



# **Emergency Medical Evacuation Plan: ANNEX C**

**Panama/ Americas Regional Office**

**Updated: May, 2019**

It is of utmost importance to note that in the event of a medical emergency, the attending doctor at the local hospital will advise if an evacuation is required, and the information will be forwarded via the Health Officer, ARO HR to the delegate's insurance company who will liaise directly with the treating physician for the co-ordination of the evacuation.

In extreme emergencies, where immediate action is required and the situation is deemed one of "life or death" by a physician in the field, the Director and/or Deputy Director of the ARO, on the advice of the attending physician and HR, has the authority to evacuate a delegate. The steps outlined for this are attached (**CIM Annex**).

If the illness or injury takes place in the field, outside Panamá City, inform the Director / Deputy Director of ARO immediately. The host (Panamanian or other) National Society will be requested to provide details on the most appropriate health facilities available.

In the event of a Federation Delegate's death while in the field, Standard Operating Procedures should be followed. **These are set out in CIM Annex**

### **I. Emergency Medical Evacuation Plan**

1. This document is to be used as a guideline for RC/RC personnel to respond where any RC/RC personnel suffers **SEVERE ILLNESS** or **INJURY** while operating under the Federation umbrella in Panama.

2. In case of severe illness or injury occurring to any RC/RC personnel **in the Republic of Panama**

a. As soon as possible, any RC/RC personnel who requires medical treatment is to be admitted to one of the following medical facilities in Panama City:

3.

**A- Centro Medico Paitilla:**

Avenida Balboa y Calle 53, Panamá.

507 265-8800 – Urgencias: +507-265-8888

**B- Hospital Punta Pacifica:**

Boulevard Punta Pacifica, Marbella, Panama

+507 204-8000 – Urgencias: +507-204-8000

**C- Hospital Nacional**

Av. Cuba, entre Calle 38 y 39, Panamá

+507-207-8100- Urgencias: +507- 306-3300

a. In case of any health emergency, be it hospitalization or evacuation, the Health Officer in Geneva must be immediately informed. If the Health Officer is unreachable one of the following alternatives must be contacted:

- **Regional Security Coordinator ARO:** mobile + 507- 6949 5546
- **Regional Director:** mobile: + 507 -6670-7377
- **HR Health Officer** (mobile +41-79-217 33 19)
- **Secretariat Security Officer,** Mobile +41 79 217 33 71, +41 79 251 80 15, +41 79 308 98 42

- b. The decision as to whether an international medical-evacuation is required for any RC/RC personnel is to be taken by the Regional Director, in consultation with, or on the advice received from, a healthcare professional.

**4. In case of severe illness or injury occurring to any RC/RC personnel in the field:**

- a. RC/RC personnel must seek medical attention at the nearest appropriate medical facility. Transport to the medical facility is to be undertaken by the most effective means possible, including transfer by road.
- b. The Regional Director or delegated authority, acting on the advice of a healthcare professional, may authorise an in-country or international air-evacuation on medical grounds.
- c. Where the advice of a healthcare professional is unavailable, the Director may use his/her discretion to authorise an in-country or international air-evacuation.

**5. In case of severe illness or injury occurring to any RC/RC personnel:**

RC/RC personnel must immediately contact the following people:

- 1- Americas Regional Director:  
Walter Cotte W.  
+507-6670-7377 – mobile  
+507 317-3050 ARO ext 252  
[Walter.cotte@ifrc.org](mailto:Walter.cotte@ifrc.org)
- 2- Americas Regional Security Coordinator  
+507-6949-5546  
[jorge.zequeira@ifrc.org](mailto:jorge.zequeira@ifrc.org)
- 3- Geneva Health Officer (GHO)  
Hannele Haggman  
DDI: (+41) 22 730 4222  
Cell: (+41) 79 217 3319  
[hannele.haggman@ifrc.org](mailto:hannele.haggman@ifrc.org)

**II. Activation of Medical Evacuation Procedure:**

***Note: The assistance company for IFRC contracted delegates is International SOS. Seconded delegates and visitors might have other assistance and insurance companies.***

