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# Report of the Inflight Emergency Medical Kit Task Force

JAA-2000-7119-8

EMERGENCY MEDICAL KIT AD HOC TASK FORCE,  
AEROSPACE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

EMERGENCY MEDICAL KIT AD HOC TASK FORCE, AEROSPACE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION. *Report of the inflight emergency medical kit task force.* *Aviat Space Environ Med* 1998; 69:427-8.

A Task Force of physicians was convened by the Aerospace Medical Association to review the contents of U.S. air carrier inflight emergency medical kits. This report includes the recommendations of the Task Force.

## INTRODUCTION

The Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) convened a Task Force of physicians across the major specialties on August 11, 1997, in Alexandria, VA, to review the contents of U.S. air carrier inflight emergency medical kits. In addition, the Task Force put forth a recommendation on inflight automatic external defibrillators (AEDs). The recommendations of the Task Force were based upon a survey of 2300 AsMA physicians (who had treated at least one passenger on a commercial flight). Medical judgement and common sense were also essential components of the deliberations. The recommendations contained herein are those of the Emergency Medical Kit Ad Hoc Task Force and, therefore, do not represent AsMA official policy. AsMA views this as an interim report requiring further studies and ongoing discussion before definitive recommendations can be made.

The following recommended list of medications and medical supplies is offered as a baseline for U.S. air carriers. Further modification may be indicated according to the experience of individual airlines as well as by the medical judgment of their respective medical departments or medical consultants.

### I. MEDICATIONS FOR LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES

These medications should be stored in an emergency medical kit to be administered only by a qualified health care provider.

1. Nitroglycerin Sublingual Tablets or Sublingual Spray—for use in suspected angina, congestive heart failure, as adjunct therapy for hypertension.
2. Epinephrine 1:1000 (Autoinjector)—with adult and pediatric dosage.

3. 50% Dextrose (50 cc Vial).
4. Diphenhydramine—for allergic reaction, motion sickness, sedation.
5. Diazepam 10 mgm Ampules (3) (IM)—for seizure disorder; can also be used for sedation.
6. Lidocaine HCL—to be used as an antiarrhythmic; administer I.V.; recommended only for long haul, over water flights.
7. Bronchodilator (Albuterol)—utilize with spacer for acute asthmatic attacks; can also be used for airway spasm.
8. Glucagon for IM Injection (1 mgm Vials)—for hypoglycemia; could also be used as adjunctive therapy for gastroesophageal spasm.

### II. MEDICATIONS FOR NON-LIFE-THREATENING CONDITIONS

As a cost-saving measure and for other logistic considerations, it is recommended that the following items be stored in a separate supplementary or amenities kit. Those medications with an asterisk (\*) should be prescribed only by a qualified health care provider.

1. Acetaminophen—non-specific analgesic; include liquid form for children.
2. ASA—as a non-specific analgesic and as adjunctive therapy for suspected myocardial infarction and TIA.
3. Promethazine Liquid—for gastroesophageal reflux.
4. Simethicone—for reduction of intestinal gas.
5. Phenergan Tabs (+ Injectable\*)—for migraine headaches and motion sickness.
6. Meclizine—for motion sickness exclusively.
7. 0.5% Neosynephrine Nasal Spray—for preventing barotrauma and/or eustachian tube blockage.
8. Toradol\*—for moderate to severe pain such as urinary tract stones.

From the Aerospace Medical Association, Alexandria, VA.  
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## TASK FORCE REPORT

### III. MEDICAL SUPPLIES

1. Pediatric Oxygen Mask With a Pop Out Valve, Hand Held Bulb Suction, Cord Clamp, Heating Capability for Towels or Thermal Blanket—for deliveries.
2. Protective Disposal Masks/Gloves—for health care providers.
3. Ambu Bag—with small, medium, and large masks.
4. Nasopharyngeal Airway—for severe breathing difficulties.
5. Splint—malleable aluminum splints of various sizes with ace bandages.
6. Medical Oxygen—flight attendant supplementary oxygen may be used.
7. Syringes for Injectables (Including Insulin Syringes)—have a variety of sizes.
8. Urinary Catheter—for acute urinary retention.
9. Bandages/Wraps/Tape.
10. Stethoscope/Sphygmomanometer.
11. Oropharyngeal Airways—three sizes.

