



# Tulsa Police Department

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**Policy #** 132

**Policy Name** Aircraft Crashes

**Approved by** *Wendell Franklin, Chief of Police*

**Effective Date** 08/15/2003

**Approved Date** 08/15/2003

**Previous Date** 11/16/1999

## PURPOSE OF CHANGE:

To update policy format.

## POLICY:

The Tulsa Police Department will assist with aircraft crashes that occur within the Tulsa city limits. The Department is not the investigating authority for aircraft crashes but plays a vital role in the sequence of events following a crash. The investigating authority will usually be delayed in arriving at the scene. Therefore, a brief *Incident Report* and witness statements are necessary to preserve valuable information that could otherwise be lost.

The Department's primary responsibilities when responding to an aircraft crash will be to coordinate with the Incident Commander (IC) if the Incident Command System (ICS) (see Policy 140, *Command Posts*) has been implemented and cooperate with other agencies at the scene. These agencies may include the Tulsa City/County Health Department, the Fire Department, and the Tulsa Area Emergency Management Agency (TAEMA).

Due to the hazards associated with aircraft crashes (e.g., aviation fuel and body fluids) crash sites will be considered hazardous material incidents until determined otherwise. Officers are discouraged from endangering themselves by performing rescue or other operations in the contaminated area unless the officer performing such an operation is wearing protective clothing, a self-contained breathing apparatus, and is trained in the use of this equipment.

In the interest of officer and citizen safety, the officer should direct lifesaving activities by promptly notifying Fire Department personnel who have the appropriate equipment to safely perform such rescues.

Aircraft crashes occurring on Tulsa International Airport property will be handled by Airport Operations personnel. The Tulsa Police Department will provide assistance as necessary.

**SUMMARY:** Procedures for responding to an aircraft crash site that does not occur on Tulsa International Airport property.

**APPLIES TO:** All police personnel

## DEFINITIONS:

AIRCRAFT – any machine designed to travel through the air, whether heavier or lighter than air, and in or upon which any person or property may be transported.

AIR CARRIER – a civilian airline engaged in the transportation of passengers and/or freight.

COLD ZONE – a fully safe area surrounding the Warm Zone at a hazardous materials site.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE GUIDE BOOK (ERG) – a field reference manual published by the Department of Transportation listing hazardous materials. The manual is cross-referenced by chemical name and ID number. The book

lists the general hazards of these chemicals and the steps to be taken by emergency response personnel dealing with them.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTER – a facility set up to house, interview, care for and communicate with family members of people believed to be on the aircraft in a crash. (Note: the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has responsibility for the families and victims of the crash. TPD responsibility will be to provide security and assist as needed.)

GENERAL AVIATION AIRCRAFT – an aircraft other than military or air carrier.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL – a group of materials that can cause harm to people or the environment upon release.

HOT ZONE – the total exclusion area around a hazardous materials incident. Entry is limited to personnel wearing special protective clothing.

INVESTIGATING AUTHORITY – the NTSB is the primary investigating authority. See 31-132 Att., Aircraft Crashes - Attachment.

MILITARY AIRCRAFT – an aircraft of any of the armed forces.

SAFETY OFFICER – person responsible for monitoring and assessing safety hazards or unsafe situations and developing measures for ensuring personnel safety.

SHIPPING PAPERS – papers that list the specific cargo being transported. In an aircraft it will be located in the cockpit and will be called the Air Bill.

WARM ZONE – the area between the Hot and Cold Zones at a hazardous materials site.

## **PROCEDURES:**

1. When officers approach an aircraft crash site, they should always approach from upwind and uphill if possible. Ask the dispatcher for the wind speed and wind direction when assigned the call.
2. Always assume that hazardous materials are involved until it can be determined otherwise. Avoid contact with smoke, vapors, and fluids.
3. Officers should not approach the accident following the same path that the aircraft crashed.
4. Officers should also be aware of the potential for fire and explosions. Military aircraft may contain weapons, ammunition, ejection seats, etc. Approach military aircraft from the side.
5. Establish crash site security and perimeter control as soon as possible keeping all non-essential persons from the scene.
6. Assess the situation. Obtain and relay the following information to the dispatcher:
  - a. Location of the accident.
  - b. Best available routes for emergency personnel and vehicles.
  - c. Type of structures involved, if applicable.
  - d. Class of aircraft - single or multiple engine.
  - e. Number of injuries and deaths, if known.
  - f. Additional assistance needed - police, fire, medical, military, etc.
  - g. Location of the command post and staging area(s).
  - h. Type of aircraft involved - military or civilian, passenger or cargo, helicopter or jet, private or commercial.

