

What is an air ambulance?

An air ambulance is a business class aircraft that is specially equipped with a flight stretcher, advanced life support equipment, medications and a highly trained medical staff. If you require extensive or urgent medical assistance, an air ambulance is the best method of transport.

Some situations that require air ambulance include:

- Relocation to a medical facility closer to family
- Transfer to an advanced treatment center, rehabilitation facility or hospice
- Cancer treatment
- Specialized cardiac surgery
- Ventilator-dependent patients
- Trauma injury or illness
- Pediatric or neonatal emergencies

How much does it cost?

Medical transport via air ambulance is quite expensive. Cost is determined by many factors, including the patient's condition, the urgency of travel, the distance and locations of travel, and the patient's and family's travel preferences.

Some air ambulance companies offer transport options that can save hundreds or even thousands of dollars. These include providing a medical assistant on a commercial flight or an Amtrak train, providing long-distance ground transportation for all or part of the transport, or providing stretcher service with medical teams on international commercial airlines.

You may qualify for full or partial insurance reimbursement. Check your policy or ask your health insurance provider to verify coverage.



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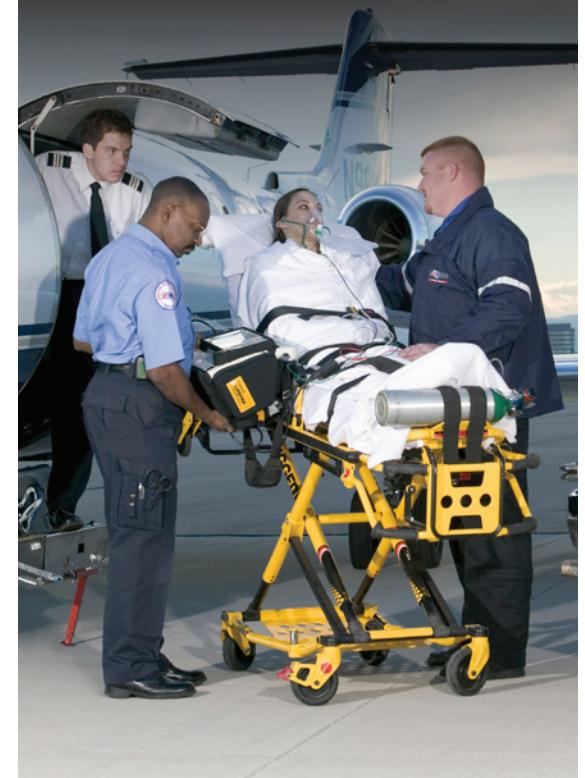
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Thinking About Air Ambulance?

*Basic information
about transporting a patient
or loved one in an ICU-equipped
fixed-wing plane
with fully trained and experienced
aero-medical crews.*



10 Questions to ask an air ambulance company (and the answers you should hear)

Q: What is your safety record?

A: The best answer is 100%! If a company hedges on this question, take that as a red flag and look elsewhere.

Q: How long has your company been in business?

A: Choose an air ambulance company with a proven track record and a consistent operating protocol. The longer they've been in business, the more likely they are to offer the services you will need. Consider companies that have successfully flown patients for at least five years; ten is even better.

Q: How many trips have you flown?

A: The number of trips (and/or patients transported) shows credibility within the medical community, as well as confidence from those patients and families whom they've helped.

Q: Is your company licensed and insured?

A: ALWAYS ask this question. If you have any doubts, request the license number and whether it is single or multiple state, or worldwide. Regarding insurance, an air ambulance should carry a minimum of \$5 million comprehensive general and liability and medical professional liability coverage of at least \$1 million per occurrence.

Q: Is your staff multi-lingual?

A: A multi-lingual customer service and medical staff indicates that this company can meet domestic and international patient requirements.

Q: What forms of payment/insurance do you accept?

A: Most companies will accept a credit card, bank wire, money order or cashiers' check for payment. You may also qualify for some insurance coverage. Choose an air ambulance company that will help you with insurance questions.

Q: What are your operating hours?

A: Medical emergencies occur day and night. Look for a company with trained, experienced personnel who personally answer your call 24/7. Avoid a company that uses recordings to capture vital and urgent patient information.

Q: Can you fly my patient to another country?

A: Many air ambulance companies do not have international licensure. If you must transport internationally, this should be the first question you ask.

Q: What type of training and experience does your medical team have?

A: A reputable air ambulance company will hire only aero-medical crew members who have at least three years of experience and training. The best companies require five years of experience and certifications in aero-medical specializations.

Q: Which parts of the transport process am I responsible for?

A: The best air ambulance companies will handle the entire transport for you, from the moment of your first call until the patient is safely delivered to his or her destination. All medical clearances, ground travel, air travel, equipment and monitoring should be handled by the company and their crew.



How can I find an air ambulance company?

Case Managers in hospitals and other medical facilities are familiar with many air ambulance companies. Ask them for suggestions, then research those companies.

Use the Internet. Just type the keyword "air ambulance" on any of the search engines – Google, Yahoo and MSN are the most popular – to read the brief descriptions of the services, and then link to their websites for more information. The companies at the top and on the right-hand side of the page have paid for their listings – that's why they're ranked higher. The rest of the listings appear in order based on the company, their product and the usefulness of information within their site, as evaluated by the search engines.

You might also check with senior service providers within your community. Or, ask your neighbors and friends if they've had experience with an air ambulance transport. Word of mouth, both positive and negative, can help you decide which company to contact.