

C E R T A L E R T

ADVISORY * CAUTIONARY * NON-DIRECTIVE

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT CERTIFICATION BRANCH, AAS-310 267.8728

DATE: October 1, 1995

NO. 95-04

TO: AIRPORT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM INSPECTORS
TOPIC: AIRCRAFT RESCUE AND FIREFIGHTING
(ARFF) OFF-AIRPORT OPERATIONS

In July 1994, a DC-9 collided with trees just outside the airport boundary, shortly after executing the missed approach. There were injuries and fatalities as a result of the post-crash fire. Because the accident occurred off-airport, in severely restricted visibility, some time elapsed before the location of the accident was determined. ARFF responded with several vehicles, two of which were delayed because of difficulties opening the gate with a magnetic card. When the magnetic card did open the gate, it opened very slowly.

NTSB focused on these aspects of the accident in the Aircraft Accident Report, and subsequently issued Recommendation A-95-77, which stated that FAA should:

Require that all 14 CFR 139 certificated airports identify gates that aircraft rescue and fire fighting personnel and their equipment might need to access while responding to emergencies, and make the necessary changes to ensure that emergency personnel and their equipment can pass through these gates without hesitation or delay. Additionally, the gates that are identified and the procedures required to access them should be included in the airport Emergency Plan.

FAA has responded to the Recommendation by affirming its intent. While the primary responsibility of airport-based firefighting units is to respond to aircraft emergencies that occur on the airport, ARFF, in certain situations, may respond to events off the airport boundaries as part of the reciprocal agreements with those who provide mutual aid to the airport. The most common occurrence is that of the aircraft accident which occurs in an area adjacent to airport property. To reach the accident site, ARFF personnel may have to use perimeter gates which are locked or require special procedures for opening/closing.

ARFF personnel need to be knowledgeable of the location, identification, and specific operation of each of the perimeter gates designated for egress to off-airport sites. This knowledge is considered part of the airport familiarization required under Part 139.319(j).

FAA recognizes that any perimeter gate on the airfield has the potential for providing ARFF egress to an accident site. However, FAA does not believe that it is practical that all gates be "crash gates," designed for ARFF egress/access. Determinations about gate operations must be considered in the context of the airport's overall security requirements and economic conditions. FAA believes that firefighters should be familiar with the *operational characteristics* of all the gates on their airports that afford egress/access, so that they can efficiently exit the airport to provide assistance at an accident scene. These should be specifically included in the Airport Emergency Plan, and ARFF training should include operation of the various types of perimeter gates on the airport.

This Certalert will be sent to the American Association of Airport Executives and the Airports Council International for distribution to their members.

O/S Robert E. David
signed by: Benedict Costellano for

Manager, Airport Safety and Operations

Date

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