DSHS Guidance Document
Regarding Air Ambulance Staffing

Background

The Department of State Health Services, EMS/Trauma Systems Section , (hereafter referred to as "the department") was tasked by the Governor's EMS and Trauma Advisory Council's Air Medical Committee to determine the appropriate personnel certification requirements for staffing rotor wing air ambulances in Texas. The department is providing this guidance to address the credentials of staff that deliver patient care on a rotor wing air ambulance.

Current Licensing Rule

25 Texas Administrative Code 157.12 requires the following staffing:

f) There shall be two Texas licensed/certified personnel on board the rotor wing ambulance when in service. A waiver to the Texas license or certification may be granted for personnel employed by providers in New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Colorado, and Louisiana who respond in Texas and are licensed in their respective state. Staffing of vehicles shall be as follows:

(1) when responding to an emergency scene, at least one of the personnel shall be a paramedic;

(2) when responding for an inter-facility transfer, at least one of the personnel performing patient care duties shall be a certified or licensed paramedic, registered nurse, or physician. The qualifications and numbers of air medical personnel shall be appropriate to patient care needs;

(3) when responding as in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection, the second person may be a certified or licensed paramedic, registered nurse, or a physician.

Guidance

Rotor wing air ambulances must be staffed by a certified/licensed paramedic in Texas and by a Registered Nurse, physician or other appropriately qualified health care practitioner that is currently licensed and in good standing with their respective licensing board in Texas.

When a rotor-wing air ambulance is responding to an emergency scene response, staff levels must be as follows:

- One Texas certified/licensed Paramedic; and
- A second Texas certified/licensed Paramedic or licensed physician, registered nurse, or other appropriate health care practitioner in Texas.

When providing an inter-facility transfer, the staffing must include two licensed personnel; at least one must be a:

- Texas certified/licensed Paramedic; or
- Texas licensed registered nurse; or
- Texas licensed physician.
- The qualifications and numbers of rotor-wing air medical personnel shall be appropriate to adequately meet patient care needs.

The department recommends that any medical personnel that regularly staff a rotor wing air ambulance be knowledgeable of the skills and care required to be performed by basic and advanced pre-hospital EMS personnel. There is not a Texas regulation that requires a nurse, physician, or other health care practitioner to become EMS-certified or licensed by DSHS to staff a rotor wing air ambulance.

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