

VareseNews

Sports fields will be lit up to allow the medical transport chopper to land at night

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From Lavena Ponte Tresa to Casorate Sempione, from Luino to Busto Arsizio, from Angera to Cadegliano Viconago, from Cuasso al Monte to Sesto Calende, from Castano Primo to Tradate, from Maccagno to Varese.

In Varese county, the areas selected for the landing of the medical transport chopper are 14. The service, which will be officially available starting **from the next 30th June**, has been presented on Wednesday 18th May by the AREU's executive director Alberto Zoli. Even the governor Roberto Maroni was there. **In the whole region, there will be 50 (100 by the end of the year) areas with particular characteristics, especially sports fields, that will be lit up, when the helicopter arrives, thanks to a remote ignition system.**

The project was explained two years ago, during a meeting in the prefecture of the province of Varese, whose aim was to test the system applied by the European Union. **The mayors of Brebbia, Sesto Calende and Lavena Ponte Tresa**, which are the three districts that took part in the **experimental stage, attended the meeting.** Thanks to an investment of about **15/16 thousand euros, in 2014 the three administrations created landing sites in their sport facilities.** Webcams to watch the area, windsocks (to check the weather conditions) and a light ignition system, all of which can be activated remotely from the operations centre of the emergency medical services in Villa Guardia (that monitors the macro areas of Varese, Como, Sondrio and Lecco), were installed.

While in Varese tests on the installations were taking place, AREU and INAER (leading aviation emergency activity companies that are carrying out the medical transport service in Lombardy) located and compiled an inventory of more than 200 sports fields in just as many municipalities in Lombardy, announcing that, among those, over 120 were suitable for the experimentation, of which 50 will already be operative by the end of June 2016.

At the same time, in support of the night medical transport activity, the use of night vision goggles issued to pilots of the regional helicopters located in the bases of Milan, Como, Bergamo and Brescia has already started and will be explicit in the next few months. The use of night vision goggles, together with the implementation of precision satellite routes that release the navigation from landmarks, will make the implementation of the service during the night easier, making available advanced technologies to pilots in order to allow them to operate safely and more efficiently.

In Lombardy, starting from July, a second helicopter of the emergency medical services will fly at night, in addition to the one of Como. In fact even the helicopter of the base in Brescia will be enabled to fly during the night. The two helicopters will provide a more punctual service, especially in mountain or difficult-to-reach areas: “With this project we wanted the assistance to make a qualitative leap in favour of citizens: 50 areas where the helicopter will be able to land at night means saving lives”.

di Alessandra Toni Translated by Chiara Adragna (Reviewed by Prof. Robert Clarke)