

Drones: What to Know Before You Fly

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Drone use near emergency scenes

Many emergency services use drones to help commanders quickly analyze the scene of fires or emergency scenes. If a drone is operating in the area, our crews will take steps to prioritize safety. Sometimes that means departing from the scene, other times it means remaining on the ground.

1. Please ensure any emergency services-operated drones are on the ground before requesting Mercyhealth REACT.
2. If a member of the public is operating a drone in the area, notify Mercyhealth REACT on the assigned contact radio channel or by phone (or ask your dispatch center to contact Mercyhealth REACT). If possible, identify the operator of the drone and request that the operator land the drone.

It's always a good idea to remain situationally aware while you are operating a drone. We appreciate your efforts to keep our crews and patients safe!

Need more information on flying Unmanned Aircraft Systems? Visit knowbeforeyoufly.org.

Congratulations to our Customer Survey Winners

When REACT transports a patient from any facility or EMS scene, the referring facility/department members are asked to provide feedback by completing a RSQ911 online survey. This gives the REACT crew feedback so they can provide the best customer service available. When filling out this survey, there is an option at the bottom to enter into a quarterly drawing.

We congratulate our latest winners: Sallie French, Mercyhealth SICU, and Maureen Prerost, Freeport Memorial Hospital Emergency Department. Congratulations to all!

How to Contact REACT

If you would like REACT to come to your event or provide education to your agency or staff, please contact us through the web at mercyhealthsystem.org/service/react-helicopter. Click through to the Contact Us form which takes you to this link: mercyhealthsystem.org/react-helicopter-contact-us-form. You can also contact Lois Hinton, REACT flight nurse, at lhinton@mhemail.org, or Lydia Oppen, Account Executive at Lydia.oppen@airmethods.com.



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A quarterly newsletter for REACT staff and friends

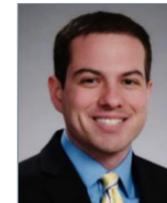
REACT Newsletter

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Drones: What to Know Before You Fly

By Sam Nepple, Area Manager, North HBS Region, Air Methods Corp.



The nighttime crash between a minivan and a pickup truck left several people seriously injured. As the air ambulance approached, first responders noticed something flying above them: a drone watching the emergency scene. First responders alerted the helicopter pilot who delayed landing at

the scene. Although a collision between the helicopter and the drone was avoided, possible lifesaving minutes were lost.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), or drones, provide a great service when assessing damage in disasters, emergency scenes and search missions. Many first responders and emergency management personnel use drones in ways we've not seen before. At Mercyhealth REACT, we proactively work to "share the air" with drone operators.

Mercyhealth REACT's helicopter cruises between 120-170 knots, almost 2-3 miles a minute, at an average altitude of 1,500 feet. While in flight, our pilot and medical crews are continuously scanning airspace with the aid of several comprehensive awareness systems, but it can be difficult to see an UAV because they can blend into the horizon when viewed from above, even with lights and bright colors.

How can you help? If you launch a drone under a professional or recreational setting, land it immediately if you see or hear another manned aircraft in the area. Exit the airspace as soon as possible.

Every drone pilot should be familiar with these six rules:

1. Never fly close to any type of manned aircraft.
2. Request special permission to fly drones within 5 miles of an airport or heliport.
3. Maximum flying altitude for UAV is 400 feet above ground level (AGL).
4. Your drone must always be within your sight.
5. All unauthorized UAV must stay clear of emergency scenes.
6. Operators must follow flight restrictions around racetracks, stadiums and other areas with protected airspace.

Drone use near hospitals

Hospital helipads are considered to be airports by the FAA. This means that recreational drone users are required to notify a hospital if they are operating a drone within 5 miles of the facility. If your hospital is using a drone, or you are notified of a drone being used within the 5-mile radius, we ask that you let us know.

1. Call Mercyhealth REACT in advance to Air Com (REACT dispatch) at (855) 667-3228 and provide the date, time, altitude and location where the drone will be flying.
2. Provide the cell phone number of the drone operator to contact if there are incoming flights during that time and the operator will be asked to land the drone temporarily.
3. Our flight communicators will post the information on Weatherturndown.com to share with other flight programs in the region.

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IDPH EMS Region One MCI Plan Overview, Part One



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Associate EMS Medical Director
Region 1 RHCC Disaster Medical Director
MD-1 Physician
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First responders have heard about and studied many examples of multi-casualty incidents, while very few have responded. A Multi-Casualty Incident (MCI) is defined as a planned or unplanned event, producing enough casualties (number and severity) to overwhelm local resources. These events typically involve special scene operations and significant coordination efforts. At its most basic definition, a multi-casualty incident is when the resources of the incident outweigh its response resources.

Among the special characteristics encountered during MCIs, there is a need for multi-agency coordination and effective management of the scene. The top two objectives of responding to an MCI is maintaining scene safety and reducing the loss of life. This is accomplished through appropriate resource allocation, triage and transporting to an appropriate health care facility.

In a major incident, the demand for a well-orchestrated response is critical to increasing survivability. One event case studied is the Aurora, Colorado movie theater shooting. Many victims were transported to local hospitals via unconventional transportation methods. The uses of creative response in place of traditional emergency medical service practices add a growing complexity to incidents today. Furthermore, Emergency Management has identified other non-conventional areas to consider such as training citizens to be a first line of victim care, improving pre-planned medical response capabilities at mass gatherings, and to prepare hospitals for self-transporting victims.

