

WAC 182-546-0700 Payment limitations for air ambulance services.

(1) MAA pays for air ambulance services only when all of the following apply:

(a) The necessary medical treatment is not available locally or the client's point of pick up is not accessible by ground ambulance;

(b) The vehicle and crew meet the provider requirements in WAC 388-546-0300 and 388-546-0800;

(c) The client's destination is an acute care hospital; and

(d) The client's physical/medical condition requires immediate and rapid ambulance transportation that cannot be provided by ground ambulance; or

(e) The client's physical or medical condition is such that traveling on a commercial flight is not safe.

(2) MAA pays providers for one lift-off fee per client, per trip.

(3) Air mileage is based on loaded miles flown, as expressed in statute miles.

(4) Except as provided in WAC 388-546-0800(6), MAA pays for extra air mileage with sufficient justification. The reason for the added mileage must be documented in the client's record and the ambulance trip report. Acceptable reasons include, but are not limited to:

(a) Having to avoid a "no fly zone"; or

(b) Being forced to land at an alternate destination due to severe weather.

(5) MAA pays a lift-off fee for each client when two or more clients are transported on a single air ambulance trip. In such a case, the provider must divide equally the total air mileage by the number of clients transported and bill MAA for the mileage portion attributable to each eligible client.

(6) If a client's transportation requires use of more than one ambulance to complete the trip to the hospital or other approved facility, MAA limits its payment as follows:

(a) If air ambulance is used and the trip involves more than one lift off, MAA pays only one lift-off fee per client and the total of air miles. If an air ambulance transport for the same client involves both rotary and fixed wing aircraft, the lift-off fee and mileage payment will be based on the mode of air transport used for the greater distance traveled.

(b) If both air and ground ambulances are used, MAA pays one lift-off fee and total air miles to the air ambulance provider, and the applicable base rate and ground mileage to each ground ambulance provider involved in the trip, except when ground ambulance fees are included in the negotiated trip payment as provided in WAC 388-546-0800(6).

(7) MAA does not pay separately for individual services or an extra attendant for air ambulance transportation. MAA's lift-off fee and mileage payment includes all personnel, services, supplies, and equipment related to the transport.

(8) MAA does not pay private organizations for volunteer medical air ambulance transportation services, unless the organization has MAA's prior authorization for the transportation services and fees. If authorized, MAA's payment is based on the actual cost to provide the service or at MAA's established rates, whichever is lower. MAA does not pay separately for items or services that MAA includes in the established rate(s).

(9) If MAA determines, upon review, that an air ambulance trip was not:

(a) Medically necessary, MAA may deny or recoup its payment and/or limit payment based on MAA's established rate for a ground ambulance trip provided ground ambulance transportation was medically necessary; or

(b) To the nearest available and appropriate hospital, MAA may deny or recoup its payment and/or limit its maximum payment for the trip based on the nearest available and appropriate facility.

(10) Providers must have prior authorization from MAA for any nonemergency air transportation, whether by air ambulance or other mode of air transportation. Nonemergency air transportation includes scheduled transports to or from out-of-state treatment facilities.

(11) MAA uses commercial airline companies (i.e., MAA does not authorize air ambulance transports) whenever the client's medical condition permits the client to be transported by nonmedical and/or scheduled carriers.

(12) MAA does not pay for air ambulance services if no transportation is provided.

[WSR 11-14-075, recodified as § 182-546-0700, filed 6/30/11, effective 7/1/11. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.057, 74.08.090, and 74.09.510. WSR 04-17-118, § 388-546-0700, filed 8/17/04, effective 9/17/04. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.08.090, 74.09.500, 74.04.050, 74.04.055, and 74.04.057. WSR 01-03-084, § 388-546-0700, filed 1/16/01, effective 2/16/01.]