12. Sealed Alcohol Sponges.
13. Basic Instruction Book or Cue Cards for Ready Reference of Medication Usage/Dose.

### IV. AUTOMATIC EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AEDs)

The Task Force recommended that U.S. air carriers consider automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) on wide body aircraft for use on specific routes, particularly long haul or over water. It was further recommended that the AEDs be avionics-tested and that airlines ensure an appropriate training program with particular attention given to safety considerations.

*[Editor's Note: The information from the Task Force included in this article will be presented at the 69th Annual Scientific Meeting in Seattle, WA, in May 1998. A follow-on article has been submitted for publication.]*

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**REPORT OF THE INFLIGHT  
EMERGENCY MEDICAL KIT TASK FORCE  
AEROSPACE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
AUGUST 11, 1997  
ALEXANDRIA, VA**

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CHIEF COUNSEL  
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The Aerospace Medical Association (**AsMA**) convened a Task Force of physicians across the **major specialties** on August 11, 1997 in Alexandria, **Virginia** to review the contents of US air **carrier inflight emergency medical kits**. In addition, the Task Force put forth a recommendation on **inflight automatic external defibrillators @ED's**). The recommendations of the Task Force were based upon a **survey of 2,300 AsMA physicians** (who had treated at least one passenger on a commercial flight). **Medical judgement** and common sense were **also** essential components of the **deliberations**. The recommendations contained herein are those of the Emergency Medical Kit Ad Hoc Task Force and, therefore, do not represent Aerospace Medical Association (**AsMA**) **official policy**. **AsMA views** this as an interim report requiring **further** studies and ongoing **discussion** before **definitive** recommendations can be made.

The **following** recommended list of **medications** and medical supplies is offered as a baseline for US air **carriers**. Further modification may be indicated according to the experience of individual **air lines** as **well** as by the **medical judgement** of their respective medical departments or medical **consultants**.

**I. MEDICATIONS FOR LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES**

These medications should be stored in an emergency **medical kit** to be administered only by a qualified health care provider.

**MEDICATION**

**COMMENTS**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) Nitroglycerin Sublingual Tablets or <b>Sublingual Spray</b> | For <b>use</b> in suspected angina, <b>congestive</b> heart failure, as adjunct therapy for hypertension. |
| 2) <b>Epinephrine 1:1000</b> (Autoinjector)                    | With adult and pediatric dosage.  |
| 3) <b>50% Dextrose (50 cc Vial)</b>                            |   |
| 4) <b>Diphenhydramine</b>                                      | For allergic reaction, motion <b>sickness</b> , sedation.   |
| 5) <b>Diazepam 10 mgm Ampules (3) (IM)</b>                     | For seizure disorder. Can also be used for sedation.  |

Valve, **Hand Held** Bulb Suction, Cord **Clamp**,  
Heating **Capability for Towels** or **Thermal** Blanket

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 2) Protective <b>Disposal Masks/Gloves</b>  | For health <b>care providers</b> .   |
| 3) <b>Ambu Bag</b>  | With small, medium <b>and</b> large <b>masks</b> .                             |
| 4) <b>Nasopharyngeal</b> Airway   | For <b>severe breathing difficulties</b> .                                     |
| 6) Splint   | <b>Malleable</b> aluminum splints of various <b>sizes</b><br>with ace bandages |
| 7) Medical Oxygen   | Flight attendant supplementary<br>oxygen may <b>be used</b> .                  |
| 8) Syringes For <b>Injectables</b><br>( <b>Including</b> Insulin Syringes)              | Have a variety of <b>sizes</b> .   |
| 9) Urinary Catheter   | For acute <b>urinary</b> retention.  |
| 10) <b>Bandages/Wraps/Tape</b>  |  |
| 11) <b>Stethoscope/Sphygmomanometer</b>   |  |
| 12) <b>Oropharyngeal</b> Airways  | <b>Three sizes</b> .   |
| 13) Sealed Alcohol Sponges  |  |
| 14) Basic Instruction Book or Cue Cards for<br>Ready Reference of Medication Usage/Dose |  |

#### **IV. AUTOMATIC EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AED's)**

The Task Force recommended that US air carriers consider AEDs on wide body aircraft for use on specific routes, particularly long haul or over water. It was further recommended that the AED's be avionics tested and that airlines ensure an appropriate training program with particular attention given to safety considerations.