POLICY: Milwaukee County Emergency Medical Services will request air ambulance transport utilizing the Wisconsin Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) Guidelines:

A. HEMS utilization is a medical decision requiring appropriate oversight and should be integrated within regional systems of care.

B. HEMS may provide a time savings benefit to patients with time sensitive emergencies\(^1\) in reaching hospitals that can provide interventions IF the patient can be delivered during an interventional window\(^2\) AND Ground Emergency Medical Services (GEMS) are not able to appropriately deliver the patient to definitive care within that interventional window.

1. Examples include: Injured patients meeting the State of Wisconsin Field Trauma Triage Guidelines Category 2 or 3 who are more than 30 minutes of ground travel to the closest American College of Surgeons (ACS) verified Level I or Level II trauma center.
   a. HEMS utilization for mechanism of injury or special population alone (Category 4 or 5) lacks clear evidence of benefit. Since these patients may not need the resources of the highest trauma level facility in a region, use of HEMS should be carefully considered. Standing protocols or online medical consultation may offer individual guidance.

2. Patients with acute STEMI needing transportation to a regional percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) capable hospital where ground transportation exceeds an interventional window.

C. HEMS may provide clinical resources to patients needing critical care services if unable to obtain critical care services by ground emergency medical services (GEMS) (e.g., inter-facility transfer).

D. HEMS may provide a mode of transport for geographically isolated, remote patients independent of emergency medical urgency (e.g., from an island) although this mode should be carefully considered.

E. HEMS may provide a resource to local GEMS systems during disasters and times of low community resources.

F. HEMS have unique risks of transport, including economic.

G. Hospital destination and mode of transport are two separate and distinct clinical issues.

H. Mode of transport decisions pose unique challenges in developing evidence-based transport guidelines.

\(^1\)A time-sensitive emergency can be defined as an acute, life-threatening medical or traumatic event that requires a time-critical intervention to reduce mortality and/or morbidity. Examples include major systems trauma, ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI) and stroke.

\(^2\)An interventional window can be defined as the period of time during which mortality or morbidity is likely to be reduced by the administration of pharmaceutical agents, medical procedures or interventions. An interventional window should be based on available national consensus guidelines such as the American Heart Association’s first medical contact or door to balloon time. The “Golden Hour” of trauma refers to the core principle of rapid intervention in trauma cases, rather than the narrow meaning of a critical one-hour time period. There is no evidence to suggest that survival rates drop off after 60 minutes.
Monitor FD's designated frequency for notification estimated time of arrival

Designate and set up landing zone in a smooth area, as level as possible with ≤ 5 degree slope, clear of wires, trees, debris and other obstacles

Helicopter landing at night or when strong winds are a factor?

Assess scene and patient

No
Yes

Ground transport to appropriate facility at appropriate provider level

Yes

Patient extricated prior to helicopter arrival?

Yes

No

Ground transport time more than 30 minutes?

Yes

No

PT requires critical care/ skill unavailable at scene?

Yes

No

Ground transport to appropriate facility at appropriate provider level

Refer to WI HEMS Utilization Guidelines to frame the discussion about HEMS utilization

Consider requesting air ambulance through fire department dispatch

Consider illuminating landing zone, taking care to keep lights out of pilot's eyes

Designate landing zone of 150 x 150 feet

Keep crowds at least 150 ft away from helicopter at all times

Anticipate request for a tail rotor guard assignment

No personnel running or smoking and no vehicles within 50 feet of aircraft

When signaling where to land, stand with your back to the wind and depart when helicopter is on final approach

NOTE: Rotor wash can produce high winds - PROTECT YOUR EYES!

Air medical personnel will coordinate all loading and unloading of patients and equipment

Approach aircraft from the front and downhill side only after signaled to do so by air medical crewmember; do not assist with opening or closing doors; carry all equipment below the waist

Transfer patient care to air medical crew

Clear area and return to quarters

NOTES:

- FFL response time is approximately 20 minutes from request to arrival at scene within Milwaukee County.
- For air medical response to an MVC, no fire hose line is required.