- 6- To activate the SOS medical evacuation procedure, the Regional Director, or authorised person, in coordination with the GHO, must contact:
  - a. *International SOS Medecins* (+41) 22 785 6464 (Switzerland Alarm Centre) and request a medical evacuation". The following information and/or documents are required to request an air-evacuation:
    - 1) Name, age, sex and nationality of the RC/RC personnel requiring air-evacuation
    - 2) Reasons for the air-evacuation request
    - 3) Details of the RC/RC personnel's condition

- 4) The RC/RC personnel's passport, vaccination card, insurance card (if possible), and any other relevant information i.e. referral letter from the physician.
  - 5) If the RC/RC personnel has been treated at a medical facility, the healthcare professional's name and contact number and the medical report.
- b. The Regional Director must inform the Geneva Health Officer (GHO) or the Geneva Duty Officer (GDO) as soon as the medical -evacuation procedure is to be invoked:

GHO

DDI: (+41) 22 730 4417

Cell: (+41) 79 217 3319

- 1) The Regional Director must provide the Federation Secretariat with the name and contact details of the treating healthcare professional as soon as these are available.
- 2) It is the role of the GHO to contact and liaise with the RC/RC personnel's insurance company. In some circumstances, this may be delegated to the National Society (NS).
- 3) It is the role of the GHO to inform the RC/RC personnel's NS that the medical evacuation procedure has been invoked.
- 4) The NS has the sole authority to contact the RC/RC personnel's next of kin. If the RC/RC Personnel is able, he/she may contact directly their next of kin and contracting NS.
- 5) The GHO is the point of contact for any updates on the health status of the RC/RC Personnel until the RC/RC personnel has been discharged from the medical facility.

### III. Medical "evacuations" can be divided into two groups:

- a. **Emergency medical evacuation** can take place within the same country, to a neighbouring country offering more sophisticated health services or to the delegate's home country. It is determined by a severe health situation requiring immediate professional health care of a type and quality not locally available.
- b. **Medical repatriation** to the delegate's home country is carried out with a commercial carrier in non-life-threatening situations.

Local arrangements for delegates going to a third country for laboratory tests or medical check-up are not to be considered medical evacuations unless the treating physician has ordered/recommended it and there is a character of urgency to it.

Regardless of the type of "evacuation" we are dealing with, the following points apply in all cases:

- a. Medical evacuation/repatriation can be implemented as soon as:
  1. the need is confirmed following medical consultation and is put in writing by the treating physician; and

2. you have received the agreement of the insurance company.
- b. In cases of serious illness or injuries, where the life of a delegate is in imminent danger the Country Representative (CR), after getting written confirmation by a qualified medical doctor, can authorise the charter of a special aircraft to the nearest location for adequate medical treatment.
- c. The HR Health Officer in Geneva will immediately be informed by the CR or designate on any health emergency. International SOS to be contacted directly by the CR or designate person if it concerns Local/National staff on mission, workshop/training etc. **outside** their home country or/and any Federation contracted delegate/family members. The HR Health Officer is responsible for ensuring immediate and round-the-clock communication between the delegation, the contracting National Society and -- in the case of Federation-contracted delegates -- the insurance company. Next of kin will be contacted by the delegate's National Society and, for Federation-contracted delegates, by the HR Health Officer.

#### **IV. Emergency Medical Evacuation within the country / to a neighbouring country / to home country**

In the development of a plan for emergency medical evacuations remember the following main points which will always apply regardless from where and to where the evacuation is taking place:

- They must clearly indicate who is responsible for what Guidelines must be as short and concise as possible
- They must indicate the steps to be taken in their chronological order
- They must indicate both practical procedures (such as contact telephone numbers) and notification procedures (inform Geneva)
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- They must include provision for within-country evacuations
- They must include contact numbers of airport authorities providing flying and landing clearances. (Some charter and medevac companies require that the Delegations organise the clearances).

It is the responsibility of the CR or designates to identify available referral hospitals and charter companies or air-ambulance services to be used in case of emergency and to include their names and contact numbers in the Plan.

In regions where health services for the expatriate community are offered by UN-based structures, contacts will be made accordingly.

#### **V. Medical Repatriation to Home Country**

The medical repatriation is mentioned in this paper, as it is the most frequent type of "evacuation" taking place in Federation delegations and needs to be carefully co-ordinated with the insurance company concerned.

