Interagency Emergency Helicopter Extraction Source List, PMS 512

This source list is compiled from federal, state, and municipal governments, military, and emergency medical response (EMS) and/or extraction programs throughout the country. This list can be useful when filling in the Emergency Contact Checklist on the *NWCG Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist*, PMS 503.

Emergency helicopter extraction is used to insert emergency response personnel and/or extract critically injured personnel from remote or inaccessible locations. Incident management and coordination system personnel should take the time to understand the capabilities and limitations of helicopter extraction. Read the background and consideration information below, including ordering resources and mission planning.

The *Interagency Emergency Helicopter Extraction Source List*, PMS 512, is developed and maintained by the NWCG National Coordination System Committee (NCSC) in collaboration with the National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC), entities of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). While previous versions may contain relevant or useful information, the GSTOP is obsolete. The user of this information is responsible for confirming that they have the most up-to-date version. NWCG is the sole source for the publication.

Comments, questions, and recommendations shall be submitted to the appropriate agency member assigned to the NCSC. View the complete roster. Submit changes for review and approval by geographic area representatives.

Ordering Resources

Careful consideration should be given by the on-scene Incident Commander (IC) and/or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel prior to making the determination to request and initiate the use of the following resources.

Most of the aircraft on the source list are not inspected/carded nor approved by a USFS, or DOI Cooperator Aircraft Letter of Approval. These non-approved aircraft do not have current procurement agreements with the federal agencies and therefore cannot be directly ordered from the vendor.

Contract aircraft that are federally carded and approved for short-haul, or cooperator aircraft by a letter of approval, may be used exclusively (on standby) for an incident through normal dispatch/helibase ordering procedures.

Process for activation of military aircraft may vary from state to state. There may be delays in response.

Aircraft that **have not been** inspected, carded, or approved by a Cooperator Aircraft Letter of Approval for agency use shall not be placed on standby for a federal incident. It may be ordered through the emergency "911" system as approved by the appropriate IC or Line Officer.

An emergency helicopter request should be initiated and coordinated through local dispatch or Geographical Area Coordination Center (GACC).

For time critical or potential long term assignments request military, National Guard or Coast Guard extraction capable resources through the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (ARFCC), phone #: 800-851-3051. It is their job to locate the closest asset to fulfill your emergency rescue needs. It is important to note resource availability may be limited due to military deployments or other factors, and response time may be 2-3 hours.

In some circumstances, orders for county/sheriff department owned aircraft can be placed directly or with the specified contact.

Additional Resource Information

Atlas & Database of Air Medical Services (ADAMS)

Definitions

Rescue Hoist:

A cable winching device permanently mounted to the helicopter that is capable of lowering/raising persons attached to the cable.

Short-haul:

To transport one or more persons suspended on a fixed line (150'-250') beneath a helicopter. The intent is to transport persons a short distance (short-haul), normally from a limited or inaccessible location to a safe landing area.

Updates and Source Verification

The NWCG National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC) intends to keep this document continuously updated. However, accuracy of source information can change due to unforeseen circumstances, and many factors may influence availability and response times. Users must verify source information accuracy based on individual needs and circumstances.

Note: If you find information that should be added, changed, or is missing from the source list, please make corrections on the blank source list template on the left menu or email to:

National Assistant Helicopter Operations Specialist
USDA-Forest Service
3833 S. Development Ave.
Boise, ID 83705-5398
Office (208) 387-5921
Fax (208) 387-5735

EHE Mission Planning

The following information was compiled by the Intermountain Healthcare Life Flight Program, Salt Lake City, Utah, and is intended to assist those involved in mission planning for an emergency extraction.

Their website states, "A hoist rescue is a great tool for extracting patients from challenging environments; however, this type of operation does have some limitations. Good communication between the requesting agency and Life Flight is critical in creating a plan to best serve all agencies and the patient safely."

For additional information, visit the Intermountain Healthcare Life Flight website.

Minor revisions have been incorporated into the information to fit the audience.

Mission planning should begin with these types of questions:

- What is the nature of the intended short-haul/hoist rescue?
- What is the weather at the scene?
- What do you want the rescuer to do?
- What is the plan if the rescuer cannot complete the mission?
- Patient information (i.e., location, mechanism of injury, condition, anyone with the patient, contact).
- Is there a Command Post (location, IC contact, radio frequencies)?
- Is SAR at the scene or deployed?
- Is there a landing area (near the patient, near the Command Post)?
- Where is the nearest location for jet fuel?
- Is there anything else you want us to do before we leave the area?

Factors That Limit Hoist Operations:

- Winds are greater than 20 mph, poor visibility, or severe weather.
- If total weight of patient and equipment exceeds 450 lbs.

- Hoist operations are not conducted at night.
- Over water.

We may not be able to complete a short-haul/hoist mission if:

- There are unresolved communications issues or safety problems.
- Near dusk.
- Patient location requires technical rescue.
- There’s avalanche potential at patient location

Initial Short-Haul/Hoist Risk Assessment:

- Life threatening injury or illness.
- Time dependent injury.
- Ground evacuation may endanger patient and/or other personnel.
- Ground evacuation would be time consuming.
- Ground evacuation is not possible.
- No landing area near the patient.

TOMAS

Terrain: Alpine, forest, slope, snow, etc. When possible, establish a nearby alternate landing area.

Obstacles: Trees, cliffs, rock scree, loose debris, dust, wires, limited daylight, rotor wash, etc.

Method: Net, bag, litter, harnesses, tag line, etc. Logistics, type of insertion/extraction.

Alternatives: Standby and/or assist SAR with a ground rescue, land near victim.

Safety: Team reviews available information and identifies concerns. Determines “Go/No-Go” decision and justifies why.