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MOFD Trains with REACH



Photo Ohlen Alexander

"The training increases the knowledge of working around helicopters and the safety precautions that must be adhered to. We have a responsibility for the safety of the firefighters, patient, bystanders and flight crew when calling for an air ambulance transport," says Lee.

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On Wednesday July 22, Moraga-Orinda Firefighters trained with REACH Air Medical Services, an air ambulance operator. REACH is one of several medical helicopters in the area that provide rapid transport for critical trauma patients. According to Moraga Orinda Fire District Battalion Chief Darrell Lee, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) uses air ambulance transport 4-6 times a year.

"We use the same concepts that trauma systems have used for decade, called the 'Golden Hour.' Trauma victims must reach definitive surgical care within the first hour in order to have a better chance at survival," Lee explains. Decisions on when to call an air ambulance are based on critical trauma, time and distance to the closest trauma center.

Opportunities for training with helicopters are a luxury due to the high cost of jet fuel, according to Lee, but MOFD looks for ways to train firefighters, paramedics, captains and police officers.