These protocols are written to be used as a guide when requesting helicopter service. The protocols should be followed unless there are reasons to deviate from them. The choice of which service you request should be based on providing the patient and the scene with the most appropriate care as quickly and safely possible.

The existing process will allow you to "one stop shop". You will *ALWAYS* call Central Dispatch and request the helicopter. Unless they know that Care Flight is out of service they will dispatch them, as they are the closest and most appropriate.

The first question that Dispatch will ask the helicopter service is "Are you available?" If Care Flight is unable to provide service, Dispatch will then immediately initiate a request for Air Care or another service.

During this process you will receive updates to the status of your requested flight and an E.T.A. from dispatch and or the responding service.

General Principles:

1. Consider use of medical helicopter scene response when:
   a. Patient(s) with life-threatening trauma and prolonged extrication and/or transport time (i.e. using Medical helicopter will reduce "scene to hospital" time).
   b. Multiple casualty incidents and inability of ground transport units to manage and transport all patients in a timely manner.
   c. Inability or difficulty in transporting patient using conventional means.
2. Highest level EMS provider on-scene or the Incident Commander should make the decision to mobilize a Medical Helicopter.
3. Higher level EMS providers en route to the scene may make the decision to activate a helicopter. In this situation, communication of the decision to activate should be made to the on-scene commander as soon as possible.
4. Decision may be made to launch medical helicopter prior to arrival on scene. Pre-arrival information from bystanders indicating the possible need for helicopter resources may be deemed sufficient for activation without delay.

Procedure:

1) When requesting helicopter response Central Dispatch shall or with *approval of Central Dispatch* the requesting agency shall:
   a. Provide the scene location.
      i. GPS coordinates and elevation (preferred), or
      ii. Physical location by land marks, road numbers and distances from known geographical locations.
   b. Provide frequency / channel information.
   c. Provide responding units numbers or designation (Fire-police-EMS).
   d. Provide any other information as requested.
   e. Provide communication assistance as needed, even if the response is not specific to La Plata County.
   f. Central Dispatch shall provide flight following as requested.
   g. Document / log all position reports.
2) Communications:
   a. For all situations, except Search and Rescue, utilize Durango Fire and Rescue Channel 153.770TX and 154.445RX - PL 131.8. S&R will use the Brown Frequency of 155.595TX and 154.785RX PL 131.8.
   b. Central Dispatch or the person requesting will notify the helicopter of the LZ frequency as chosen by the LZ manager. (FERN-1 TX/RX154.280 PL CSQ) If FERN is being used Air to Ground will be chosen, TX/RX 172.275 (PL CSQ).
3) On-scene command.
   a. Assign LZ Manager, with the following responsibilities:
      i. Select LZ.
      ii. Establish communication with helicopter on the appropriate channel.
      iii. Advise responding aircraft of the LZ location.
      iv. Advise on weather, hazards; wind (speed / direction) any other LZ specifics.
   b. Assist in LZ selection as needed.
   c. Communicate with Central Dispatch as needed regarding aircraft status and advise them of the LZ frequency.

4) Helicopter.

   a. Once airborne initiate radio contact with Central Dispatch and provide them a status, and an E.T.A.

   b. Notify dispatch when landing and departing the scene.

   c. Establish communication with command or LZ Manager on the appropriate channel.

   d. Notify Mercy Medical Center (MMC) on Regional Medical frequency (155.430 Tx & Rx PL CSQ) inform them of pt destination and condition.

   e. Patient reporting or status with the E.R. If radio communication cannot be established with MMC, on regional meds, they should try the Mercy **"green"** frequency 155.385 Tx & Rx PL CSQ. If still unsuccessful, Central Dispatch may take the information via DFRA or Brown channel and contact MMC or the helicopter may attempt to raise MMC ER on, DFRA primary channel.

Notes:

1. This procedure applies to all agencies involved in helicopter operations within La Plata County or while providing mutual aid out side the County.

2. Currently, aircraft are not allowed to utilize 800 mhz communications. All communications with aircraft must be conducted with VHF radios until this policy changes.