



FLIGHT LINE

WHAT'S NEW...

Helicopter Shopping

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Helicopter shopping has been defined as “The practice of calling, in sequence, several air medical providers until one will accept the mission without sharing with subsequent operators the reason the flight was declined by the previously called operators”. In plain English this can best be described as calling a service, typically the usual provider, and having them decline the mission due to weather conditions, and immediately calling the next nearest service without providing that provider’s dispatch with the information that some one else declined because of weather. There have been several incidents where “helicopter shopping” has resulted in fatal crashes, several of which occurred in 2008 in Texas and Arizona.



Having said this, there is a lot of communication between all the providers along the front-range, sharing weather and other condition reports to ensure and promote safety. This information sharing includes a reporting network that pages out which providers have turned down a mission, to where, and for what reasons, as well as fairly open communication between pilots from the different bases. This open communication not only prevents shopping, but also helps us deliver the safest possible services to the agencies that call us. More than once communication has occurred between Memorial Star and other HEMS services after a mission was declined due to weather to see if one of us could make it to the scene “the back way”; a situation that is entirely possible due to the unique weather patterns in Colorado. This would allow the necessary services to be delivered to the patient and does not constitute “helicopter shopping” because of the open sharing of information. This should provide a model for hospital and pre-hospital personnel to reduce risks and prevent adverse outcomes from utilizing helicopter services.



The key is prevention. This starts with both hospital and pre-hospital personnel minimizing risks of an adverse event by sharing information with any providers, regardless of whether they are the first or the next service to be called. This information could include if there were other operators that declined the flight, and also, if possible, the weather conditions at the scene or facility. Another means of preventing “helicopter shopping” and the possible adverse outcome of doing so is to have contingency plans for transporting patients. This could include ground or alternate means of air transport (fixed wing) that are able to fly in conditions that would prove dangerous to helicopters if possible. Rest assured that Memorial Star has resources available for alternate means of air transport, as well as contingency plans for ground transport of patients. Memorial Star has, and will share these resources with any and all agencies that require it. These include contact information of fixed wing providers and a practice that, essentially, means the helicopter could be a ride to work; meaning, if we are able to make it to the patient and not able to return via air, we would stay with the patient and deliver any level of care needed on the way to the closest appropriate

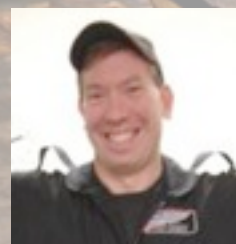
facility with the ground ambulance.

Now having made mention of the fact that there is weather that we do not fly in, there should be reference made to some of the weather “minimums” or boundaries we use prior to accepting a mission. During the day we must have at least 3 miles of visibility in all directions and we must have at least 1000 foot ceilings, or, the clouds cover has to be at least 1000 feet above the ground. At night these restrictions are stricter in that we must have 5 miles of visibility and 1500 foot ceilings. Also, these “minimums” must exist from our point of origin all the way to the scene or facility, and all the way back, so if the “minimums” are acceptable in the Colorado Springs city limits, those limits could easily exist somewhere en-route. We must keep the seemingly capricious nature of the weather in Colorado in mind, and watch any weather patterns that might develop or move in behind us that could prevent our return to a hospital. One other restriction we face concerns high winds. We are not able to fly in sustained winds of 35 knots (approximately 40 mph) or gusting winds to 40 knots (approximately 46 mph) because of the danger it presents to the aircraft and all aboard from the resulting turbulence. The measure of the winds would be taken aloft, not just on the

ground, where there can be a significant discrepancy, but all of us who live in Colorado can truly appreciate the power of the wind and the strength with which it makes its presence known.

In conclusion, whereas “helicopter shopping” has never been a significant issue in Memorial Star’s service area, or even in Colorado, it is worth addressing. We all want what is best for the patient, and that should always be on the forefront of our minds when considering how to transport a patient to the hospital, “What is best for my patient?”. This would certainly include getting them to the most appropriate facility as quickly as possible, most poignantly by helicopter following this subject. However, this should also include alternate or back up plan, which is something providers in emergency and critical care medicine excel at, both field and hospital providers.

As always, we look forward to seeing all of you, whether socially or “on business”, and we are always happy and excited to be a part of, and to help meet the needs of your patient care. Remember, “Let’s be careful out there!”



Anders is a flight paramedic and base safety officer at Memorial Star



LANDING ZONE



Hey check out our new website!!! Laura has been working very hard to get our website up and running and it looks great. You can contact each and everyone of the crew, fill out a satisfaction survey, check out some cool pictures and videos and sign up for a class. The goal is to serve you! To that end there is even a place for you to display your pictures and agency information. As always we are very appreciative of what you do to serve your community and we are honored to take part!



TEAM CONNECTIONS

Everyday you allow us to be a part of your team. You trust us with your patients, friends and your community, and that is something that we consider an honor and take very seriously. As you get this newsletter you get to learn about us but we want to know more about you too! So, every month we'd like to highlight an agency, department or hospital so that we can get to know you better. What drives you? What do you offer? Who makes up your team? These and other questions are burning to be answered. This is your section of our newsletter. Think of it as... Well, think of it as a newsletter within a newsletter! If you would like to share your agency and team please drop a line to

StarOneNewsletter@gmail.com. Include your name and agency, department, or hospital as well as a contact number.



I NEED YOUR PICTURES!!!!



Hey, I've seen you taking pictures of us coming and going! If you have some cool pictures that you want to submit of us interacting with your agency we'd love to see them. Send them in and we'll publish them along with your name and agency. Again, the email is StarOneNewsletter@gmail.com!



Beat the caption!

This picture is begging for a caption! I take a lot of pictures and frequently I get one that could use a witty caption. This just happens to be one of those times. Hook me up with a funny caption and we'll hook you up with something worthwhile. Send your caption along with your name, agency or department to StarOneNewsletter@gmail.com!



Matt just finished watching all the Rocky movies back to back...

We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts, we make the world.
- Buddha

It's Back!!!!

Memorial Star

Dinner Club!!!

You're Invited

January 26th @ 6:30

Rock Bottom Brewery

3316 Cinema Point
(Powers and North Carefree)

Rock Bottom Brewery... It's where we started the whole thing off a year ago. Good food, good beer and good friends!

Everyone is welcome to attend and we always end up having a blast. Please email me at staronenewsletter@gmail.com to RSVP as soon as you can so I can let them know we're coming!!! Thanks

-Matt



Do you eat?!

I don't know about you but at my house dinner is the time we gather and talk about our day. We all feel like a great big family right? Well, perhaps it's time to gather around the table and share our communities stories with each other. That's the idea behind the dinner club. Please join us so we can get to know each other better! Please RSVP though email

StarOneNewsletter@gmail.com

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