Aircraft Crashes

434.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

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

434.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

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

434.2.1 OFFICER RESPONSIBILITY

Officers should treat an aircraft crash site as a crime scene until it is determined that such is not the case. If a military aircraft is involved, additional dangers such as live ordinance or hazardous materials may be present. The scene may require additional security due to the potential presence of confidential equipment or information.

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

- Determine the extent of the crash.
- Request additional personnel and other resources to respond as needed.
- Provide assistance for the injured parties until the arrival of fire department personnel and/or other emergency personnel.
- Cordon off and contain the area to exclude unauthorized individuals as soon as practicable.
- Provide traffic and crowd control and other assistance until directed otherwise by a supervisor.
- Ensure the appropriate Medical Examiner's Office is notified if a death occurs.

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 reasonably 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 practicable.

The fire department will be responsible for control of the crash scene until the injured parties are cared for and the crash 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.

An airport service worker or the airport manager 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 crashes involving civil aircraft. In the case of a military aircraft incident,

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

Every effort should be made to preserve the scene to the extent reasonably 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, regardless of any injury or death.

If the crash 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. If the NTSB is not responding for an on-site investigation, removal of the wreckage shall be at the discretion of the pilot or the owner.

434.2.3 COMMUNICATIONS SECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

Dispatchers are responsible to make notifications as directed once an aircraft crash has been reported. The notifications will vary depending on the type of crash, 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 crash has occurred.

- Fire department.
- The affected airport tower.
- Closest military base if a military aircraft is involved.
- Ambulances or other assistance as required.

When an aircraft crash 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 Arizona Department of Transportation Aeronautics and Aviation Section, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Flight Standards District Office and NTSB. In the event that airport personnel are not involved, the dispatcher should notify the Arizona Department of Transportation Aeronautics and Aviation Section, the FAA and the NTSB.

434.2.4 RECORDS SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Records Supervisor is responsible for the following:

- Forward and maintain an approved copy of the accident report to the Arizona Department of Transportation Aeronautics and Aviation Section and the NTSB if requested.
- Forward a copy of the report to the Operations Deputy Police Chief of Operations and the manager of the affected airport.

434.2.5 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Police Department Public Information Officer is responsible for the following:

- Obtain information for a press release from the on-scene commander or a designee.
- When practicable, the Department Public Information Officer should coordinate with the FAA Press Information Officer on preparing a press release and distributing it to the media.

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Information released to the press regarding any aircraft crash should be handled by the Department Public Information Officer or in accordance with existing policy.

434.3 DOCUMENTATION

Any aircraft crash within the City, regardless of whether injuries or deaths occur, shall be documented.

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