

**Monterey County Fire Chiefs Association**  
**Fire Operations Manual**  
**Section 10**

**Aircraft Accidents off Airport**

**Purpose**

This policy describes situations involving aircraft accidents including responsibilities of personnel, making proper notification, and documentation.

**Fire Fighter Responsibility**

*First on scene officer*

- Establish command. More likely than not, it will be unified
- Determine the nature and extent of the accident
- Request additional personnel and other resources to respond as needed
- Provide EMS care for the injured parties
- Cordon off and contain the area to exclude unauthorized individuals as soon as practicable
- Treat the aircraft crash as a crime scene

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.

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, law enforcement 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 the responsible jurisdiction may assist in containment of the scene until the investigation is completed or assistance is no longer needed.

In the event of an off airport crash the Monterey Peninsula Airport Executive Director or designee may arrive on scene upon request to assist the onscene incident commander with technical expertise, should it be needed during the operation.

## **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.

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 subject to local law enforcement.

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.

See the attached document for notification and reporting requirements of aircraft incidents or accidents, and what elements qualify for notifications.

## **COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES**

Dispatchers are responsible to make notifications as directed once an aircraft accident has been reported.

Dispatchers will need to notify the following agencies or individuals when an aircraft accident has occurred:

- Fire Department
- Law enforcement
- EMS/Ambulance
- The affected airport tower (if the incident is off airport property)
- FAA Regional Operations Center 425-227-1999 (located in the State of Washington). The FAA will advise the NTSB if needed.
- Military Aircraft – FAA Regional Operations Center, they will make all notifications regardless if it is a Commercial, Private, or Military Aircraft.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Public Information Officer is responsible for the following:

- Obtain information for a press release from the onscene commander or his or her designee.
- When practical, coordinate with the FAA
- Prepare a press release for distribution to the Media in consultation with the Airport's public information officer representative, if applicable.

Information released to the press regarding any aircraft accident should be coordinated with the FAA and NTSB.