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Any means of medical transport by air intended for the evacuation ^[1] of wounded, sick ^[2] or shipwrecked ^[3] persons and for the transport of medical personnel ^[4] or equipment.

In an international armed conflict ^[5], a medical aircraft may not be attacked but must be respected by all parties to the conflict while flying at altitudes, at times and on routes agreed upon between the parties to the conflict.

Besides the national colours it must be marked with the distinctive emblem of the red cross (or red crescent) on a white ground ^[6], on its lower, upper and lateral surfaces. It must be provided with any other markings or means of identification which may be agreed upon between the parties to the conflict.

A medical aircraft must obey any summons to alight on land or water. Flights over specified zones involved in hostilities, or over the territory of neutral States, and restrictions on the use, landing and inspection of medical aircraft are the subject of detailed regulations.

See Air warfare ^[7]; Aircraft ^[8];

OUTLINE

Chapter 11, Introductory text ^[9]

Chapter 11, VI. 1. a) the protection of medical aircraft and their identification ^[10]

LEGAL SOURCE

GCI, 36 ^[11] (see ICRC updated Commentary ^[12]), 37 ^[13] (see ICRC updated Commentary ^[14])

PI, 24 ^[15]-31 ^[16]

CIHL, 29 ^[17]-30 ^[18]

DOCUMENTS

San Remo Manual (Paras. 53-54) ^[19]

HPCR, Manual on International Law Applicable to Air and Missile Warfare (Rules 75-87) ^[20]

BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

Suggested readings:

CUMMINGS Edward R., “The Juridical Status of Medical Aircraft Under the Conventional Laws of War”, in *Military Law Review*, Vol. 66, Fall 1974, pp. 105-141.

DOSWALD-BECK Louise, “Vessels, Aircraft and Persons Entitled to Protection During Armed Conflicts at Sea”, in *BYIL*, 1994, 262-268 pp.

DOSWALD-BECK Louise, “The Protection of Medical Aircraft in International

Law”, in *IYHR*, Vol. 27, 1997, pp. 151-192.

Further reading:

EBERLIN Philippe, “The Identification of Medical Aircraft in Periods of Armed Conflict. Identification of Hospital Ships and Ships Protected by the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949”, in *IRRC*, No. 229 & 231, November-December 1982, 31 pp.

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[14] [https://ihl-](https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Comment.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=825B8938D01F98A1C1257F7A0)

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<https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=BC88A5C59E4F2BEFC12563CD>

[17] https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule29

[18] https://www.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_rul_rule30

[19]

<https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Article.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=C269F9CAC88460C0C12563FB0>

[20]

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Claude_Bruderlein/publication/264036862_Manual_on_International_Law_Applicable_to_Air_and_Missile_Warfare/pdfs/5445499c0c950c12563fb0.pdf