February 17, 2021

Public Safety Partner,

In coordination with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Aeronautics Division, the North East Air Alliance (NEAA) is updating the way it handles medical transport communications in Massachusetts. The NEAA is a cooperative partnership between the seven helicopter air ambulance operators who serve the northeast, from the Hudson Valley to eastern Maine. This organization was created 30 years ago to advance the safety of air ambulance operations and assure quality care for the patients we transport. To date, it is the only such regional cooperative partnership between helicopter air ambulance services in the United States and continues to fill a vital role in our pre-hospital healthcare system.

For many years, helicopter operators providing scene call services in Massachusetts have relied on over 300 different radio frequencies, in several different bands, to communicate with public safety ground units. Although typically dictated by local requirements, routine frequency and PL changes have often resulted in lack of air-to-ground communications during critical phases of flight when the helicopter operator was not aware of a new frequency. In 2012, the Commonwealth published its first Interoperability Field Operations Guide (MIFOG) and included a section with an associated ICS217A table standardizing Air to Ground channels for hailing in all frequency bands. Over the years, that has grown to an expanded table but with varying degrees of adoption among agencies.

To standardize and prevent future lost communications, beginning on April 1, 2021, all helicopter air ambulance operators who service Massachusetts will be using standard frequencies across the Commonwealth to communicate directly with first responder ground units. These frequencies, often referred to as “National TACs”, are common channels used by many public safety agencies in their emergency communications plans (see enclosed Air to Ground Communications table). The National TACs are included in the Massachusetts Tactical Channel Plan (MTCP) and as such, should be programmed in all first responder radios in Massachusetts.

NEAA partners maintain an extensive database of designated landing zones in each town and city across Massachusetts. We are proud of the work we do with all the fire departments and other EMS providers in the Commonwealth. We believe the use of these standardized radio frequencies will enhance our cooperation and assure safe operations for your department, our crews and our patients.

If you have any questions about this communications plan, or suggestions to enhance our cooperative operations, please contact Rick Kenin at If you have questions or suggestions regarding designated landing zones in your town or city, please contact Ken Panciocco at If you have any questions about the Commonwealth's documents referenced here (MIFOG and MTCP) or public safety agency emergency/interoperability communications planning, please contact the Massachusetts Statewide Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC) at ma.swic@mass.gov.

Sincerely,

The red highlighted channels are primary and should be used first. If a primary channel is in use, any one of the other channels may be used. Reminder that use of simplex communications is for landing zone coordination on approach and the helicopter air operators will only attempt radio contact once they are below 1000 feet elevation. Use of National TAC Frequencies is restricted to public safety agencies.

COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCE AVAILABILITY WORKSHEET ICS 217A										
									Frequency Band VHF/UHF/700/800	**Description** MA Aviation Interoperability
Channel Configuration	**Channel Name/Trunked System Talkgroup**	**Eligible Users**	**Mobile RX Freq**	**N or W**	**RX Tone / NAC**	**Mobile TX Freq**	**N or W**	**TX Tone / NAC**	**Mode A, D, or M**	**Notes**
Simplex	123.025	Rotary Wing	123.0250	AM	N/A	123.0250	AM	N/A	A	Air-to-Air
Simplex	123.750	Fixed Wing	123.7500	AM	N/A	123.7500	AM	N/A	A	Air-to-Air
Simplex	123.075	Unicom	123.0750	AM	N/A	123.0750	AM	N/A	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	Marine CH 17	Maritime	156.8500	W	N/A	156.8500	W	N/A	A	Air-to-Maritime
Simplex	Marine CH 22A	Maritime	157.1000	W	N/A	157.1000	W	N/A	A	Air-to-Maritime
Simplex	DCR FIRE 13	Fire	151.2350	N	71.9	151.2350	N	71.9	A	Air-to-Ground (Water Drop Coord)
Simplex	DCR FIRE 14	Fire	151.3100	N	71.9	151.3100	N	71.9	A	Air-to-Ground (Water Drop Coord)
Simplex	VTAC11	All	151.1375	N	156.7	151.1375	N	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	VTAC12	All	154.4525	N	156.7	154.4525	N	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	VTAC13	All	158.7375	N	156.7	158.7375	N	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	VTAC14	All	159.4725	N	156.7	159.4725	N	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	UTAC41D	All	453.4625	N	156.7	453.4625	N	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	UTAC42D	All	453.7125	N	156.7	453.7125	N	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	UTAC43D	All	453.8625.	N	156.7	453.8625.	N	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	7AG58D	All	769.13125		$F7E	769.13125		$293	D	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	7AG60D	All	769.63125	N	$F7E	769.63125		$293	D	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	7AG67D	All	770.13125	N	$F7E	770.13125		$293	D	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	7AG68D	All	770.63125	N	$F7E	770.63125		$293	D	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	7AG78D	All	773.11875	N	$F7E	773.11875		$293	D	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	7AG80D	All	773.61875	N	$F7E	773.61875		$293	D	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	7AG85D	All	774.11875	N	$F7E	774.11875		$293	D	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	7AG88D	All	774.61875	N	$F7E	774.61875		$293	D	Air-to-Ground (Landing Zone Use)
Simplex	8TAC91D	All	851.5125	W	156.7	851.5125	W	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	8TAC92D	All	852.0125	W	156.7	852.0125	W	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	8TAC93D	All	852.5125	W	156.7	852.5125	W	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground
Simplex	8TAC94D	All	853.0125	W	156.7	853.0125	W	156.7	A	Air-to-Ground