffic, (aircraft Call sign), 1,500', 7 miles east, landing. Grant Hospital" Or "Columbus Traffic, (aircraft call sign), 1,000', 6 miles north transiting southeast, Riverside Hospital."
3. Landing aircraft should announce their landing intentions on 123.025. For example "Columbus downtown traffic Toledo LifeFlight 1 is on a 2 mile final to Grant or AeroCare 1 is landing Grant."
4. Departing aircraft should announce their departure intentions on 123.025. For example, "Columbus downtown traffic, MedFlight 3 is departing OSU hospital to the west, will be Southbound to Wellston."

CONTROLS:

1. Other pilots in the area should remind each other of the process if they hear them on the radio.

PROCESS MEASURES:

1. Feedback from programs will be solicited at OACCT meetings or when deemed necessary.
2. Follow-up from programs will be forwarded to the respective programs.

INTERFACES:

1. OACCT Safety Committee
2. Columbus Air Traffic Control
3. Respective Part 135 operators flight communications procedures
4. Airman's Information Manual (AIM)

RESPONSIBILITY:

1. Pilots are expected to follow this procedure any time they fly in the State of Ohio.
2. Program Directors and Pilot supervisors at each program should educate crews on the procedure and assure compliance

AUTHORITY:

1. The OACCT Safety Committee members have the authority to update and make changes to these procedures.

REFERENCES/RESOURCES:

1. CAL-AAMS Air to Air Communications
2. Minnesota Air Medical Council Communications procedures
3. TAAMS – HEMS Communications and Coordination
4. Middle Tennessee area communications plan

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OACCT Recommended Date: 11/20/09