



Dear MedFlight Community Partner:

We are writing for your support in reducing the number of medical helicopter accidents.

Helicopter Emergency Medical Services provide a unique and vital public service. Currently, there are more than 30 medical helicopters providing service to Ohio citizens.

While many programs do a good job of communicating between one another when dispatching helicopters, there is always the threat of a dangerous practice called “helicopter shopping.”

“Helicopter shopping,” is when a requestor (agency, individual, or hospital that needs to have a medical helicopter come and transport a patient) calls more than one service, when the first is not available due to adverse weather conditions. This practice can result in threatening the lives of patients and crews.

To reduce “helicopter shopping,” you can simply call one service that can facilitate other air medical helicopters, if they can’t respond to your request because of the following reasons:

- **Mechanical Problems** (Helicopters can experience mechanical problems warranting other services being dispatched).
- **Local Weather Conditions** (Other operators may be able to complete the assignment without encountering those weather conditions, due to geographic location).

When the original requested service can’t fly, **the reason for the refusal should be known to the subsequently called service.** MedFlight provides this safety feature when another service is needed to take care of your patient as a back-up option.

As an advocate for patients, we simply recommend that you develop a procedure that ensures that, after a service has refused a flight assignment, subsequently called operators are made aware of the circumstances surrounding the first refusal. This will ensure that only safe flight assignments will be accepted.

It is our obligation, as guardians of public (patient) trust, to ensure the safest and most appropriate medical transportation. Like ours, your role in improving safety is critical to reducing the number air medical accidents. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

If more assistance is needed, please contact me at (614) 734-8061 as your appropriate air-medical provider.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Allenstein
Chief Clinical Officer
MedFlight