

## APPENDIX J

### GUIDE FOR WITNESSES OF AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS

This guide has been prepared for Texas Forest Service personnel who may witness an aircraft accident or arrive on the accident scene before the Accident Investigation Team.

- A. Rescue. This is the first action to be taken at the scene. If survivors are in the wrecked aircraft and rescue appears possible, remember:
1. Use care in approaching the wreckage by vehicle, particularly if the approach is along the crash path, as survivors may have been thrown out.
  2. Render first aid to survivors until relieved by medical personnel. Use caution and be aware of the blood –borne pathogen problem.
  3. If there are indications of a spreading post-crash fire or possible explosion from fuel vapor, move survivors a safe distance away; otherwise, do not disturb them except as necessary for first aid. The witness should either request medical assistance for the injured or transportation to the nearest hospital.
  4. Keep bystanders or any unauthorized personnel out of the area.
  5. Establish a no smoking rule to help prevent possible fire.
- B. Searching the Wreckage. If you are the first to arrive at the wreckage scene you may find no one. Several possibilities exist: occupants may have parachuted, may have been thrown clear, or may have survived and gone off in search of help. Look around crash path. Call out. A survivor you can't see may hear you. In accidents where the aircraft has disintegrated in flight, both wreckage and occupants may be scattered over a large area.
- C. Notification. Notification of an aircraft crash should be through regular command channels to the Texas Interagency Coordination Center. The following basic information should be included in the crash modification:
1. Give your name and location from where you are calling.
  2. Report the time the aircraft crashed and whether or not there is a fire.
  3. Give accurate geographical location on how to reach the site.
  4. Number of and extent of injuries.
  5. Type of medical help needed.
  6. Give the number of aircraft on the fuselage or tail if possible.

- D. Protect Property. Fire and explosion are always possibilities at a crash scene until the area has been properly secured by fire fighters or other appropriate personnel. Fire sources include residual fuel ignited by hot metal or oxygen bottle cook off from heat generation.
- E. Preservation of the Accident Site. Each and every piece of the aircraft, its location and its position is important to investigators in determining the sequence of events, causes of the accident, and injuries involved. Lessons learned from each accident are used to prevent future accidents from like causes and to improve aircraft equipment design.

Nothing should be disturbed other than what is necessary to rescue survivors. If there are fatalities, the bodies should not be moved until positive identification is made, since location of bodies may help determine significant facts about the accident. Above all, no part, no matter how small, should be disturbed, for even instrument readings, control positions and injury patterns can be determined from smashed equipment. Every effort should be made to prevent souvenir hunting, as a small component is often a key factor. Even marks on the ground are important clues, so entry and movement of people and vehicles should be held to a minimum for this reason. Any photographs could be of great help to investigators. Modern aircraft constructed from composite materials will produce hazardous residue contained in the smoke.

- F. Witnesses. Witnesses are extremely important in helping to determine the cause of the accident. Names and addresses of all witnesses should be taken for subsequent interview by accident investigators.