A medical repatriation to the delegate's home country can usually be organised within two or maximum three days from the date of the doctor's recommendation. Depending on the health status and the treating physician's recommendations, a medical escort and/or the use of a

stretcher might be required. Under such circumstances the carrier will require the treating physician to fill in a medical form called MEDIF. It is at the carrier's discretion to accept or refuse a medical case on board.

**In the organisation of a medical repatriation, co-ordination with the insurance company is essential to guarantee the refunding of both the transport and medical expenses the patient will incur in his home country.** In any case, the CR or designate must inform the HR Health Officer, in Geneva, who will then take appropriate action (e.g. contact the delegate's National Society, who informs the insurance company). The insurance company will in turn contact the treating physician before agreeing to the repatriation and its modality. The insurance company must agree to the repatriation **prior to** its taking place.

**Note 1: Repatriation without medical escort and/or stretcher**

Unless otherwise agreed with the insurance company, it is the responsibility of the Delegation to take care of the booking and, if required by the carrier, have the medical forms filled in by the treating physician. Repatriations are effected in economy class unless otherwise agreed with the insurance, or they will not reimburse the ticket.

**Note 2: Repatriation with medical escort and/or stretcher**

The need for a medical escort will be discussed and agreed between the insurance company and the treating physician. It will be the insurance company who decides if the medical escort is locally identified or if they send their own medical staff. In such situations, the insurance company will normally organise the complete repatriation from collection of the patient from the hospital to his/her admission to the hospital in the country of destination.

**VI. Medical Evacuation Plan:**

1. In case of severe illness or injury, the delegate should be admitted as soon as possible to one of the following Hospitals:

***Hospital Nacional, Av. Cuba, entre Calle 38 y 39, Panamá, +507 207-8100***

***Hospital Centro Medico Paitilla, Avenida Balboa y calle 53, Panamá, +507 265-8800***

***Clínica Hospital San Fernando, Av. Central España, Panamá, +507 305-6300***

***Hospital Punta Pacífica, Calle Boulevard Pacífica, +507 204-8000***

2. If the illness or injury takes place in the field, inform the CR\* immediately. If the condition of the delegate is severe and does not allow for road transport, the CR can require an air-evacuation. Contact the air company: **STAR MEDIC LIFE FLIGHT : +507 6671 8023 7/24** , (have the details ready as per Point 7 below).
3. The CR will inform the HR Health Officer at the Federation Secretariat in Geneva per the Security Regulations and will also provide the name and contact telephone number of the treating physician (once available).
4. It is the responsibility of the HR Health Officer, to inform the delegate's National Society, who will then contact the next of kin and the insurance company. The CR will be the point of contact for HR Health Officer for any update on the delegate's health status until his/her discharge from hospital or evacuation.
5. The doctor at the hospital will advise if the delegate requires an evacuation, and the information will be forwarded via the HR Health Officer, to the delegate's insurance

company who will liaise directly with the treating physician for the co-ordination of the evacuation.

6. In extreme emergencies, where immediate action is required and the situation is deemed one of “life or death” by a physician in the field, the CR, on the advice of the attending physician, has the authority to evacuate a delegate and should take the necessary steps.
7. Before contacting the air-ambulance services make sure you have the following details ready:
  - You need an evacuation from (patient's location) to (Capital City, neighbouring country, third country)
  - Name, DOB, age, sex and nationality of the patient
  - Reasons for requesting evacuation (severe illness, accident)
  - Details on patient's condition. If patient is already in hospital give physician's name and contact number.
  - In case of medical evacuation from the field towards the Capital City or neighbouring country, be aware of the time required for the patient to reach the airstrip (this information is required if the flying time of the air-ambulance is shorter than the road transport time to reach the airstrip).
8. Make sure you have patient's passport and vaccination card ready and, if possible, the insurance card.

