

Cal-AAMS

TITLE: Air-to-Air Communications

SUBMITTED BY:

Revised: 4/12/2021

PURPOSE

To improve safety through the standardization of self-announce practices used by helicopters transiting to, from and in the vicinity of a Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) landing zone (LZ).

POLICY

Cal-AAMS recommends that all California HEMS programs transmit and receive on a common frequency identified for the purpose of landing and take off 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 LZs.

This policy shall apply to all HEMS landing sites unless FAA regulations or local procedures require otherwise. For simplification purposes in this document, the term LZ will apply to all landing sites to include; scene calls, predetermined LZs, Emergency Landing Sites (ELS) and hospital helipads.

PROCEDURE

A. Frequencies:

1. 123.025 is the accepted common frequency unless the LZ is located within the boundaries of Class B, C, or D airspace or whenever a facility specific frequency is required. Examples of facility specific frequencies include private hospitals such as Stanford (130.05) or Enloe (122.85).
2. Regional Air-to-Air frequencies may also be in use. Examples are 124.30, also known as "Golden Gate Common", used in the San Francisco Bay area, and 123.10 used in San Diego County. Due to the large volume of non-EMS VFR aircraft in these areas, local frequencies should be utilized when transitioning and conducting HEMS operations.
3. For those LZs located within the boundaries of Class B, C, or D airspace, traffic separation for airborne aircraft SHOULD be provided by the controlling agency. However, the requirement to communicate on a tower frequency does not preclude the HEMS aircraft from also monitoring and/or communicating on the appropriate Air-to-Air frequency.

B. Recommended Traffic Advisory Practices:

1. Inbound, Outbound, and Transiting traffic: Whenever practicable, and when not required to be communicating on another ATC frequency, all aircraft should continuously monitor and communicate on the appropriate common frequency, from a point no less than 10 miles from the LZ.
2. It should be noted that aircraft operating to or from another nearby LZ may be making "self announce" broadcasts on the same frequency. To help identify one LZ from another, the LZ name (or general location if an unnamed LZ) should be spoken at the beginning and end of each "self announce" transmission.

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PROCEDURE

3. Inbound traffic:

- a. No less than 10 miles out report the name of LZ, altitude, location relative to the LZ, flight intentions, and the name of the LZ.

Example: “John Muir Hospital, (aircraft call sign), 1,500’, 7 miles east, landing, John Muir”.

- b. Report turning final for the LZ. For LZs with multiple approach paths, this call will include the direction the aircraft is arriving from.

Example, “Mendo Coast Hospital, (aircraft call sign), turning final (from the north or south as appropriate), Mendo Coast.”

- c. Report on the ground.

Example, “Santa Rosa Memorial, (aircraft call sign), on the pad, Santa Rosa Memorial.”

4. Departing traffic:

- a. Upon startup or while running on the ground, monitor the appropriate frequency for other traffic in the area.

- b. Prior to lifting, indicate intentions for takeoff and direction of flight.

Example: “Delta Hospital Antioch, (Aircraft call sign), lifting or lifting in X minute(s), westbound, Delta Hospital Antioch.”

- c. Continuously monitor the frequency until at least 10 miles from the LZ.

5. While transiting between LZs, base, or other facilities, aircraft are encouraged to periodically self-announce call-sign, altitude, position, and heading on the appropriate common frequency, so that other aircraft transiting the area may be made aware of their presence.

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