

SAFEMEDFLIGHT: QUICK FACTS

MISSION

The mission of Safemedflight is to stop air medical accidents and prevent unsafe aviation practices that endanger flight crews and their patients.

Founded in 2005, Safemedflight was started by the family of flight nurse Erin Reed and has grown to include the families, friends and colleagues of flight crews killed and injured in the line of duty over the past two decades.

THE PROBLEM

In 2004, The National Safety Council found that the death rate of EMS flight crewmembers was 75 per 100,000 person-years, 16 times the occupational death rate of 4.6 for all U.S. workers.¹

The average rate of fatal helicopter EMS crashes per 100,000 hours from 2000 to 2004 was 1.8. ***At this rate, an EMS pilot or crewmember flying just 20 hours per week during a 20-year career would have a 37% chance of dying in a fatal crash.*** $(20 \times 52 \times 1.8 / 1000,000 = 37\%)^2$

EMS flights that begin without a patient or organ are allowed to fly under weather conditions that are not good enough for passenger-carrying commercial operations. Once the patient or organ is collected, stricter weather requirements and pilot rest periods apply. The majority of fatal EMS crashes occur with only flight crew on board.

In 2006, the National Transportation Safety Board completed a special investigation of EMS flight operations. The NTSB made four recommendations to the FAA to improve EMS flight safety. The FAA rejected all four.³

LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

Safemedflight has helped to introduce two bills to improve the safety of crew and passengers on aircraft providing emergency medical services. Both measures contain provisions to reduce flights in hazardous conditions.

- Senate Bill S. 1300, Section 508, Increasing Safety for Helicopter Emergency Medical Service Operators, and...
- H.R. 3939, A bill to increase the safety for crew and passengers on an aircraft providing emergency medical services.

Safemedflight advocates for air medical safety legislation. Please visit www.safemedflight.org to find out how you can support this important legislation.

REFERENCES:

1. National Safety Council. *Injury Facts: 2004 Edition*. Chicago, IL.
2. Annals of Emergency Medicine, *EMS Helicopter Crashes: What Influences Fatal Outcome?* January 2006.
3. National Transportation Safety Board. *Special Investigation Report Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Operations*. January 25, 2006.