

Threat Assessment 8-A Transportation: Major Air Crash

General Situation

A major air crash that occurs in a populated residential area can result in considerable loss of life and property. The impact of a disabled aircraft as it strikes the ground creates the likely potential for multiple explosions, resulting in intense fires. Regardless of where the crash occurs, the explosions and fires have the potential to cause injuries, fatalities and the destruction of property at and adjacent to the impact point. The time of day when the crash occurs may have a profound affect on the number of dead and injured. Damage assessment and disaster relief efforts associated with an air crash incident will require support from other local governments, private organizations and in certain instances from the state and federal governments.

It can be expected that few, if any, airline passengers will survive a major air crash. The intense fires, until controlled, will limit search and rescue operations. Police barricades will be needed to block off the affected area. The crowds of onlookers and media personnel will have to be controlled. Emergency medical care, food and temporary shelter will be required by injured or displaced persons. Many families maybe separated, particularly if the crash occurs during working hours; and a locator system should be established at a location convenient to the public. Investigators from the National Transportation and Safety Board and the Los Angeles County Coroners Office will have short-term jurisdiction over the crash area and investigations will be completed before the area is released for clean up. The clean-up operation may consist of the removal of large debris, clearing of roadways, demolishing unsafe structures and towing of demolished vehicles.

It can be anticipated that the mental health needs of survivors and the surrounding residents will greatly increase due to the trauma associated with such a catastrophe. A coordinated response team, comprised of mental health professionals, should take a proactive approach toward identifying and addressing mental health needs stemming from any traumatic disaster. The American Red Cross is mandated by Congress to provide assistance to families and victims of air crashes.

It is impossible to totally prepare, either physically or psychologically, for the aftermath of a major air crash. However, since Southern California has become one of the nation's most overcrowded air spaces, air crash incidents are no longer a probability but a reality. Therefore, air crash incidents must be included among other potential disasters.

Specific Situation

The City of Bradbury is located in the eastern portion of Los Angeles County. The City is comprised of residential and agricultural areas. The skies above Bradbury are occupied by aircraft originating and departing from a number of airports located in Southern California. The airports nearest to Bradbury which handle the greatest amount of air traffic are as follows:

The **Ontario International Airport**—It is ranked 6th busiest airport in the state in terms of air traffic that it handles and is experiencing a 3 percent growth rate, which is projected to continue.

The **Burbank Airport**—It is ranked 7th busiest airport in the state in terms of air traffic that it handles and has experienced a 9.4 percent growth rate since 1993. Also, airport hours of operation are restricted to 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM.

El Monte Airport- has no commercial traffic, but serves charter and private aviation users. The tower is unmanned and operates on visual flight rules.

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)

Aircraft flying over Bradbury are located in the Los Angeles Terminal Control Area (TCA). The TCA is airspace restricted to large, commercial airliners. Each TCA has an established maximum and minimum altitude in which a large aircraft must travel. Smaller aircraft desiring to transit the TCA may do so by obtaining Air Traffic Control clearance. The aircraft may then proceed to transit when traffic conditions permit. Aircraft departing from other than LAX, whose route of flight would penetrate the TCA, are required to give this information to Air Traffic Control on appropriate frequencies. Pilots operating small aircraft often rely on geographical landmarks, rather than charts, to indicate their locations. If a pilot is unfamiliar with the geographical landmarks of the Southern California basin, he/she may misinterpret a particular landmark and inadvertently enter the restricted TCA airspace. This misunderstanding may result in a mid-air collision.

Smaller aircraft from El Monte and Brackett fields, as well as military aircraft often fly over Bradbury. As the City is against the mountains/foothills, it is common for smaller aircraft to circle over the City to gain altitude so that they can fly over the mountains in addition, due to our location, the radar from LAX does not penetrate over our city and smaller aircraft that wish to practice “stunt” flying will use this air space to avoid detection.

Emergency Response Actions

Emergency response actions applicable to all hazards are included in **Part Two Annexes, Checklist Actions for each Section.**

Attachment 1 – Map of Airport Locations

Attachment 1, Threat Assessment 8-A Map of Local Airports

