



## Emergency Response Plan Drill

In-house, Tabletop, ERP Drill

### *Instructions to the Safety Officer:*

This is a simulation of a minor accident at an airport (XYZ) that you frequently use, which is a two hour flight from your home base. This version will exercise most aspects of your ERP, yet should not take more than a few hours to complete. You are the referee in this exercise, so you control the release of information to the players. Schedule this exercise on a day where the carrier managers are willing to devote a morning or afternoon to the effort.

When someone needs to make one of the many calls, have that person leave the room. They can then write down who they called, and write up a brief summary of what the call was supposed to accomplish. This takes that individual away from the scenario, and makes it a more accurate simulation. For example: Your Director of Operations has to recall another one of your aircraft. While he is calling the crew (away from the room) the **H+30 Minute** release takes place. He will not know that the hospital called, and will have to be briefed in. What happens when three of four people have to make a call? The room could be nearly empty, and some important information may be missed.

Make sure you keep a log. This cannot be stressed enough. You would be keeping a log if it was an actual event, so get into the practice of doing it the correct way, right now. This will be a great way to evaluate your own performance, as well as the other principles in the drill.

Remember that all this is made up, and designed to be a learning experience, not a stressful situation. Here's how you run the show.

Enjoy the exercise!

**Scenario:** One of your aircraft has just picked up 2 passengers from a regional airport approximately 1000 miles away. The aircraft picked up a piece of FOD during the take-off roll which caused the right main tire to puncture, and then disintegrate. Too slow to rotate, the crew attempted to abort the take-off, but lost control of the aircraft when the right gear folded. The aircraft slid off the right side of the runway, spinning 270 degrees to the right before coming to rest 150 feet off the runway. The crew experienced bruises and sprains. Passenger #1, who was seated on the right side of the aircraft, is just shook up. Passenger #2, who was seated on the left side of the aircraft, struck his head on the window, and was knocked unconscious. Passenger #2 has special health needs that required medication (i.e. diabetes, etc.) This is how to run the drill:



## Preparation

1. Preparation: Ensure each manager has a copy of the ERP folders, and has read through the portion that pertains to his offices. Make sure the notification table, with everyone's home and cell phone numbers, is current. Designate a conference room with phones and fax to work the exercise.
2. Schedule this exercise in advance, and have the management personnel assemble in the conference room with their copies of the ERP, at the start of the exercise, which we will call "H hour."
3. Release the attached "Exercise Inputs" at the times indicated for each one. Controlling the release of information not only improves realism, but allows the entire management team to participate in solving each problem. The purpose of this exercise is to validate your ERP, and to rewrite the manual if glitches are found.
4. Keep a log of what the management team does throughout the exercise to solve problems and to simulate coordination with outside agencies. Make sure it is accurate with names, dates, times, etc. This will be valuable later in the self-critique. In an actual accident, this log could be essential for many reasons: Liability, proof of actions taken, etc.
5. Keep this exercise "in-house" by simulating the coordination with outside agencies. As the management team becomes more experienced at coordinating the company's response to an accident, other agencies can be invited to participate and exercise their own emergency manuals alongside yours.
6. At the end of the exercise, go over your notes, and record any open concerns by the participants which may require reworking of the manual on your part. Schedule a meeting when you feel you can present the team with a finished summary of the exercise, open items, problems that were identified and resolved, and other suggestions for the next exercise.



## **ERP Basic Exercise**

Exercise Inputs: Timed releases

**H Hour:** You receive a call from the airfield manager at XYZ stating that one of your aircraft has just run off the side of the runway while on takeoff roll. As the plane exited the side of the runway at high speed, one or more landing gear collapsed, and the aircraft skidded to a stop on the grass, 150 feet off the runway. There is no fire, and rescue trucks and ambulance are enroute to the scene.

**Goal:** Team leader should ensure the ERP is activated, critical managers are alerted and recalled to the office, and confirm the details you can from your own flight schedule.

**Analyst Notes:** *The call list should be activated. This is where you will see what phone numbers have not been updated, and who is difficult to reach, for example: "Mrs. Smith is on vacation, who is doing her job???"*

**H+5 minutes:** Carrier records show that the accident jet was a live trip with four hours of fuel on board, two pilots, and two passengers. The passengers are mid-level executives from your company (if you operate Part 91) or are regular charter passengers (if you operate 135).

**Goal:** Resources of the company should be directed to identify the crewmembers and the passengers by name, and the aircraft by tail number. The passenger manifest should have been readily available. Consult the manifest for pertinent information regarding your passengers. If your passengers have special needs, like Passenger #2's medical condition, this needs to be found right here, and quickly.

**Analyst Notes:** *The information on Passenger #2's medical condition is set up for you to evaluate the system you have in place regarding passenger information. It is not nearly enough just to have a phone number in case of an emergency. Part 91 flight departments have it a lot easier than Part 135 charter operators in this regard. Make sure you keep your passenger information up to date, and that any special needs or concerns are noted.*

**H+15 minutes:** Airfield manager confirms that four victims were extracted from the aircraft and taken to a local hospital with injuries. He informs you that one of the passengers was unconscious (though you have no way of knowing which). The aircraft is intact, with one main gear or collapsed, and the airfield manager needs a rep. to come out and help plan for moving the wreckage so they can reopen the airport.

