

Forward

Air medical transportation is a vital part of the EMS system in Alaska. Medical providers who accompany patients on air medical flights need to be aware of the unique environment in which they are working. This book examines the history of air medical transports and the EMS system in Alaska. It will aid in planning air medical missions, both from a community planning perspective, as well as for specific flights.

Many medical providers, particularly those trained outside Alaska, have limited experience in aviation. Learning about specific types of aircraft, their capabilities, and the rules under which they operate can help a provider pick the best aircraft or type of air medical service for a given patient situation.

Understanding the physical properties of gases and the way these properties act on the body is vital to avoiding complications for patients during air medical flights. Other topics included in this book are hypoxia, the air medical escort and equipment considerations during flights. One section of this book details specific medical problems and special considerations to be taken when patients are transported by air.

This book also gives a good introduction to understanding some of the cultural differences found in Alaskan Native communities. This section may be of particular use for medical providers who are from outside Alaska. Finally, there is a section on putting-it-all-together to help the air medical provider plan an air medical transport from start to finish.

This book, when used with the Alaska Air Medical Escort training program, should help prepare the experienced medical provider to deliver care in the air medical transport setting. It is the responsibility of individual escorts and air medical services to apply the information and implement the suggestions and ideas found in this book.

Putting Regulations into Perspective

The following are actual regulations concerning operation of aircraft as set forth by the United States Air Service in 1920.

1. Don't take the machine into the air unless you are satisfied it will fly.
2. Never leave the ground with the motor leaking.
3. Don't turn sharply when taxiing. Instead of turning short, have someone lift the tail around.
4. Never get out of a machine with the motor running until the pilot relieving you can reach the engine controls.
5. Pilots should carry hankies in a handy position to wipe off goggles.
6. Riding on the steps, wings, or tail of a machine is prohibited.
7. In case the engine fails on takeoff, land straight ahead regardless of obstacles.
8. No machine must taxi faster than a man can walk.
9. Do not trust altitude instruments.
10. If you see another machine near you, get out of the way.
11. Before you begin a landing glide, see that no machines are under you.
12. Hedge-hopping will not be tolerated.
13. No spins on back or tail slides will be indulged as they unnecessarily strain the machine.
14. Pilots will not wear spurs while flying.
15. If an emergency occurs while flying, land as soon as you can.