

FOREIGN MEDICAL POLICY MANUAL

CHAPTER: 2
SECTION: 3
TITLE: TRAVEL

AUTHORITY: 38 USC 1724; and 38 CFR 17.35

RELATED REFERENCE: M-1 Part I Chapter 25

I. PROCEDURE CODE(S)

HCPCS: ambulance-A0030-A0050, A0225-A0424, A0999

X-Codes: attendant-X0200, attendant-X0210, attendant-X8010

II. DEFINITIONS

A special mode vehicle includes ambulance, ambulette, air ambulance, wheelchair van, and other modes of transportation which are specially designed to transport certain types of disabled individuals.

III. POLICY

A. Travel costs associated with authorized VA Compensation and Pension Examinations are covered.

B. Ambulance services are payable when medical necessity is established or the veteran's condition is such that the use of any other method of transportation is contraindicated.

1. Ambulance coverage includes transfers from a veteran's place of residence, accident scene, or other location to a hospital.

2. Ambulance service by other than land vehicles (e.g., boat and airplane) may be considered only when:

(a). the point of pick-up is inaccessible by a land vehicle,

(b). other obstacles are involved in transporting the veteran to the nearest hospital with appropriate facilities and the patient's medical condition warrants speedy treatment, or

(c). is such that transfers by other means is contraindicated.

3. The following guidelines should be utilized in providing benefits for ambulance services to deceased veterans:

(a). Benefits should not be provided when a veteran is pronounced dead by a legally authorized individual before the ambulance was called.

(b). If the veteran was alive at the time the ambulance was called, but was deceased when the ambulance arrived, benefits are payable to the point of pickup.

(c). Benefits should be provided when a veteran is pronounced dead while enroute.

C. Special mode vehicle transportation is payable when a physician specifies the medical necessity for special mode transportation.

IV. EXCLUSIONS

A. Ambulance service is not payable when transport or transfer of a veteran is primarily for the purpose of having the patient nearer to home, family, friends, or personal physician.

B. Charges for an ambulance to return to home base from the hospital while not transporting a veteran (deadhead charges).

C. If the air ambulance is not covered, the services of a medical attendant will not be covered.

D. Travel to the United States for examination or treatment.

E. Voluntary ambulance.

F. Travel by family members to visit the veteran.

G. Travel by public transportation such as a bus, subway, train, airplane, or privately owned conveyance.

*** END OF POLICY ***