

**POLICY
434**

**EFFECTIVE
DATE
8-01-09**

**Eugene
Police Department**



Aircraft Accidents

434.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes situations involving aircraft accidents including responsibilities of personnel, making proper notification, and documentation. Aircraft accidents occurring at the Eugene Airport will generally be handled in accordance with the Eugene Airport Emergency Plan. This policy is designed to deal primarily with aircraft accidents occurring elsewhere, and is designed to be used in concert with other City protocols and relevant department policies, such as those related to large-scale incidents. Its provisions may be used for incidents occurring at the Eugene Airport to the extent that the provisions are consistent with the Eugene Airport Emergency Plan.

434.1.1 DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the terms below have the meanings indicated:

Aircraft: Any contrivance now known, or hereafter invented, used or designed for navigation of or flight in the air, including a balloon, which is designed for maneuvering in airspace at an altitude greater than two feet above ground or water level, and which is designed to carry one or more person(s) and/or which is a military aircraft. A hang glider is not included in this definition.

Aircraft accident: An occurrence associated with the operation of an aircraft which takes place between the time any person boards the aircraft with intention of flight and the time at which all such persons have disembarked, and in which any person suffers death or serious injury, or in which the aircraft receives substantial damage. In the case of an unmanned military aircraft, this would include any incident resulting in substantial damage to the aircraft which occurs between the time the aircraft becomes airborne and the time it safely lands at its destination.

434.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

In the event of an aircraft accident the employee responsibilities are as follows:

434.2.1 RESPONDING OFFICERS

Officers should treat an aircraft accident site as a crime scene until it is determined that such is not the case.

The duties of the field officer at the scene of an aircraft accident include the following:

- a. Determine the nature and extent of the accident.

- b. Request additional personnel and other resources to respond as needed.
- c. Provide assistance for the injured parties until the arrival of fire department personnel and/or other emergency personnel.
- d. Cordon off and contain the area to exclude unauthorized individuals as soon as practicable.
- e. Provide crowd control and other assistance until directed otherwise by a supervisor.
- f. Ensure the Medical Examiner's Office is notified if a death occurs.
- g. If there appears to be a large number of fatalities, consider contacting the County Health Department for mass casualty assistance. In addition, implement provisions of other department policies relevant to mass casualty incidents.
- h. Interview witnesses. Document their contact information, and as well as their observations regarding such things as:
 - Weather conditions (including wind) at the time of the accident
 - Whether the aircraft was on fire in flight
 - Whether there was an explosion in the air prior to the accident
 - Any sounds heard (e.g., engine noise, or lack thereof)
 - Whether objects were seen falling from the aircraft

Entering an aircraft or tampering with parts or debris is only permissible for the purpose of removing injured or trapped occupants, protecting the wreckage from further damage, or protecting the public from danger. If possible, the investigating authority should first be consulted before entering or moving any aircraft or any crash debris. Photographs or sketches of the original positions should be made whenever feasible. Additional procedures for initial responding officers are outlined in [Appendix A](#).

The Fire Department will be responsible for control of the accident scene until the injured parties are cared for and the accident scene has been rendered safe for containment. Thereafter, police personnel will be responsible for preserving the scene until relieved by the investigating authority.

Once the scene is relinquished to the investigating authority, personnel from this agency may assist in containment of the scene until the investigation is completed or assistance is no longer needed.

The Eugene Airport Director or designee may respond to the scene to assist the on-scene commander with technical expertise, should it be needed during the operation.

434.2.2 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has the primary responsibility for investigating accidents involving civil aircraft. In the case of a military aircraft incident

the appropriate branch of the military will be involved in the investigation. The NTSB is concerned with several aspects of an accident as described in this section.

Every effort should be made to preserve the scene to the extent possible in the condition in which it was found until such time as NTSB or other authorized personnel arrive to take charge of the scene.

Military personnel will respond to take charge of any military aircraft involved, whether or not injuries or deaths have occurred.

If the accident did not result in a death or injury and the NTSB elects not to respond, the pilot or owner may assume control of the aircraft.

Removal of the wreckage shall be done under the guidance of the NTSB or military authorities or, if the NTSB is not responding for an onsite investigation, at the discretion of the pilot or the owner.

434.2.3 CENTRAL LANE COMMUNICATIONS

Dispatchers are responsible to make notifications as directed once an aircraft accident has been reported. The notifications will vary depending on the type of accident, extent of injuries or damage, and the type of aircraft involved. Generally, the dispatcher will need to notify the following agencies or individuals when an aircraft accident has occurred:

- a. Fire Department
- b. The affected airport tower
- c. Closest military base if a military aircraft is involved (Air Traffic Tower will assist)
- d. Ambulances or other assistance as required
- e. FAA Seattle Center (if Eugene Air Traffic Tower is closed)

When an aircraft accident is reported to the Police Department by the airport tower personnel, the dispatcher receiving such information should verify that the tower personnel will contact the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Flight Standards District Office and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). In the event that airport personnel are not involved, the dispatcher should notify the FAA and the NTSB.

434.2.4 RECORDS MANAGER

The Records Manager is responsible for the following:

- a. Forward an approved copy of the accident report to the Oregon Department of Aviation.
- b. Forward a copy of the report to the Patrol Division Manager, the Eugene Airport Director, and the manager of any other affected airport.

434.2.5 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

The Department Public Information Officer (PIO) is responsible for the following:

- a. Obtain information for a press release from the on-scene commander or designee.
- b. When practical, the PIO should coordinate with the FAA Press Information Officer to prepare a press release for distribution to the media.
- c. Information released to the press regarding any aircraft accident should be handled by the PIO or in accordance with existing policy.

434.3 DOCUMENTATION

Any aircraft accident, as defined in this policy, which occurs within the City will be documented in a police report.