## **VII. Emergency Medical Evacuation Notification Procedures and Geneva Contact Numbers**

1. At field level the CR has the final responsibility in ordering an evacuation based on the information he/she receives from the treating physician or, when no medical doctor is available, by any health professional dealing with the case. The information must be given in writing.
2. The CR will inform the HR Health Officer (**mobile +41 79 217 33 19**) in Geneva per Security Regulations. CR will also provide the name and contact telephone number of the treating physician/health professional (if possible). International SOS Alarm centre Geneva (**+41 22 785 64 64**) or nearest ISOS alarm centre) to be contacted directly by the CR if it concerns a Federation contracted delegate/family member or Local/National Staff. The International SOS will contact the Health Officer in HR/Security.
3. It is the responsibility of the person contacted in the Secretariat in Geneva to forward the information to all relevant parties.
4. It is responsibility of the HR Health Officer to inform the delegate's National Society, who will then contact next of kin and the insurance company. Delegates must be familiar with their insurance procedures vis-à-vis medical evacuation, that is whether they need to contact the insurance company directly (as in case of ISOS) or whether this is to be done by their National Society.
5. The assistance/insurance company will contact directly the treating physician and agree on modality of evacuation (commercial flight escorted/not escorted or air ambulance).

6. The CR will be the point of contact for the HR Health Office, for any update on the delegate's health status and evacuation plans.
7. In extreme emergencies, where immediate action is required and the situation is deemed one of "life or death" by a physician in the field, the CR will take the appropriate steps to ensure the immediate evacuation of the delegate. If normal airlines cannot be used and the insurance company cannot be contacted, the CR can authorise the charter of a special aircraft to the nearest location for adequate medical treatment. The Health Officer will then be advised of progress.

### VIII. Checklist for Information Sheet to Delegates.

Each delegate arriving at the delegation should receive among the briefing papers a set of information with contact telephone numbers and addresses of a reliable known doctor and dentist (if possible), a referral hospital and ambulance (if the service exists). These contacts should be added to the general list of important telephone numbers issued by the delegation:

- **General Practitioner**  
Name and office address; office and residence telephone numbers
- **Dentist**  
Name and office address; office and residence telephone numbers
- **Gyn/Obs** (if possible try to have two names and at least one female)  
Name and office address; office and residence telephone numbers
- **Paediatrician** (if relevant)  
Name and office address; office and residence telephone numbers
- **Hospitals**
  - **Centro Medico Paitilla:**  
Avenida Balboa y Calle 53, Panamá.  
507 265-8800 – Urgencias: +507-265-8888
  - **Hospital Punta Pacifica:**  
Boulevard Punta Pacifica, Marbella, Panama  
+507 204-8000 – Urgencias: +507-204-8000
  - **Hospital Nacional**  
Av. Cuba, entre Calle 38 y 39, Panamá  
+507-207-8100- Urgencias: +507- 306-3300
- **Ambulance**
  - **SEMM** Betania, El Ingenio, Av. La Paz  
366-0122
  - **AMBULANCIAS VIVE.** Calle D, Nº 32, El Cangrejo  
279-3111
  - **Cruz Roja Panameña** (0800 AM to 1700 PM)  
  
315-1388 / 1389 / 1428 / \*455
  - **DENADE** Ave. Simón Bolívar  
  
503-2532/35



- **Safe blood**, to identify the location of the nearest safe blood please contact the ARO Health officer and / or Geneva Health POC.
- **PEP-kits**, to identify to nearest PEP-kit please refer to the ARO Security Regulations (as well as these can be found with ICRC health delegate, UN clinic, local hospital)

**The inclusion of additional written information on the main health problems in the region and preventive measures to be taken is recommended.** In this regard, the IFRC should identify a health professional within the National Society in the country of assignment who can give a country-specific health briefing on major health risks and preventive measures.

As the medical evacuation contains **confidential personal information** on one's health, all information must be kept highly confidential. Avoid copying any unnecessary people in the emails.

**IX. For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:**

*"RC/RC personnel"* includes: Federation Delegates, family members of Federation Delegates, and, staff, visitors, and volunteers operating under the Federation umbrella in the operational area of the IFRC South Sudan Office.

*"Severe illness or injury"* means an illness or injury that is life threatening, or that could cause serious and lasting harm if not treated by a healthcare professional as soon as possible.

*"Country Delegate"* includes his/her designee.

*"The Federation"* means the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies whose Secretariat is based in Geneva.

The local Air Medical Evacuation Company in Panama covering from USA to Argentina is:

**STAR MEDIC LIFE FLIGHT: +507 6671 8023 7/24, +507- 6913-4758- Operations.**