

IN CASE OF A SERIOUS HEALTH EMERGENCY, KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

by Lois Anderson

While we all hope this never happens, it is good to know what to do if a friend or family member suffers a life threatening emergency while at the lake.

Thanks to several of our neighbors, we now have an additional potentially life saving air ambulance option. Previously, if an air evacuation was deemed necessary, air landing pads were not close to many of our lake homes. We now have a pilot approved helicopter landing pad on Buxton Road between 46th St NW and the T at Barnum.

Currently, an ambulance can get a patient to a local hospital in about an hour: Brainerd, Park Rapids, or Bemidji. If you need to call 911 for someone, the EMTs and ambulance drivers will determine if faster transport is medically necessary. If so, they will call in a helicopter. Currently air services from Fargo (Sanford), Duluth and North Memorial are aware of our new landing site. It is on air service maps. Some ambulance drivers are aware of this helicopter option but perhaps not all, so it might be helpful if you and your family take a drive by the site so you are aware of where it is in case of an emergency.

The Buxton Road Landing Site began as people on Barnum Lake became concerned about the lack of access for helicopters near our lakes. Mark Poppendock of the Nordheim Association did research on what was needed and asked pilots from several air ambulance services to help select a site. Because of our extensive tree cover there were not many possibilities. Mark contacted Tim Anderson, a Man Lake property owner, about a clearing on land Tim owned on Buxton Road. Two years ago, Tim began improving the clearing to make it appropriate for a landing site. Fortunately, Tim owns heavy earth moving equipment which he had been using to make ski trails for his family. He spent 3-4 days taking down trees, moving rocks and grading the area. A pilot from North Memorial came up and approved the site.

The landing pad is now equipped with hockey puck sized landing lights, in a white canister on the site with a twist off top. They enable a night landing. They are magnetic and will be placed by ambulance drivers or any one available to help on red stakes flagged at the site. In winter weather Tim will groom the snow with his ski trail equipment to pack it down. Be aware that if weather is stormy a helicopter will not be able to land. The ambulance staff and helicopter pilot will make that call. Also be aware that if the helicopter arrives and the patient no longer needs an air evacuation there is no charge for the helicopter service. It will be logged as a training flight.

Barnum Lake owners and the Nordheim Association have already held meetings at the site to familiarize themselves with it. Several of the air ambulance pilots have visited. We are fortunate that we now have a potentially life saving site close to some of our lakes, given our aging population and our distance from hospitals.

Our thanks to Mark Poppendock and Tim Anderson for making our lakes community safer.