

# BEST PRACTICES

VOLUNTEER COMMAND PILOTS

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ANGEL FLIGHT  
SOUTH CENTRAL



# BEST PRACTICES

## FINDING AVAILABLE MISSIONS



## AVAILABLE MISSIONS

Angel Flight South Central (AFSC) provides various ways for volunteer pilots to search for available missions. Whether pilots are interested in receiving notifications or finding missions on their own, AFSC makes it easy to volunteer for a flight.

## SUBSCRIPTION OPTIONS

- Receive **email notifications** for missions that are available to/from your home airport.
- Receive **SMS text messages** for missions near your home airport that are available within the next few days.

## AFSC'S WEBSITE

To view upcoming missions using search criteria, access the "Available Missions" tab on AFSC's Pilot website. If pilots are combining missions, they will receive credit for each mission leg that is executed, even if passengers fly together.

- Search for available missions to/from nearby airports.
- Combine missions where different passengers may be headed in the same direction.
- Search for missions that could be combined to create a round-trip flight.
- Consider flying multiple legs for the same mission.

# BEST PRACTICES

## MISSION EXECUTION AND SAFETY

### COMMAND PILOTS

AFSC refers to pilots as Volunteer Command Pilots because pilots have the opportunity to fully coordinate their missions.

*When placed in command, take charge!*  
~General Norman Schwarzkopf

### MISSION EXECUTION AND SAFETY

Executing the mission matters, and so does safety.

- As pilot-in-command (PIC) of a mission, pilots are responsible for making the go/no-go call to fly the mission.
- Fulfilling the mission to the patient is important, but safety is always AFSC's top priority.
- Flexibility and good communication can increase the chances of a mission being flown.



# BEST PRACTICES

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE PASSENGER

### COMMUNICATE EARLY

AFSC encourages pilots to communicate with their passengers shortly after volunteering for a mission. Early communication:

- Increases scheduling flexibility if weather or other factors become an issue.
- Enables pilots to facilitate alternate missions if the passenger needs to cancel the flight.

### TEXT MESSAGING

Consider initiating contact with the passenger using text messages.

- Passengers may ignore calls from unknown numbers, thinking they are spam.
- Their schedule or condition may preclude their ability to talk.

### CALLS AND EMAILS

- If texting is unsuccessful, try calling or emailing the passenger to ensure the mission gets coordinated.
- First-time passengers may benefit from a call to calm any concerns they may have about flying in a small plane.

### QUESTIONS TO ASK THE PASSENGER

- Confirm if the passenger has flown with AFSC before.
- Confirm the passenger's backup plan if the mission is cancelled.
  - Options may include rescheduling the appointment, driving, or taking the bus.
  - All passengers are required to have a backup plan.
- Ask the passenger about the possibility of changes to their schedule, plans, treatment, etc. Cancellations or changes may be driven by the doctor or the health of the passenger, and this will give the pilot ample time to make adjustments.



# BEST PRACTICES

## FLEXIBILITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

### PILOT AND PASSENGER FLEXIBILITY

The more flexibility a pilot has to fly a mission, the greater the chances are that the mission will be flown, even if weather becomes an issue. Some options available for volunteer pilots include:

- Adjusting the flight time by 3-6 hours to avoid cancellations for weather.
- Offering to fly the passenger a day earlier or later to ensure they are able to keep their scheduled appointments.
- Flying a mission at night, if the pilot is comfortable doing so.

### PASSENGER'S LOCATION

The passenger's location may change after the mission itinerary is created. It's always best for the pilot to verify the pickup and dropoff locations with the passenger.

- Airports and FBOs are always the pilot's choice, regardless of what is listed on the mission itinerary.
  - When changing an airport, consider the proximity to the passenger's location and/or the pilot's home airport.
- Confirm that the passenger knows how to get to the FBO, especially if the airport has a commercial terminal.

### MULTI-LEG MISSIONS

Pilots are busy! AFSC recommends contacting the connecting pilots as early as possible to review the following:

- Arrival and departure times that best accommodate pilot and passenger schedules.
- Communication methods and flight tracking in real time for all pilots on the day of the mission.
- Optimal hand-off airports.
  - There might be a better airport for approaches or that offers fuel and fee discounts for AFSC missions.
  - Pilots may be traveling from airports that differ from what is listed on the mission itinerary.
  - Weather or other factors may require pilots to extend or shorten their leg.

# BEST PRACTICES

## MISSION CHANGES AND CANCELLATIONS

### PASSENGER DEVIATIONS

Pilots should notify AFSC immediately about any patient-related issues so they can be addressed for future flights. These may include:

- Additional companions.
- Excessive luggage.
- Significant changes in weight for the passenger and/or companion.
- Passengers that are not ambulatory.

### CANCELLING A MISSION

Providing advanced notice to AFSC about the possibility of a mission cancelling increases the chances of finding another pilot to fly the mission.

- Call or email AFSC as soon as possible if a mission might be cancelled.
  - For cancellations on weekends or after hours, pilots should notify the passenger and connecting pilots first.
  - Follow up with an email to [coordinator@angelflightsc.org](mailto:coordinator@angelflightsc.org) or call the after-hours number at (972) 755-0433.
- Pilots may choose to purchase a commercial ticket for the passenger to avoid cancelling a mission.



# BEST PRACTICES

## GROUND TRANSPORTATION

### PASSENGER CONCERNS

Ground transportation is often an issue of concern for the following reasons:

- Incurring additional costs to get to/from the medical facility.
- Lack of public transportation options.
- Traffic/safety concerns when travelling to large cities.

### GROUND TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Ground transportation is *not* the pilot's responsibility. If passengers need additional assistance with ground transportation resources, contact AFSC.

Confirm how the passenger is traveling to/from the airport.

- Many passengers do not realize it is their responsibility to coordinate their own ground transportation, or they have forgotten to do so.
- First-time passengers may look to the pilot for advice on available options.

### COMMUNICATING WITH GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Determine how you or the passenger will communicate with ground transportation in real time on the day of the mission. These may include:

- Flight tracking.
- Text messaging.
- Calling prior to departure with an ETA.





# BEST PRACTICES

## SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEER PILOTS



### FBO FUEL AND FEE DISCOUNTS

Many FBO's offer AFSC discounts, which are posted on AFSC's website ([Fixed-base Operators & Fuel](#)).

- Call the FBO in advance to confirm available discounts for AFSC missions.
- Some FBOs may require that you provide a copy of the mission itinerary or proof that you are flying an Angel Flight mission.
- If you are flying to an FBO that is not on the list, always ask for a discount. You may be surprised by what they offer!

### WING LEADERS

- Contact your regional Wing Leader for any questions you may have about flying a mission.
- Wing Leaders may be able to accompany you on your first Angel Flight mission, or connect you with an experienced Angel Flight pilot.

