



Quick Facts

General information

- Founded by Dr. Greg Powell after a patient he encountered, a young mother suffering complications after delivering her child, was lost due to length of time taken to transport her to the hospital by ground;
- Calgary base opened in 1985 as a result of the efforts of a dedicated group of volunteers and the assistance of the Lions Club;
- Edmonton base opened in October 1991 and Grande Prairie base opened in November 2006;
- Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg bases opened in 2012;
- Over 36,000 missions have been flown since STARS' launch;
- Nine missions are flown per day across all bases, on average;
- 3,022 missions flown in 2016-17.

Finding the patient

- The Emergency Link Centre (ELC) is a highly advanced 24-hour communications centre that links local emergency services, physicians and hospital personnel in one call;
- Remote industry sites can also register with the ELC for 24-hour monitoring. Unlike emergency medical communications, this coverage is provided on a fee-per-service basis, paid by the owner of the industry site.

Critical care

- STARS is dispatched most commonly for scene calls and inter-hospital transfers but is asked on occasion to assist in search-and-rescue missions and disaster response;
- On a mission, the STARS helicopter is always staffed with two pilots and the air medical crew;
- Air medical crew is made up of one flight nurse and one paramedic;
- Special circumstances may require a physician to accompany some flights;
- Each helicopter is equipped to transport one critically injured patient but can be configured to transport two patients in special circumstances;
- STARS helicopters have a well-equipped medical interior to ensure top-level critical care on all flights

Transport

- STARS fleet currently consists of 11 helicopters;
- Ideally, STARS will fly to a hospital or incident scene and return without refueling. In special emergency situations, STARS will fly beyond this refueling radius in order to assist with patient care and transport. In



these situations, STARS has a network of fuel caches available to allow the helicopter to refuel as needed;

- Our crews are able to land in a variety of locations including highways, parking lots, fields, and other areas free of obstructions such as trees or power poles;
- Generally speaking, an area of 36 meters by 36 meters of clear, relatively flat space is required for the helicopter;
- Severe thunderstorms, dense fog, high winds or icing can limit the availability of the aircraft. Before any mission is accepted, STARS pilots review the weather conditions in the areas of the planned flight path;
- STARS was the first civilian helicopter air ambulance service in Canada to have a night vision goggle program. All STARS pilots are trained and certified in their use;
- Occasionally, STARS may receive requests to transport a patient during a time when our crews are engaged in a mission. If this occurs, alternate transport may be arranged, either by ground or airplane ambulance. Other times, the patient may be stabilized at a nearby hospital until the STARS crew is available.

Education

- Human patient simulator replicates complex medical and traumatic problems and offers medical personnel an opportunity to test and practice their reactions and skills;
- Mobile Education Unit was first of its kind in North America and began in 1999: acts as a simulated mobile emergency room and can be used in hospital emergency rooms, classrooms and mock accident scenes for training purposes;
- Fully funded program: free to rural emergency care providers;
- Operational Outreach Program includes how emergency responders can access STARS, how to land the helicopter and preparing patients for transport – designed specifically for emergency and medical personnel.

Foundation and fundraising

- STARS is funded by governments, fundraising activities such as lotteries, events and individual and corporate donors, and revenue generation programs such as site registration.
- Provincial government funding levels for 2016-17:
 - Alberta: approximately 20%;
 - Saskatchewan: approximately 50%;
 - Manitoba: 96% with plans to reduce this over time.