

On-site Hospital Helipads

Joint Position Statement of the National Association of EMS Physicians and the Association of Air Medical Services -- approved 8/27/06

Position

The National Association of EMS Physicians (NAEMSP), and the Association of Air Medical Services (AAMS) believe that helicopter EMS (HEMS) patient care and outcomes are optimized by using helicopter landing areas that are physically on-site at referring and receiving institutions. On-site helipads are those that do not require an additional ground vehicle transport leg for transfer between the helicopter's landing area and the hospital's patient care area (such as the Emergency Department). Advantages offered by on-site helipad placement include:

- *Savings of transport time incurred in executing the extra transport leg.* The use of remote helipads and the associated need for the extra transport leg always prolongs out-of-hospital time as compared with on-site helipads. The amount of additional transport time associated with using remote helipads depends upon location-specific logistics, and the clinical relevance of this additional transport time depends on a particular clinical situation. However, patients with acuity sufficient to warrant HEMS transport may benefit from the transport time that is saved through use of on-site helipads.
- *Elimination of extra patient stretcher-to-stretcher transfers.* The risks inherent to remote helipad use include the requirement for an extra patient transfer, since patients must be loaded and offloaded as part of an additional ground vehicle transport. Apart from time considerations, these patient transfers are notably associated with risk of movement-related adverse events such as displacement of an endotracheal tube.
- *Improved efficiency of EMS resource utilization.* The addition of an extra ground transport leg places demands upon ground EMS, in that an ambulance and personnel must be available to effect the transport between hospital and helipad. Furthermore, the round trip ground transport prolongs

the time that the HEMS unit and ground transport ambulance are unavailable to respond to additional emergency requests.