

This guideline provides North Zone Agencies procedures for operating at an aircraft incident. The first priority in an aircraft emergency is rescue. The first arriving Company Officer should plan all actions with this priority in mind. The objective must be to move the fire away from the passenger areas and from the areas where evacuation and rescue operations are taking place. Controlling the fire in order to perform a rescue is more important than extinguishment.

RESPONSE PROCEDURES:

The Company Officer should consider the following while responding to an aircraft emergency:

- Type of aircraft involved.
- Nature of emergency (crash landing, emergency landing, medical aid etc.).
- Amount of fuel on board.
- Number of passengers and crew (locations and possible injuries).
- Location of incident.
 - A. Terrain
 - B. Location in relation to exposures
- Cargo of critical significance (nature and location).

SIZE-UP:

Upon arrival at the crash site, the first in Company Officer should determine the specific actions required. The first arriving company should respond by a route, which takes advantage of existing wind, terrain, and aircraft wreckage features, if possible. This route will normally provide the most effective approach for firefighting and other responding companies can then follow the same route.

Extreme caution must be exercised when approaching an aircraft crash site. This will avoid further injuries to persons who may have been thrown clear, or may have escaped the aircraft. Additionally, apparatus should make every attempt to avoid running over aircraft parts and components that have been scattered over the crash site. This precaution will aid in preserving the accident scene for investigators, safeguard possible evidence, and prevent damage to responding apparatus and equipment. In the event visibility is obscured due to rain, fog, or other adverse conditions, fire personnel should walk ahead of the apparatus to insure the path is clear. Fire personnel are to wear full protective clothing and equipment unless otherwise advised by the Incident Commander.

Your size-up should also consider the possibility of radiation hazards. Some aircraft may have hazardous radiation around the nose of the aircraft due to the operation of radar equipment. A large aircraft has a danger area of approximately 75 feet.

POSITIONING APPARATUS:

Although every situation will vary to some degree, the usual sequence in positioning apparatus will be as follows:

- Position apparatus to reach rescue points with hose lines.
- Position close enough to gain maximum effectiveness from fire streams.
- Position up-wind, with consideration given to escape routes.
- Do not block other apparatus.
- Give consideration to repositioning and covering other apparatus.

Proper positioning of vehicles must always reflect the possibility of repositioning. When positioning an apparatus at an aircraft incident, distance must be left to maneuver, advance, withdraw, or handle equipment. Apparatus should never be blocked by another vehicle.

INITIAL ATTACK:

Principle points of concern for first arriving units conducting an initial attack are:

- Location of occupants trapped within the aircraft.
- Location of normal and emergency entrances.

The first-in Company Officer should remember that normal entry points might be rendered useless by fire, wreckage, or gun positions on military aircraft.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RESCUE OR ESCAPE AREAS IS THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE AND IS THE PRIMARY FACTOR IN DETERMINING WHERE INITIAL ATTACK EFFORTS SHOULD BEGIN.

Consideration must be given to whether or not evacuation of occupants has begun prior to the arrival of fire apparatus. If the flight crew or other people have already begun an evacuation, this area must be maintained safe and the passengers must be protected.

The minimum size hose line to be used on an aircraft crash is 1¾" at 150 GPM. If more fire flow is needed and a water source can be obtained, the Incident Commander should consider the use of 2½" hose lines and master stream appliances. Every effort must be made to maintain a wall of protection by overlapping fog patterns and by providing additional back up lines. This is essential to avoid or reduce the probability of ignition or re-ignition of aircraft fuel.

DURING THE CONTROL PHASE, ALL EFFORTS MUST BE DIRECTED TO KEEPING THE OCCUPIED PORTIONS OF THE AIRCRAFT COOL.

In incidents with no fire, the same basic procedures should be followed unless there are fuel spills. Fuel spills become a priority and must be covered with foam to reduce the possibility of ignition.

RESCUE:

The primary objective during any aircraft emergency is the safe removal of passengers. When possible, rescue operations should be conducted using the buddy system. At no time should fire personnel place themselves in a situation where they could become a victim. All rescue operations depend upon teamwork and coordination. Fire personnel should approach and enter the aircraft with the use of charged hose lines and all personnel should know escape routes. Fire personnel should be extremely cautious when attempting to remove victims from an aircraft, which is surrounded by spilled fuel.

REMEMBER, RE-IGNITION OF AIRCRAFT FUEL MAY CUT OFF ESCAPE ROUTES.

The easiest and quickest way for fire personnel to gain access to an aircraft is through normal doors and hatches. In most cases, they will have external releases. Additionally, windows may often be used for rescue or for ventilation purposes. Some windows are designed as emergency exits. These exits are identified and have latch releases on both the outside and inside of the cabin.

IT SHOULD NEVER BE ASSUMED ALL CREW MEMBERS AND/OR PASSENGERS HAVE BEEN EVACUATED FROM THE AIRCRAFT. A PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SEARCH MUST BE MADE OF THE AIRCRAFT AND SURROUNDING IMPACT AREA.

FORCIBLE ENTRY:

Normal forcible entry methods can be used in the event standard methods of gaining access have failed. On some civilian aircraft and on all military aircraft, areas have been designated for cutting. These areas are outlined with yellow or black dash lines and are labeled "Cut Here For Emergency Rescue". When making a rectangular opening to permit access, only three sides should be cut. The fourth side should be used as a hinge, bending the skin out to form an opening.

Only one firefighter should make the initial entry into an aircraft. Other fire personnel should stay at the opening until the first firefighter gives some indication help is needed inside. Fire personnel on the outside of the aircraft should be alert to changing conditions in order to warn the firefighter inside the aircraft if a dangerous condition develops, and to assist in the removal of victims through the opening. When entry is made, the first job of the entry team is to locate victims and initiate action to remove them.

NOTIFICATION AND SECURING THE CRASH SITE:

After the incident has been abated, investigative responsibilities belong to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). In addition to the NTSB, other agencies and companies will respond to the crash site. They may include:

- FBI
- FAA
- Local Airport Authorities
- Airline
- Aircraft Manufacturer
- State and/or local police, fire, and rescue authorities
- Military, if the plane is a military aircraft

All fire personnel should understand federal law prohibits removal of aircraft wreckage, mail and cargo. Allowance for moving aircraft wreckage is given only for the following reasons:

- Removal of trapped or injured persons
- Protection of wreckage from further damage
- Protection of public from injury

When it is necessary to disturb or move any aircraft wreckage, descriptive notes, photos, and/or sketches should be made of the accident site prior to moving.

Fire personnel may be asked by local FAA authorities or other responsible persons to assist in the search of the crash site area. It is important to remember in no case will any aircraft part, luggage, or personal belongings be removed from the area unless items have been tagged, recorded, and released by the responsible persons in charge.

MILITARY AIRCRAFT: