

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**DIVISION OF FORESTRY**  
**AVIATION INCIDENT/ACCIDENT**  
**RESPONSE**  
**GUIDE**

**2002**

**Note: This guide is available on the DOF external Internet Site. This copy does not include all the necessary Regional / Area specific contact names and numbers. Each Area/Regional Office must download this document from the external Internet site update it with local contact information. This document is designed to be written on. When an aircraft incident or accident occurs use this document to record your actions and the steps that are taken during your emergency response.**

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**Thoughts to consider in any aviation operation:**

You are now in charge of a **sacred trust, the safety of human lives.**

You **must not let undue pressure (expressed or implied) influence your judgment** during the performance of this sacred trust.

You must be able to “**develop a team**” in which members must participate and contribute to the safety of the operation.

You must **delete “false pride,” “calculated risk,” “real world,” and “good enough for Government work”** from your professional vocabulary.

You **must not let your actions instill the attitude of competition between pilots or team members.** This attitude may hinder their performance and may compromise the safety of the mission.

**You will not be criticized or stigmatized for any decision you make which will ensure added safety to an operation.**

**PLAN \* ACT \* INFORM \* COORDINATE \* LOCATE \* RECOVER \* SECURE \* RECORD**

**\*Someone's Life May Depend on Your Actions**

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**AVIATION INCIDENTS**

Aviation incidents include hazards, maintenance deficiencies, airspace conflicts or any act, event, or circumstance which affects or compromise safety of aircraft operations.

**Anyone may (and should) report aviation incidents.** This includes pilots, passengers, dispatchers, aircraft managers, ground personnel, etc. The reporting and wide dissemination of aviation incidents is a good accident prevention tool. It identifies safety concerns and increases safety awareness, may indicate trends, may prevent similar situations from re-occurring and promotes aviation involvement and team building.

Aviation incidents are reported on the **SAFECOM** form (**OAS-34/FS 5700-14**). Anyone may complete the form but it should be submitted through dispatch or aviation program management personnel. The form may be submitted anonymously. If an individual chooses not to, or cannot, submit the form in writing they can report the incident verbally to a dispatcher or Aviation staff.

**REPORTING PROCEDURES:**

**SAFECOM REPORTS:**

SAFECOM reports should be used to report any condition, observance, act maintenance problem, or circumstances, which has the potential to cause an aviation related mishap. An electronic version, available on the DOF internal web site (<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/int>) allows. The electronic form is recommended by the Division's Aviation Management staff to provide clear, legible reporting in a standard form that is easily shared with all cooperating agencies. The process of SAFECOM reporting is as follows:

1. Fill out the form completely and legibly. The narrative should be concise, factual, and objective.
2. Submit the SAFECOM to the appropriate Regional Aviation Manager through the Regional Logistics Office, or to the State-wide Aviation Office attn: State Aviation Manager, or State Aircraft Maintenance Inspector as soon as possible.
3. Dissemination: To the appropriate Division or Regional Aviation Manager

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4. Action. Local aviation manager may take corrective action, if appropriate. State or regional managers may follow-up, provide feedback or take additional action.

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**OVERDUE AIRCRAFT**

An aircraft normally will be initially considered "overdue" when it has not completed a required check-in by radio or telephone within the time frame specified of agency requirements or specified in the flight request, flight plan, resource order. This time frame may be an elapsed period of time such as "every 30 minutes" for agency flight following or may be an "estimated time of arrival (ETA) at a destination or reporting point during a point-to-point itinerary/FAA flight plan. Do not announce the name(s) of individuals or the aircraft operator (vendor) on the radio.

Dispatchers or persons responsible for flight following are responsible for initiating and documenting all actions and contacts with date/time/action taken as specified by this guide. If the status of an overdue aircraft changes (especially locating the aircraft), notify all previously made contacts of the change.

If the overdue aircraft is not located before anticipated fuel exhaustion, declare the aircraft missing and proceed with the search and rescue (SAR) phase (see Missing Aircraft checklist).

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>CONTACT &amp; PHONE #</b>	<b>TIME COMPLETED</b>
Immediately at overdue time	Attempt to contact by radio or phone.  Contact destination agency airbase or airport.  Complete Overdue Aircraft Info Sheet (below).		
15 minutes past due	Contact originating or enroute agency dispatch/airbase.  Contact originating or enroute airport(s).		
30 minutes past due	Contact vendor home base.  Contact FAA Flight Service Station: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- give known flight info</li> <li>- request commo, ramp, ELT check.</li> </ul>		
Fuel duration exceeded	Declare as "Missing Aircraft".  Notify (Regional Aviation Manager) Notify (State Aviation Manager)  Notify Regional Duty Officer (see schedule near TTY).		

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**OVERDUE AIRCRAFT INFO SHEET** (Complete as information becomes available)

<b>1.</b>	<b>Type of Aircraft:</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Registration #:</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Color:</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Type of Mission:</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>FAA or Agency Flt Plan?</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Pilot Name(s):</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>No. &amp; Names of Pax</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Departure Point/Time (ATD):</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Est. Time of Arrival (ETA):</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Last known location/time (lat/long):</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Amt. of fuel on board (FOB) or max flt. time for a/c:</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Other Information:</b>

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**MISSING AIRCRAFT**

An aircraft is officially missing when its fuel duration has been exceeded and the aircraft's location is not known. The Missing Aircraft designation requires that all the items on the following checklist are completed and available for reference purposes when conducting this phase (previous section). Documentation of all actions, contacts, conversations, and time is an absolute necessity during the missing aircraft phase.

Notify the Regional Duty Officer and Aviation Manager immediately upon declaration of "Missing Aircraft". The Regional Aviation Manager will perform indicated actions, if available, otherwise the dispatcher is responsible to complete all items.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>CONTACT &amp; PHONE #</b>	<b>TIME COMPLETED</b>
<b>DISPATCH:</b>		
Notify Alaska Coordination Center (ACC)	ACC-Initial Attack Desk 907-356-5670	
Dispatch Helitack/Air Attack/SMJ A/C with EMT (if applicable)		
Continue radio and phone search		
Alert Rescue Coordination Center of possible SAR*	RCC 800-420-7230 or 907-428-7230 *FAA FSS may complete	
Assist/coordinate agency SAR effort		
Continue documenting all actions/contacts/ results		
<b>AVIATION MANAGER:</b>		
Request SAR with Flight Service Station (FSS)	Kenai / Fairbanks FSS 800-478-3576 Palmer FSS 745-2495 McGrath FSS 907-524-3935	
Inform State & Regional Aviation Manager	Matt Tomter – wk:761-6271; cell: 232-7149	
Inform Local Agency Unit Line Officer		
Inform Local Agency Public Information Officer		
Inform State Troopers	24 Dispatch 907-428-7200	
Complete SAFECOM form		
Other Notes:		

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**AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT**

Aircraft accident notification may be reported by individuals involved in the accident, witnesses, search aircraft, general aviation aircraft and others. The agency dispatch office receiving the report becomes responsible for action, rescue, notification, coordination, and documentation. The following required actions are listed in priority. **\*Do not announce names of parties involved over the radio.**

**ACCIDENT INFORMATION**

<b>Name of Person Reporting the Accident:</b>			
<b>Contact Phone # and/or Frequency:</b>			
<b>Date &amp; Time Reported:</b>			
<b>Date &amp; Time of Accident (if known):</b>			
<b>Location of Accident: Geographic:</b>			
<b>Lat/Long:</b>			
<b>VOR:</b>	<b>degrees</b>	<b>NM</b>	
<b>VOR:</b>	<b>degrees</b>	<b>NM</b>	
<b>Access to Site: Road?</b>		<b>Helispot?</b>	
<b>Number &amp; Type of Injuries:</b>		<b>*Do not announce names over the radio</b>	
<b>Number of fatalities:</b>		<b>*Do not announce names over the radio</b>	
<b>Type of Aircraft:</b>			
<b>Color:</b>			
<b>Registration No.:</b>			
<b>Owner/Vendor:</b>			
<b>Pilot(s) Name:</b>			
<b>Destination &amp; ETA:</b>			
<b>Departure Point &amp; Time:</b>			
<b>Type of Mission:</b>			
<b>Other Information:</b>			

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**AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT ACTIONS**

ACTION	CONTACT & PHONE NO.	TIME COMPLETED
Maintain communication with accident site or person reporting		
Activate local airbase Crash Rescue Plan (if on PAAQ)		
Activate ground ambulance (if applicable)		
Dispatch helitack / Air Attack / SMJ w/ EMT (if applicable)		
Activate air ambulance (if applicable)	See <i>Helicopter Ambulance</i> section of this Guide	
Notify State Troopers	Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) – 800-420-7230	
Notify FAA Flight Service Station	Palmer FSS – 745-2495 Kenai/ Faibanks FSS- 800-478-3576 McGrath FSS 907-524-3935	
Notify hospital (if applicable)		
Request TFR through ARTCC (if needed)	Anchorage Center – 907-269-1119	
Ensure security at accident site	See <i>Preparing for the Investigation Team</i> section of this Guide	
Notify agency personnel		
Notify NTSB	(907) 271-3005	

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**HELICOPTER AMBULANCE REQUEST INFORMATION**

**A. Injury Information:**

1. Total personnel involved in mishap \_\_\_\_\_
2. Time of mishap \_\_\_\_\_
3. Type or extent of injuries (vitals, other medical personnel on scene):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B. Site Information:**

1. Unit/Agency: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Contact telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Radio frequency to contact unit/agency: VHF-AM \_\_\_\_\_ VHF-FM \_\_\_\_\_
4. Location of mishap:
  - a. Township \_\_\_\_\_ Range \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4 Section \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Latitude \_\_\_\_\_ Longitude \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ nautical miles at \_\_\_\_\_ degrees from \_\_\_\_\_ VOR
  - c. Prominent landmark:  
Description \_\_\_\_\_ Distance \_\_\_\_\_ Direction \_\_\_\_\_
5. Site Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Radio frequency at mishap site:  
Primary: VHF-AM \_\_\_\_\_ VHF-FM \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary: VHF-AM \_\_\_\_\_ VHF-FM \_\_\_\_\_
6. Other known aircraft in the area (call signs): \_\_\_\_\_  
Air-to-Air Frequency:  
Primary: VHF-AM \_\_\_\_\_ VHF-FM \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary: VHF-AM \_\_\_\_\_ VHF-FM \_\_\_\_\_
7. Special information, flight hazards, MOAs, MTRs, etc.:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Landing site(s) and conditions (is it completed or when will it be completed?):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Proximity of landing site to mishap site: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Nearest available AV Gas/Jet A fuel: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Conditions at the mishap site:  
Wind direction \_\_\_\_\_ Wind velocity \_\_\_\_\_  
Ceiling \_\_\_\_\_ Visibility \_\_\_\_\_  
Obstructions to visibility \_\_\_\_\_  
Temperature \_\_\_\_\_ degrees (F or C) \_\_\_\_\_ Elevation \_\_\_\_\_  
Sunrise \_\_\_\_\_ (local time) Sunset \_\_\_\_\_ (local time)  
Description of Terrain \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Note: EMS helicopters do not usually carry extrication equipment nor are the EMS personnel always trained in these procedures: Clarify the need, if possible and capability of dispatched aircraft.

## **PREPARING FOR THE INVESTIGATION TEAM**

An aircraft accident can be a serious and traumatic event. This is a checklist of some tasks, which both the Line Manager and Aviation Manager can use to take charge of the accident scene and prepare for the arrival of a trained aircraft accident investigator and/or the aircraft accident investigation team. Some items may not be applicable and others may need to be added, depending on the circumstances of the accident. This list was developed with the objective of providing a place to start during upsetting times.

A. General. The local Line Manager should establish an Officer-in-Charge of Search/Rescue. The first agency employee to arrive at the scene of the accident will be responsible for crash site protection until relieved by Accident Scene Officer-in-Charge or by the appointed accident investigation team. Accident scene protection by the Line Manager can last from a few hours to several days, depending upon location, accessibility, etc. The time will depend on which level of the organization will take jurisdiction, what intermediate actions are taken and how long it will take the investigation team to travel to the site, assemble, organize, and take charge.

B. Off-Scene Responsibilities. The Officer-in-Charge will ensure the following off-scene tasks are accomplished:

1. Procedures in this Aircraft Crash, Search, and Rescue Guide are followed; emergency notifications made promptly.
2. Determine accident scene land ownership. If the accident site is determined to be on Private or State Lands, ensure that notification is made to the appropriate parties.
3. Inform receptionists and others who may answer the telephone to pay particular attention to anyone calling in who may have witness information. The investigation team will want to contact those persons, so they will need names and telephone numbers for later contact.
4. Prepare a list of names, telephone numbers, addresses, etc., of all known witnesses at or near the accident scene.
5. Obtain all available weather data for the area. Order additional weather information to be taken at weather stations in the area, and be prepared to do it again 24 hours later. The information may be needed to compare with weather readings at the accident scene to estimate the weather at the time and place of the accident.
6. Determine when and where the aircraft was last fueled, and request the supplier to take fuel samples for the agency to pick up later. It is best if the Officer-in-Charge can do the fuel sample at the last fueling site; but it is recognized that this is not always possible.
7. Obtain the following names and telephone numbers:
  - a. The sheriff or other local law enforcement officer having jurisdiction.
  - b. The coroner or other person having jurisdiction over the removal of the remains.
  - c. The attending medical doctor for those injured in the accident.

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- d. The landowner if the accident occurred off Federally owned lands.
  - e. The names and telephone numbers of any reporters who have requested information for media dissemination. The chief investigator or Agency PIO will be in touch with them, when information becomes available.
8. Arrange transportation for the use of the investigation team. Two vehicles will probably be needed and one person who is familiar with the area-hospital, sheriff's office, witness addresses, etc. A helicopter and/or airplane may be needed for transportation of the team to remote sites.
  9. Arrange lodging for the team at a city/town nearest the accident site.
  10. Prepare for a brief entrance conference with the chief investigator upon his arrival. The local Line Manager should make available all personnel involved in the flight (Aviation Manager, Dispatcher, etc.)
  11. Obtain five topographic and agency maps of the area. Aerial photographs, if available, plus any other maps the unit believes will be helpful to the investigation team, should be included.
  12. If the aircraft was under contract to the agency, secure a copy of the contract for the investigation team.
  13. Obtain agency radio logs, tapes, flight request/schedule, weather observations and forecasts, etc., that may contain information (no information can also be evidence) relating to the accident.
  14. Determine whom the Line Manager wants to designate as the unit's primary contact with the chief investigator.
  15. Establish a work area with desk, telephone, and computer station for use by the chief investigator.

C. On-Scene Responsibilities. The Officer-in-Charge will ensure the following on-scene tasks are accomplished.

1. Deactivate (disable) the emergency location transmitter (ELT). (Most positive method is battery removal).
2. Prevent unauthorized people from conducting activities that will destroy important information. Ground impact points should be preserved; that is, people should not be walking around to satisfy their curiosity. They may damage evidence.
3. Ensure that personnel involved in the search and rescue do not broadcast the names of aircraft occupants or state the extent of injuries over the radio system.

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4. Personnel should be advised that the wreckage is hazardous. Fuel can burn; tires can explode; gases and metals can be ingested by the body; bacteria can be present; corrosive liquids may be exposed; liquid and solid poisons may be present; chemical reactions may have occurred, especially if there has been a fire; personal baggage and equipment contain unknown items; etc. The Officer-in-Charge should stay away from the wreckage and keep others away from it until a trained aircraft accident investigator arrives. Personal risk should only be taken to assist evacuation of the injured. The removal of bodies falls within the Coroner's (local/State/county) authority.

5. Prepare written notes on all activities at the accident scene. Each recording should include the date and time of the activity and observation. Ensure an accurate recording will be made by someone until the wreckage is removed. Examples include:

- a. The time the agency Officer-in-Charge arrived at the scene.
- b. Other personnel who were or may have been at the accident location (date/time/location relative to the crash site) before the arrival of the Officer-in-Charge.
- c. Weather observations and any odors (such as fuel) noticed upon arrival.
- d. Any wreckage moved or removed and by whom.
- e. First aid and medical assistance rendered to the injured.
- f. Removal of fatally injured persons necessitates the recording of:
  - (1) Which body came from which seat, or where it was found.
  - (2) Seat belt usage (or lack thereof).
  - (3) A description of type and color of clothing.
  - (4) A witnessed statement (inventory of personal effects removed, such as counting cash in wallet, listing all identification cards, match books, loose pocket change, keys, pocket notebooks, pens, personal protective equipment worn or found).
  - (5) Names of all persons visiting the accident scene after arrival of the Officer-in-Charge.
  - (6) Any other information that might help the investigation team.

6. Take photographs, if possible, before removing remains or disturbing wreckage. This should be foregone if there are injured that need to be evacuated. In that case a written recording and/or photographs taken after the fact will suffice. Preserving life is the number one priority.

7. Flag or rope off the accident scene to prevent unauthorized access. Colored flagging is preferred, to allow for later pictures taken from the air by the investigation team.

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8. Accept all written narrative witness statements, place them in an envelope, and transmit them to a central point for collection by the investigation team or by the first trained investigator that arrives. To the extent possible, do not allow anyone to verbally question the witness. Questions by an untrained person can contaminate (modify and/or change) the information the witness will provide. Encourage written statements made by each person; attempt to separate all witnesses.
  
9. Take all other prudent actions to:
  - a. Preserve life
  - b. Protect people at the scene
  - c. Protect and preserve information