Through preparedness efforts and funding sources, planning for the previously mentioned dynamics is possible. Javon Bea Hospital in Rockford, Illinois, is identified by IDPH as the Regional Hospital Coordinating Center (RHCC) for nine counties in northwest Illinois. Additionally, the Emergency Management staff led the Northwest Illinois Preparedness and Response Coalition

(NIPARC), responsible for educating and planning with over 165 organizations on critical issues such as MCI planning. Through these planning efforts, the NIPARC Multi-Casualty Incident Response Plan was created. The plan's purpose is to coordinate an effective response between first responder agencies (law enforcement and EMS) and hospitals, thus resulting in improved victim outcomes and resource optimization.

The goal of NIPARC is to reduce silos, communicate more often, and avoid relocating a disaster from one area to another. Recognizing that MCI rarely occur, this plan assists first arriving responders in identifying an MCI, initiating communications, controlling the scene, and activating command and control.

The benefit of using this plan includes:

- Uses standardized National Incident Management System language
- Outlines recommended activation criteria
- Initiates communications through existing methods
- Uses the Hospital Disaster Communications Center (RockCom) to rapidly notify regional hospitals (based on location to incident, bed availability, and available resources)
- Standardizes modified inbound ambulance reports (when activated)
- Assures early notification of other critical external stakeholders

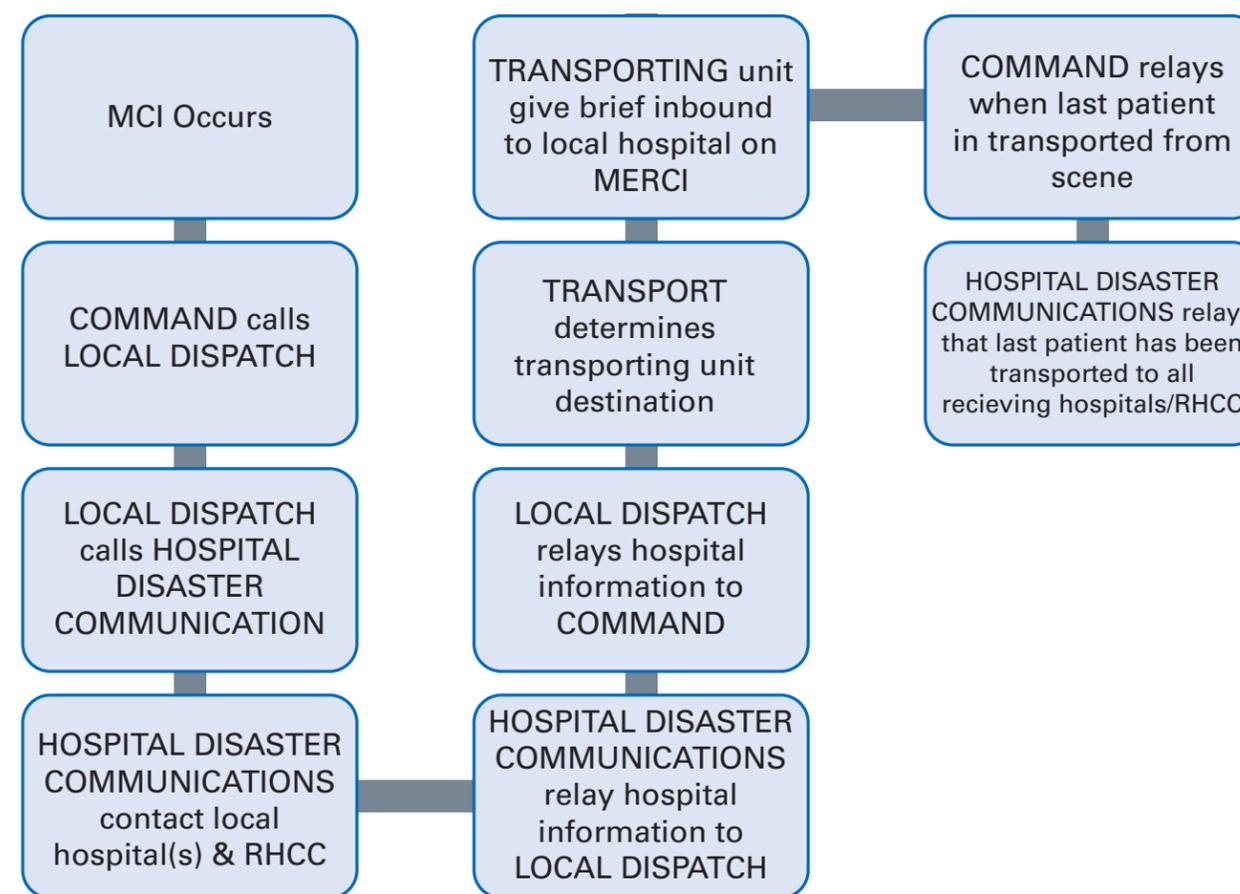
A copy of the NIPARC MCI Response Plan can be requested by contacting the author, Dr. Matt Smetana at MSmetana@mhemail.org.

Activation criteria

Activation of this plan may be considered whenever patient needs exceed local resources.

This Multi-Casualty Incident Plan shall be activated under the following situations:

- An incident with five or more patients who are triaged red (immediate)
- An incident with more than 10 patients who require Emergency Medical Services transport regardless of triage category
- An incident with five or more patients of any category who require special resources to treat or to gain access, including technical rescue, hazardous materials response, and/or enhanced scene security.
- Any incident in which the Incident Commander deems appropriate



About the author:

Dr. Smetana has been involved in EMS for more than 15 years as a firefighter, paramedic, rescue diver, flight physician and emergency physician. He is an MD-1 physician and Associate EMS Medical Director for the Mercyhealth Prehospital and Emergency Services Center. He functions at the IDPH Region One Regional Health Care Coordinating Center Medical Director and Mercyhealth Disaster Medical Director. He also serves a Medical Manager for the Illinois Urban Search and Rescue Team.