**Goal:** If you have a 'Go-Team' this is where you begin the process of deploying it. The management team can now go forward with several items on the ERP checklists: Identify the crew, notify their families, send a rep to the hospital, notify the customer, call the FAA and/or NTSB, and call the legal and insurance reps. The management team should also



recall to those ops and maintenance experts needed to man the on-site deployment team if they are not on the premises. These actions should be done 'in-house' and outside calls simulated for this exercise.

**Analyst Notes:** *Does the hospital know about Passenger #2's special condition? This is an important time in the drill. There are a lot of calls taking place, and it is easy to get behind. Take notes on how things are progressing so you can see what areas need attention.*

**H+30 minutes:** The hospital calls with preliminary reports on the condition of the crew and passengers. All crew injuries consist of bruises and sprains, and one of the passengers is fine. One of the Passengers (#2) was unconscious, but has since regained consciousness. He will be admitted for observation.

**Goal:** Is this classified as an accident or an incident? Read the paragraphs of NTSB Part 830 and see if this meets the accident criteria.

**Analyst Notes:** *There should be no hesitation in the realization that this will be an accident (you can safely assume that the damage is more than \$25,000. You should be preparing for worst case scenarios, anyway). How up to date are you pilot files...Aircraft MX documented as well? Have you had any outsourced MX lately? You can be assured that they are going to be the center of intense scrutiny.*

**H+45 minutes:** A reporter from the local paper calls your operator. He wants a statement on the accident. Within a few minutes another reporter calls, this time from CNN. They will be going live with a shot of your aircraft from a helicopter in 20 minutes.

**Goal:** The "PR manager" or equivalent should write a brief statement of what happened using the guidelines in the ERP. The team can work on the wording of the release. Do you have a manager who will act as the family assistance team, meeting face to face with families of crewmembers involved in an accident? Can the responder perform duties listed in the ERP?

**Analyst Notes:** *With the advent of the 'information age' it is not difficult to get aircraft registration information from the FAA website. Watch to see how your PR department (or individual) handles this. Stick to the minimum info you can give. By this time, all the crew and passenger families should have been notified. If not, you have a huge problem on your hands. We are hitting you with the media attention 45 minutes in to the drill. That is more time than you should expect, so keep that in mind.*

**H+1 hour:** The FAA calls to say they are treating the mishap as an accident, and have notified the NTSB. They want all records and manuals sequestered, so the investigators can begin reviewing them later. The aircraft can be moved, as long as pictures are taken of the entire site before evidence is disturbed. By the way, have you tested the crew for



drug and alcohol use, following the accident? You also need to begin working on the NTSB Accident report form.

**Goal:** Managers with control of crew and maintenance manuals and records have responsibilities for safeguarding crew and aircraft records and manuals in the event of an accident. These actions should be accomplished during this exercise, to show how it is done, and whether it can actually be accomplished, given the current state of records and manuals.

**Analyst Notes:** *Do you have a procedure for post-accident testing of crewmembers? Do you have each crewmember's work and training history in a single form, up to date? Once you have the results (negative, hopefully) back from these tests, it is one less item to worry about.*

**H+1.5 hours:** The airfield manager has contracted for a crane and a flatbed truck, and the question is: what do you want to do with the plane? Do you have a storage area where you can store the wreckage and allow the investigation to continue?

**Goal:** Reorganize work, clear space for long term work, and accident investigation. Secure other resources, or subcontractor, for remaining flights that were scheduled for the accident aircraft, and crew.

**Analyst Notes:** *It helps to have a good relationship with the airports you frequent. When something like this happens, they can be an invaluable resource. You don't want to be looking through the phone book under "CRANES" and hoping to find someone who won't turn your damaged aircraft into a totaled aircraft!*

**H+2 hours:** You receive a call from one of your pilots. He is concerned about the expenses accrued in the hospital. He gives you the details of the accident, and tells you about the piece of debris that he was unable to avoid hitting. The airport manager calls with information regarding moving and storing the aircraft.

**Goal:** Appropriate personnel should be involved in briefing the survivors and their families on what benefits are being provided.

**Analyst Notes:** *This should generate some interesting conversations regarding the liability issue. Also, someone should be thinking about securing the aircraft. Didn't someone's checklist have something about contracting with local cops or private security to protect your assets?*

**H+3.5 hours:** The crew and passenger #1 have been released, and are hounded at the hospital by several reporters. Passenger #2 will be held overnight, but is expected to be



released tomorrow. CNN shows a lovely overhead view of the crane lifting your aircraft onto a flatbed. The company switchboard is lit up.

**Goal:** Keep the investigation and security issues going, while dealing with the media. PR assets should be working to bring things back on an even keel.

**Analyst Notes:** *If you have a 'Go-Team,' someone should be at the hospital, making sure your pilots and passengers' needs are being handled. If not, your crew should be briefed on how to handle the press. Are you finding it difficult trying to get your point across with all the phones ringing, and your crew trying to get out of the hospital? Maybe you should have trained your crews in handling crises like this. Is your office manager ready to quit? Could she have used some backup for the dozens of calls from the media, crew and your passengers' families, etc? Bring in help for whoever needs it.*

Good Job! You made it through! Take some time, and review your notes. Go over the points that worked, and those that didn't work as well as you hoped.

View the different liability issues that should be apparent. Involve the non-line managers to discuss legal actions that occur after an accident.

Review your log, and write up a report. Schedule a brief so that you can review what worked, and what did not. Make the necessary changes to your Emergency Response Plan, and get ready for you next **Emergency Response Plan Drill**.