

**MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
PATROL POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

**CHAPTER - EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
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**DATE
September 2, 1999
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AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT

POLICY

It is the policy of the Marin County Sheriff's Office to respond to and coordinate all aircraft accidents in its jurisdiction.

DEFINITIONS

Aircraft Accident: Any accident involving an aircraft, when the motion of the aircraft leads to the events or series of events, causing damage to property or injury and death to person(s).

PROCEDURES

The following duties and responsibilities shall apply in all instances in which an aircraft is involved in an accident.

The first unit on the scene shall evaluate the accident site and take the following actions.

- Check the need for fire and medical.
- Locate the exact site of the accident.
- Determine the number of casualties.
- Determine the extent of damage to the aircraft and/or any other property.
- Begin evacuation procedures, if needed.
- Request a Field Supervisor to the scene.
- Evaluate manpower needs and request additional personnel, if needed.
- Determine if a military aircraft is involved and the branch of the military of which the aircraft belongs, and whether it is in "Active Duty" status.
- The identification number of the aircraft and the owner, if known.

The Field Supervisor at the scene shall notify the Watch Commander or in his absence the Captain of Field Services, the Undersheriff or the Sheriff.

He or she shall evaluate the need to establish a Field Command Post and shall reevaluate the initial manpower request and make the necessary modifications.

The Field Supervisor shall determine the approximate boundaries of the involved area (include areas where wreckage might have fallen while the aircraft was still in flight) and shall make notification to surrounding municipalities. In the event of a major aircraft accident, traffic rerouting shall be requested through the California Highway Patrol.

If there are fatalities, Field Services shall secure the area until the Coroner's Office arrives. If there are no deaths, the area shall be secured until the proper investigative agency arrives at the scene. Additional assistance, as needed, shall be provided to the outside investigative agency.

The Watch Commander shall be responsible for establishing an incident command system, if needed, and notification of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Captain of Field Services, the Undersheriff and the Sheriff. The Watch commander shall, if needed, request a restricted airspace through the FAA. This is covered by 91.91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations. The purpose of this is to provide a safe environment for the operation of disaster relief aircraft and to prevent unsafe congestion of sight-seeing aircraft in the area of an incident or event, which may attract a high degree of public interest.

PROCEDURES NON-MILITARY AIRCRAFT

Take photographs as soon as practical. Bodies and articles removed from the wreckage are best documented by photographs.

A perimeter should be established around the crash site. All aircraft accidents should be treated as a crime scene until it is determined differently. The containment of a crash site should be done as quickly as possible to preserve any possible evidence. All civilians, including members of the press, as well as the owner of the aircraft, shall be prevented from entering the secured perimeter.

Keep activities around the wreckage to a minimum to prevent unnecessary disturbance of the wreckage and eradication of valuable evidence.

Remove articles from the wreckage only if it is determined that they will be damaged, lost or destroyed in their current state. Document the position of any article moved, giving the original position and the location placed. Obtain names and addresses of any witnesses.

INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Marin County Sheriff's Office is responsible for preservation of the accident site and coordination of local agency support activities in accordance with this Order.

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has the overall investigative responsibility for all fatal civil aircraft accidents. The purpose of the NTSB investigation is to determine the actual factors for the accident. (The response of the NTSB is sometimes delayed 24 hours.)

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) investigates all civil aircraft accidents to determine whether there has been a violation of FAA regulations. The FAA will normally work in conjunction with the NTSB.

Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) is responsible for conducting the criminal investigation if there is an indication that the aircraft accident occurred as a result of criminal activity. In that event, the Sheriff's Investigative Unit will assist the FBI as requested.

Military authorities have complete jurisdiction over aircraft accidents that involve only military aircraft. In any accident that involves both military and civilian aircraft, the NTSB, FAA, and the Marin County Sheriff's Office will be responsible for the investigation.

CORONER

The coroner is responsible for the directing and coordinating of the recovery, collection, identification and processing of the deceased and their personal effects.

SUSPECTED PILOT INTOXICATION

If, during the investigation of any aircraft accident, the Investigating Deputy suspects the pilot may be under the influence of an intoxicant, the same procedure for a suspected 23152 CVC violation should be followed.

The regulation governing flying an aircraft while intoxicated is Section 91.11 Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR). While there is no statute that mandates a violator of 91.11 to take a blood, breath, or urine test, the violator should be asked to take one of the tests.

RELATED STANDARDS:

91.91 Federal Aviation Regulations
91.11 Federal Aviation Regulations.

AFFECTED DIVISIONS:

Patrol
Communications
Investigations

DATE OF REVISIONS:

1/29/90

By order of

DENNIS M. FINNEGAN
UNDERSHERIFF