

# Helicopter Protocol

Mercy Flights takes many steps to ensure our flights are safe and sound

**M**ercy Flights is committed to safely transporting our patients and crew. We take every preventative measure to safeguard our flight systems. This includes well-trained pilots, state-of-the-art equipment, and well-established operations protocol.

Mercy Flights operates a twin-engine Eurocopter BO-105. It's fully customized with state-of-the-art in-flight medical equipment. This light, compact helicopter has four rotors with composite blades to ensure maneuverability. All of its main systems (hydraulics, electric, fuel, lubrication) were designed to be fully redundant.

"The redundancy of the systems means if one isn't functioning, there is a back-up that continues to operate," says Mercy Flights Chief Pilot H. Dashper Wood III or "Woody."

"It is important to Mercy

Flights to have as many added safety features as possible," he said. "This was demonstrated in October when our helicopter made an emergency landing. One engine was not functioning properly, but the second engine continued to operate perfectly. Because Mercy Flights is dedicated to safety, we have a system in place that protected our crew, patient, and equipment."

The Mercy Flights helicopter pilots have to be the best in the industry in order

to securely land at emergency situations that may occur on twisting highways, tight can-



Chief Pilot H. Dashper Wood III or "Woody" trains each Mercy Flights helicopter operator. To ensure our pilots are the best in the industry, Mercy Flights requires more than three times the FAA-required annual training hours. We are dedicated to safety first!

yons, or the sides of mountains. The compact size of the BO-105 helicopter model allows the craft to safely land

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**How the GPS Tracking System Works**

## Safety Tracking

**M**ercy Flights will be installing a new automatic flight tracking system to further enhance its flight safety protocol. These new Outlink units will be in both the airplane and the helicopter. The units use GPS satellites to transmit the aircrafts' location data and deliver real-time updates of the position of the aircrafts to our dispatch center.

Every 15 minutes, Mercy Flights receives the exact coordinates of the aircrafts. These updates are automatically plotted on a computer map via the Internet. The Outlink system is also capable of transmitting text messages.



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**Holiday 2005**

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in a variety of EMS situations.

“About 95% of what we do in the helicopter is on-the-scene landings,” Woody says. “For instance, when there is a car accident on a winding road, the helicopter size allows it to land safely to pick up an injured patient. We can get in and out of narrow canyons and various other places that a larger helicopter couldn’t safely navigate.”

Another safeguard Mercy Flights takes to ensure safety for its flight program is the amount of training that both airplane and helicopter pilots receive. As Chief Pilot, Woody has 35 years of flight experience under his belt. He oversees the training of all the helicopter pilots.

“Mercy Flights helicopter pilots fly under the same regulations and certifications as airplane pilots,” Woody says. “As a certificated air carrier, each year our pilots go through rigorous training.

Because well-trained pilots are the best safety feature of all, it is Mercy Flights’ policy to exceed training requirements set by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Every Mercy Flights helicopter pilot is required to receive three to four times the FAA-set training hours.

“The helicopter is a fully-instrumented ship,” Woody says. “Because safe helicopter operation relies on good visibility, we don’t fly the helicopter in inclement weather or at night. However, if the helicopter is caught in unpredicted bad weather, the aircraft’s calibrated instruments have the capability of navigating it. Our pilots are all trained to operate the helicopter in adverse weather conditions.”

Thank you to the entire Mercy Flights team for your dedication to safety and emergency care!

# Fast Facts

- **Expert Training:** Mercy Flights’ emergency medical staff consists of rescue paramedics, registered nurses, experienced pilots, and EMTs.
- **Advanced Equipment:** Mercy Flights maintains a fleet of advanced life-support equipped ambulances to respond to emergency 911 calls 24 hours a day.
- **High Value:** A Mercy Flights membership can mean a significant cost savings in the event of an emergency.
- **Gift to Save Lives:** You can purchase a gift Mercy Flights membership for your friends and family at any time during the year.



## response planning

**A**s Chair Elect of the Association of Air Medical Responders of Oregon (AAMRO), Mercy Flights General Manager Ken Parsons keeps his finger on the pulse of what is happening with our state’s air medical services. AAMRO has recently completed a thorough Air Medical Responders Resource Guide that compiles valuable information from all of the air medical assets that respond to clinical and/or rescue missions within Oregon. AAMRO is currently working to develop a comprehensive response area guide that will help first responders quickly locate the closest air medical responder. Ken Parsons is closely involved with the planning process for this guide.





# Critical *Program*

Every Wednesday, our flight team is participating in a clinical program, rotating between Providence Medford Medical Center and Rogue Valley Medical Center. To gain valuable medical experience, Mercy Flights' emergency medical professionals work closely with hospital staff in various departments.

**M**ercy Flights has started an exciting new clinical program in partnership with Providence Medford Medical Center and Rogue Valley Medford Medical Center. Each Wednesday, our flight team travels to one of the hospitals. The entire morning, the Flight Crew works side-by-side with the staff in one of the departments (ex: pediatrics, emergency room, intensive care, cardiac care, and so on). The Mercy Flights team alternates the hospitals every other Wednesday and rotates among departments.

"We are very excited about this partnership," says Doug Stewart, Operations Director. "It helps build better relationships between our crew and the hospital staff. It also helps our flight team obtain a hands-on understanding of what happens to patients after they are taken to the hospital setting."

Stewart says this program also benefits patients, because the flight crew has the opportunity to get more exposure

to advanced procedures and conditions. The flight crew consists of highly trained emergency medical professionals who can examine, evaluate, and treat patients with emergency equipment prior to arrival at a hospital emergency department. Care begins on the scene of an accident or other emergency and continues during the transport to the closest appropriate medical facility. In consultation with a physician via phone or radio, a flight paramedic or nurse can perform a variety of emergency medical interventions and procedures on patients.

"It helps our staff when they pick up someone from the hospital to transport them because they have acquired a fuller understanding of various conditions and equipment," Stewart says. "It also benefits the patients because our staff is more experienced with a wider variety of diseases, illnesses, symptoms, and treatments."



# a gift from the heart

## Show them you care with a gift membership.

Looking for a special gift this holiday season? Give the gift that saves lives. Call Mercy Flights today to purchase a gift membership for your family, friends, or neighbors. Emergency transportation and care is expensive. Even with insurance, many plans leave you with a large balance.

A Mercy Flights membership fills the gap left by inadequate or non-existent insurance coverage. You can protect your loved ones from the additional expenses of ambulance transportation. A Mercy Flights membership can save them hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars if they ever need emergency transportation.

For just \$70, you can cover an entire annual family membership for Mercy Flights' ground, airplane, and helicopter. Call us to find out more: (800) 903-9000 or (541) 858-2600.

*Happy Holidays! from all of us at Mercy Flights!*

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