



NEWS RELEASE

Travis County *STAR Flight*

7800 Old Manor Road, Austin TX 78724

Nov. 12, 2013

***STAR Flight* made 32 flood rescues in 16-hour period**

During the October 30-31 floods, *STAR Flight* crews rescued 32 people and four dogs in a 16-hour period.

STAR Flight's response to flooding began by 10:00 p.m. on October 30 with Search and Rescue (SAR) operations by *STAR Flight* helicopters 1 and 2 (EC-145 helicopters). Between 10:00 p.m. and 1:30 a.m., both aircraft were responding to swift-water incidents, rescuing several flood victims. Severe weather prohibited flying during a three-hour window between 1:30 and 4:30 a.m. After 4:30 a.m., rescue flights resumed, including rescues in Hays County and the transport of a patient in labor off of Spicewood Springs Road.

During the morning of October 31, replacement crews relieved *STAR Flight* 1 and 2 crews due to the high-stress, extreme-weather work performed during the night. These crews were in place by 7:00 a.m. and immediately continued rescue responses. As the flooding situation evolved in South Austin, *STAR Flight* 4 (the firefighting UH-1H Huey) also responded to swift-water, flooding incidents and rescued several victims.

Austin-Travis County EMS prioritized for first-response rescue calls with victims in the highest-risk environments, such as in attics, on car roofs, in trees or in the water. First-response personnel also managed aviation rescues geographically to ensure aircraft crew and victim safety in the small area of operations.

By 12:00 p.m., most rescue activity was winding down, but one rescue was performed around 4:00 p.m. in Caldwell County.

To further explain the rapid response by *STAR Flight* personnel, staffing ramped up as follows:

Normal Staffing

STAR Flight 1—24 hour coverage. (Crews work two 12-hours shifts.)

STAR Flight 2—12 hour coverage. (Crews work one 12-hour shift from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.)

STAR Flight 3—No routine staffing.

STAR Flight 4—Demand staffing, firefighting only.

October 30-31 Staffing

STAR Flight 1—24 hour coverage. (Crews worked two 12-hours shifts.)

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STAR Flight 2—24 hour coverage. (In preparation for forecasted flooding, a second crew was placed in service from 10:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. on the evening of October 30.)

STAR Flight 3—Not available due to scheduled maintenance. (Scheduled maintenance is required by the aircraft manufacturer and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and is a normal aspect of aircraft operations for any aviation program.)

STAR Flight 4—Aircraft was reconfigured for land and load mass-evacuation missions and put in service.

STAR Flight 1, 2 and 3 are Eurocopter EC-145 helicopters and are **STAR Flight** normal EMS/SAR aircraft. They are configured for EMS response and patient transport and SAR operations, including hoist and short-haul (fixed rope) rescues. The aircraft are equipped for flight in marginal weather conditions that generally occur during flooding events and include Instrument Flight Rules (IFR), auto pilot, color weather radar and storm scope. All aircraft are identical and have similar functionality for consistency. The crews are fully qualified and trained to operate these aircraft in responding to swift-water and flood incidents.

STAR Flight 4 is a Bell UH-1 (Huey) aircraft. Travis County purchased this aircraft for wild land firefighting and disaster operations. In order to maximize water carrying capacity and control cost, the aircraft does not include equipment for hoist-type SAR operations. It is not equipped with auto pilot, color weather radar or storm scope.

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Submitted by: Lisa Block, Public Information Officer, (512) 854-7954