OBJECTIVES

- To support ground Emergency Medical Services (EMS) operations in determining the clinical value of continuing, versus standing down, a Shock Trauma Air Rescue Services (STARS) mission after STARS has already been dispatched to the scene of the event.

- To ensure that patients receive the appropriate level of medical care for pre-hospital trauma or a medical scene event.

APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

ELEMENTS

1. **STARS Helicopter Stand Down**

   1.1 Where a STARS helicopter is specifically dispatched to the scene of an event and ground ambulance operations, already on scene, verbally request an EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centre Emergency Communications Officer (ECO) to stand down the STARS helicopter, the following process must be followed (see Appendix A: **STARS Stand Down Process Map**):

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**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the information in this document, please contact Policy Services at policy@ahs.ca. The Policy Services website is the official source of current approved policies, procedures, directives, standards, protocols, and guidelines. Only the electronic version of this document, as hosted on the Policy Services website or www.ahs.ca, is valid.
a) The ECO must immediately notify the STARS Emergency Link Centre (ELC), a helicopter dispatch agency managed by STARS, of the stand down request.

b) STARS ELC must notify as soon as possible, the appropriate Transport Physician of the stand down request and present available call details.

c) The Transport Physician must evaluate potential risks and benefits of continuing the helicopter mission. Considerations include, but are not limited to, patient needs, available dispatch notes, geographic event location, STARS helicopter response time, and transport distance.

(i) If the information gathered in Section 1.1 c) is available and is sufficient for the Transport Physician to make an informed decision, the Transport Physician may:

- confirm that the STARS helicopter must stand down. STARS ELC must have the STARS helicopter return to base and reply ‘STARS copies’ to the stand down note in iNET; or

- refuse the stand down request and verbally direct the STARS helicopter to continue with the mission and proceed to the scene of the event, or rendezvous at a nearby hospital or helicopter landing site, as appropriate.

(ii) If the information gathered in Section 1.1 c) is unavailable or insufficient for the Transport Physician to make an informed decision, the Transport Physician may request to be connected with a ground ambulance operations crew member on scene for a consultation. This consult must be facilitated by an EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centre ECO in collaboration with STARS ELC. Following this consultation, the Transport Physician may:

- confirm that the STARS helicopter must stand down. STARS ELC must have the STARS helicopter return to base and reply ‘STARS copies’ to the stand down note in iNET; or

- refuse the stand down request and verbally direct the STARS helicopter to continue with the mission and proceed to the scene of the event, or rendezvous at a nearby hospital or helicopter landing site, as appropriate.

1.2 All STARS stand down events must be tracked by the STARS ELC and reported on a monthly basis to AHS EMS Provincial Air Ambulance leadership. This report must include dispositions for call outcome, date/location, and AHS EMS event number.
a) Reporting may take into account the information captured in Section 1.1
c) as well as other relevant patient outcomes / contextual parameters
   (e.g., call type).

b) Additional information such as call recordings and/or electronic patient
care records may be obtained for internal management purposes
   including but not limited to quality assurance, by specific request. These
   requests must be in alignment with the AHS Collection, Access, Use, and
   Disclosure of Information Policy.

c) Privacy considerations must be maintained in accordance with AHS
   privacy policies.

DEFINITIONS

Emergency Communications Officer (ECO) means an officer who answers,
evaluates calls and delivers emergency communications from a caller to the appropriate party following
approved guidelines from AHS Medical Direction and the International Academy of Emergency
Medical Dispatch.

EMS Dispatch, Communications and Deployment Centres means the EMS dispatch centres
for AHS.

Shock Trauma Air Rescue Services (STARS) means a Canadian non-profit helicopter air
ambulance organization funded by individual donors, service groups, corporate donors, and
government contributions.

Transport Physician means the physician who supports red/critical patient processes and all
medical consultation needs for AHS EMS Provincial Air Ambulance.

REFERENCES

- Appendix A: STARS Stand Down Process Map
- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - Collection, Access, Use, and Disclosure of Information Policy (#1112)

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STARS Stand Down Process Map

CURRENT EAD PROCESS

- EMS requesting STARS launch
- DM requesting STARS launch
- Early Automated Dispatch (EAD) Auto-launch
- Transport Physician (TP)/Air Medical Crew (AMC) launch decision
- Any First Responder requesting STARS launch (Fire, RCMP, etc.)

CURRENT STARS DISPATCH PROCESS

- STARS ELC receives request, pre-alerts appropriate aircraft, notifies STARS AMC, TP, communicates with relevant dispatch agencies, etc.

- Upon STARS mission accept – STARS dispatched

- Mission declined (weather, etc.) or triaged by TP to another call

- STARS ELC communicates to relevant parties that STARS is:
  - Dispatched to event
  - Approximate STARS time to scene
  - Request patient weight, hazards
  - Request info from appropriate agency
  - Coordinates any rendezvous or other logistics with appropriate agencies

- EMS arrive on scene, assess patient, determines STARS is not required and stands down STARS

NEW MODIFICATION DRIVEN BY STARS ELC AND TP

- STARS ELC will notify STARS TP and provide updated briefing on call details, location, response time, etc.

- TP evaluates decision and comfortable with STARS being stood down

- TP evaluates decision and not comfortable with STARS being stood down

- TP requests update and validation with EMS on scene via phone, radio, CAD, etc.

- TP requests STARS continue and provide updates upon arrival

- STARS ELC confirms STARS is stood down via notifications to relevant agencies

- STARS will keep proceeding to scene

- EMS connect with TP for consult on stand down, TP makes decision

- ELC informs EMS & EMS dispatch STARS continuing to scene via iNET/CAD

OUTCOME

- STARS stand down, returns to base.

- STARS arrive and connects with EMS; proceeds with treatment and transport as appropriate