

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mardie Rhodes  
425-391-6445 or 206-521-1599  
Suzanne Lagoni  
360-385-9517 or 206-521-1599

## **Airlift Northwest to Add Medical Helicopter During 1-5 Closures**

**SEATTLE, August 8, 2007** – Airlift Northwest announced today that it will add an extra air medical helicopter from August 13-29 during the closure of I-5 for repairs. The additional helicopter will be based at Boeing Field in Seattle and staged around the region, depending on need. Airlift Northwest can also respond with its existing Seattle helicopter or from its other bases in Olympia, Arlington and Bellingham.

“We want to assure the EMS agencies and hospitals in the region that we will be able to support them when they need air medical helicopters for patients who require rapid transport to an appropriate facility,” said Airlift Northwest CEO Stephen Lewis. “Transportation officials estimate that back-ups could be extremely lengthy for people headed into Seattle from the south on 1-5 and surrounding streets. For critically ill or injured patients, the potential increase in ground ambulance transport times could delay life-saving care, as well as take paramedic units out of their response area for quite a long time.”

After consulting with area emergency medical services, local hospitals and the Washington Department of Transportation, Lewis said Airlift Northwest will take the following actions to help meet the expected increase in need for air medical transportation:

- Adding a fifth helicopter at Boeing Field, which is the headquarters for Airlift Northwest, between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm each day during the construction period, except for weekends
- Coordinating each day with key agency and hospital liaisons in the region
- Monitoring the bed availability and divert status of hospitals in the area
- Pre-stocking extra supplies at the Airlift Northwest supply depot
- Coordinating with air medical services in Portland and Spokane to provide mutual aid, if needed
- Providing landing zone orientation and safety training for any agency or facility that may desire it in anticipation of increased air medical support needs
- Providing housing for staff near Boeing Field to assure full rest periods between shifts

Lewis praised EMS agencies and local hospitals for their help in planning for the closures. “The hospitals and EMS agencies have been great to work with, and we really appreciate them taking the time to work on contingency plans. While we hope the impact on the emergency medical system is minimal, we are all working together to ensure patients continue to get rapid access to the critical care they need”.

###

*Airlift Northwest is a nonprofit service founded in 1982 to provide air medical services for critically ill and injured infants, children and adults. Airlift Northwest has bases in Washington and Alaska to serve the Pacific Northwest. More information is available at [www.airliftnw.org](http://www.airliftnw.org).*