

434 – Aircraft Accidents: Appendix A – Response Procedures

A. Initial response procedures

1. Assess the scene and advise dispatch:
 - Type of aircraft involved, hull number, and whether civilian or military
 - Safe avenues of approach, and areas to be avoided
 - Number of persons on board (estimated or actual) and condition
 - Whether any buildings are involved and, if so, the building type and whether the building is on fire
 - Additional personnel and/or equipment needed
2. Establish inner and outer perimeters.
3. Maintain security of the scene, including the crash site and the debris field, which may encompass a large area.
4. When practical, approach the aircraft with the wind at your back, to avoid any toxic smoke or fumes.
5. Be alert for explosions that could occur from such sources as fuel, oxygen, tires, de-icing equipment, and batteries. Some of these may be a delayed reaction. In addition, metal at the crash site may retain heat from friction or fire in sufficient amount to cause injury.
6. If approaching along the crash path, be alert for wreckage or survivors that may have been thrown clear of the aircraft or ejected.

B. Special instructions for military aircraft

1. Armament and other equipment installed on a wide variety of military aircraft may present significant hazards to response personnel. Safety devices may have been rendered inoperable following a crash, making weapon systems unsafe or unstable. Assume the aircraft is armed with ammunition, rockets, or other explosive devices.
2. Fighter aircraft danger areas include the canopy, jet intakes, jet exhaust, and armament areas. Some aircraft carry an extremely hazardous fuel cell.
3. Avoid approaching from the front, as weapons could discharge in that direction. Conduct rescue or firefighting operations from the sides.
4. Ejection seats, present in certain military aircraft, are very dangerous. Don't raise, move, or tamper with arm rests, or with crew member seats or harnesses. What you don't know about ejection seats can kill you. Seek the assistance of trained personnel (fire/rescue or military) if it is necessary to remove someone from an ejection seat. (These may be marked with a triangle, indicating "Danger – Ejection Seat.")
5. Parachutes, which may be affixed to crew members or equipment, may be equipped with devices that forcefully eject the parachute material from the pack. When it is necessary to remove or transport a person wearing a parachute, care should be taken not to activate the ejection mechanism (e.g., rip cord).
6. Emergency exits are indicated by orange-yellow markings. Arrows will indicate rescue points; instructions are stenciled near the arrow markings.
7. Stay clear of intakes and exhausts of operating jet engines (at least 25' from the intake and 330' from the exhaust).
8. Radar, often located in the nose of the aircraft, can represent a danger area extending to 30' unless the equipment has been shut down.
9. A minimum perimeter of 2500' should be established as soon as practical.

10. Military aircraft may contain classified information and/or equipment, which should be protected until custody is assumed by military authorities. Prevent the taking of photographs of such classified information/equipment by civilians to the extent feasible.