7. If the incident is a minor crash (e.g., bent propeller, pilot forced to land in the street) contact the investigative authority and complete an *Incident Report*.
8. If the incident is a major crash (e.g., injuries, fatalities, hazardous materials) inform the dispatcher of potential hazards and request they notify the Fire Department, the City/County Health Department, and TAEMA.
9. Take appropriate action to stabilize the conditions at the scene:
  - a. Isolate the Hot Zone. Establish the boundaries of the Warm and Cold Zones.
  - b. Keep internal combustion engines out of the Hot and Warm Zones.
  - c. Aid the injured if possible. Officers who do not have protective clothing, a self-contained breathing apparatus, and who are not trained with this equipment must not enter the Hot or Warm Zones.
  - d. If any person has entered the Hot Zone, ensure that they are decontaminated before leaving the Warm Zone.
10. Complete an *Incident Report* listing AIRCRAFT CRASH as the crime type. List the pilot as the victim. If the identity of the pilot cannot be determined, list the victim as John or Jane Doe. Include in the report at least the following information if available:
  - a. Time and date of the crash.
  - b. Weather conditions at the time of the crash.
  - c. Direction the aircraft was headed.
  - d. Whether there was a fire or an explosion in the air prior to the crash.
  - e. Witnesses names, social security numbers, addresses and telephone numbers.
  - f. Names and information on injured/deceased persons in the crash, if available.
11. Contact the dispatcher and have them notify the investigating authority.
12. Upon arrival, the supervisor(s) will reassess the incident and establish a command post using the Incident Command System in accordance with Policy 140, *Command Posts*.
13. Determine additional manpower needs for zone security and evacuation notification.
14. Ensure the establishment of access routes and stabilization of conditions at the scene.
15. Establish the area for evacuation notification if necessary.
16. Designate a staging area(s) for the following:
  - a. Ambulance service.
  - b. Equipment.
  - c. Volunteers.
  - d. Police personnel.
  - e. Fire personnel.
  - f. Investigating Authority.
17. If the crash requires a substantial effort including evacuations and/or a large use of manpower, notify the Chief of Police (or designee) of the circumstances and the actions being taken.
18. Coordinate activities with the Incident Commander (IC) if the Incident Command System has been implemented. The IC will direct the necessary actions to control the incident and dispose of any hazard.
19. Actions which may take place before the arrival of the IC are:
  - a. Use personnel who are not assigned to zone security to perform evacuation notifications.

- b. Attempt to ensure that air traffic is restricted over the scene.
  - c. Identify all witnesses and ensure that the following information is obtained:
    - 1) Time of crash.
    - 2) Location of witnesses when the crash occurred.
    - 3) Weather at the time of crash.
    - 4) Aircraft direction in flight.
    - 5) Explosion prior to crash.
    - 6) Anything removed from the scene and by whom.
    - 7) The impact angle and position of survivors.
    - 8) The location of objects falling from the aircraft prior to the crash.
  - d. Conduct a thorough, wide search for survivors and other evidence, if necessary. Victims may be displaced from the immediate scene by the impact of the crash.
  - e. Ensure that all the crash debris is protected and that the wreckage and evidence are not disturbed.
  - f. Establish relocation points (e.g., schools, Salvation Army, Red Cross, fairgrounds, churches) and facilitate the movement of displaced citizens to these points.
  - g. Evacuate at least 2,000 feet downwind, if necessary. Inform evacuees of the approximate time when they may return to the area.
  - h. Arrange for security of the evacuation area.
  - i. Arrange for personnel relief.
20. Set up an area within the Cold Zone but outside the staging area for briefings with the media.
21. Ensure that officers decontaminate clothing and take proper precautionary measures if they have had any possible contact with hazardous material, its vapors, or any contaminated persons or equipment.

#### **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS:**

- 1. **Avoid physical contact with hazardous substances.** Dangerous exposures can occur through contact, inhalation, ingestion, or absorption. Hazardous substances may be odorless and colorless.
- 2. Eliminate open flames and the possibility of sparks from smoking, flares, electricity, etc. Shut off automobile engines. Never enter the Hot Zone in an automobile.
- 3. If an exposure occurs, decontaminate clothing.
- 4. The command post and general staging areas will be located in the Cold Zone.
- 5. The Warm Zone is where decontamination takes place and includes the staging area for entry into the Hot Zone.
- 6. Clearance to enter the Hot Zone must be approved by the Safety Officer or his designee.

#### **REGULATIONS:**

- 1. Any person who enters the Hot Zone shall be decontaminated before leaving the Warm Zone.
- 2. Officers shall not issue statements regarding the cause of the crash.
- 3. Officers shall not release the names of persons killed or seriously injured in aircraft crashes involving military or air carrier aircraft unless authorized to do so by the investigating authority.

#### **REFERENCES:**

111A, *Hazardous Materials*  
127, *Tulsa Police Reserve Emergency Call Out*  
132 Attachment, *Aircraft Crashes – Attachment*  
134, *Bomb Threats/Detonations*  
140, *Command Posts*  
*Major Incident Response Manual*