



AirLink or Life Flight

“Now that there are two organizations, which do I choose?”

For many years Central Oregonians including Black Butte Ranch owners and guests have relied upon AirLink (formerly Airlife) to provide air medical transport when the needs arose. In February 2012, a second air transport organization (Life Flight Network) based an operation out of the Redmond Airport, bringing a second air-medical service to our area.

Life Flight's Redmond helicopter has become the closest air medical resource for Black Butte Ranch, so it is now the helicopter that is dispatched first when an air ambulance is requested by emergency personnel.

Initially, if you had a membership for air-medical service with either “non-profit” provider (Life Flight or AirLink), you were covered by both through reciprocal agreements.

Recently however, St. Charles Medical Center in Bend, Oregon sold the AirLink flight program to new owners which is effective June 1, 2012. The new “**for-profit**” owners of AirLink are Metro Aviation, Inc from Louisiana and Med-Trans Corporation from Texas who have announced they will ***not*** have reciprocal agreements with ***any*** air service providers in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California, Utah, and Wyoming.

Understandably, with the reciprocal changes mentioned, questions have started to surface regarding membership and which service to choose. Answers to these questions will have to come from each person or family independently and must be a personal choice.

If you remain with AirLink, your membership applies only to them. Should you be transported by Life Flight or any of the other “non-profit” partners (listed below), you will be responsible for the associated charges.

Partners of the Life Flight Network:

- Life Flight
 - Aurora, Eugene, Ontario, La Grande and Redmond, Oregon
 - Longview and Dallesport, Washington
 - Boise, Mountain Home, Lewiston, Pocatello and Sandpoint, Idaho
- Air Idaho – Idaho Falls
- Airlift Northwest – Seattle, Bellingham, and Olympia, WA; and Juneau, AK
- Air St. Luke's – Boise and Twin Falls, ID
- CALSTAR – Central and Northern, CA
- Care Flight – Reno, NV
- Enloe FlightCare – Chico, CA
- Northwest Medstar – Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Moses Lake, WA
- Wyoming Life Flight – Casper, Wy

If you choose the Life Flight Network, the opposite is true and you will be covered under any of the above partners but would not be covered if you were transported by AirLink.

You can also choose to have dual memberships. Dual memberships may be prudent for the following reasons:

- 1) If Life Flight Network's helicopter is unavailable due to being on another mission, grounded due to weather in Redmond, or various other reasons, AirLink is the next closest resource and will be automatically dispatched.
- 2) There are several locations in Central Oregon where AirLink is the closest air medical resource. In those areas, AirLink will be the air resource that is dispatched first.
- 3) For hospital patients that need to be transported from a St. Charles Health System hospital to another hospital, AirLink serves as the primary provider for those inter-hospital transfers.

Lastly, at the time of the incident, you can inform your physician, fire department or ambulance personnel that you are a member of a specific air medical service membership; and request that service to be dispatched. However, there is no guarantee that your specific service provider will be available at your time of need. In addition, if you are not conscious or mentally competent at your time of need, the choice will be made for you; and most likely without knowledge of your membership provider.



With the above changes, we have also received some questions regarding FireMed.

FireMed membership for ground ambulance service is separate from air medical service memberships. Although FireMed and air medical membership may be purchased at the same time and utilizing the same application form, the membership programs are separate entities. FireMed memberships will continue to be honored by other participating programs.

Additional information regarding air medical service memberships, service areas and reciprocating partners may be obtained from each provider:

- AirLink, www.airlinkcct.org, 541-706-6305 or 800-353-0497
- Life Flight, www.lifeflight.org, 503-678-4370 or 800-982-9299.

For information on air medical service and FireMed membership, contact

- Black Butte Ranch Rural Fire Protection District, 541-595-2288