

► This RA has been substantially rewritten; for clarity no change marks are presented – please read RA in its entirety ◀

## RA 3311 – Aircraft Emergency and Crash Procedures

### Rationale

*Pilots handling an Aircraft emergency are likely to be under an increased workload and stress, resulting in them potentially having reduced spare capacity to be able to make effective decisions and process information correctly. The incorrect handling or lack of appropriate assistance, including the recognition of stress indicators, could exacerbate the situation and result in the delivery of unsafe operations. Therefore, it is vital that Air Traffic Control (ATC) personnel know how to appropriately handle an Aircraft emergency or crash to ensure that the pilot receives the necessary assistance required to achieve the optimal outcome.*

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### Regulation 3311(1)

#### Aircraft Emergency and Crash Procedures

3311(1) Head of Aviation Duty Holder-Facing Organizations and Accountable Manager (Military Flying)-Facing Organizations and Heads of Establishment **shall** ensure that emergency Aircraft are provided the assistance required.

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#### Aircraft Emergency and Crash Procedures

##### Emergency Procedures

1. Throughout all stages of handling an Aircraft emergency the delivery of calm and coordinated instructions are essential and the Controller **should** tailor their actions accordingly to the situation<sup>1</sup> and the pilot's ability to respond.
2. On notification that an Aircraft is suffering an emergency, the Controller **should**:
  - a. Ensure that the pilot has passed the relevant information within the emergency message<sup>2</sup> below and elicit any that are missing:
    - (1) MAYDAY x3 or PAN PAN x3;
    - (2) Name of the station addressed;
    - (3) Callsign;
    - (4) Type of Aircraft;
    - (5) Nature of the emergency;
    - (6) Intention of the pilot (person-in-command);
    - (7) Present or last known position, Flight Level (FL) / altitude and heading;
    - (8) Pilot experience / qualification;
    - (9) Any other useful information eg endurance remaining, persons on board, Aircraft colour / markings, any survival aids or carrying dangerous goods.
  - b. Inform the pilot to squawk 7700, if possible, and to only acknowledge transmissions that are essential to the Safety of the Aircraft and its occupants.
  - c. Provide the pilot with all the relevant information required to assist them in forming an appropriate plan.
  - d. Inform the pilot of the most suitable Aerodrome available and provide navigational assistance if required, ensuring that the weather conditions, terrain

<sup>1</sup> For example, the Aircraft endurance and / or pilots' qualification.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to CAP 413 – Radiotelephony Manual, Chapter 8: Emergency Phraseology.

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and any known obstructions that could affect the Aircraft's transit route and level are considered.

e. Inform Distress and Diversion (D&D)<sup>3</sup> and any other ATC units as required and continue to update them up until either the emergency has concluded, or the Aircraft is handed over to another unit.

f. Alert Aerodrome Emergency Services<sup>4</sup> if the Aircraft is being handled by a Terminal Unit.

g. Advise other Aircraft of the emergency in progress and, where possible, keep them off the frequency being used by the Aircraft in distress. If possible, avoid changing the frequency of the Aircraft in distress once suitable contact is established.

h. Ensure the Supervisor is informed and all relevant details of the Aircraft emergency are recorded in the Air Traffic Watch Log (RAF F6658).

3. If an Aircraft is carrying dangerous goods, all pertinent information **should** be passed to D&D and the Aerodrome Emergency Services without delay.

4. Guidance on the actions and procedures that **should** be followed for specific emergency procedures can be found in the Manual of Military Air Traffic Management (MMATM)<sup>5</sup>.

**Crash Procedures**

5. **Tracing Action.** If an Aircraft unexpectedly disappears from radar and there is a loss of radio contact, D&D **should** be informed immediately so that tracing action can be instigated.

6. **Search and Rescue Action.** If an Aircraft crashes or a pilot indicates that they are about to abandon their Aircraft, or it is suspected that either has happened, Controllers **should**:

a. Take immediate action to obtain direction finding bearings and any other pertinent information relating to the Aircraft's last known position, heading and / or FL / altitude.

b. Inform D&D of all pertinent information without delay so that search and rescue activity, co-ordinated by the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC), can commence at the earliest opportunity. This does not however prevent the Controller from taking local search action such as requesting local Aircraft operating in the vicinity to conduct a search, but it is essential that D&D are given full details to ensure the JRCC are able to plan and develop the search without duplication of effort.

7. **Crash on or in the vicinity of an Aerodrome.** ATC personnel **should** take immediate crash action, in accordance with (iaw) Local orders.

8. **Crash away from an Aerodrome.** When a crash takes place away from an Aerodrome, the action to be taken will depend on whether the exact location of the crash / forced landing is known or not. When the location is known, Controllers **should** take action iaw Local Orders. When the location is unknown D&D **should** be informed and requested to commence tracing action.

9. **External report of an Aircraft Crash.** If an Aircraft Incident / crash is reported by an outside source, the following information **should** be obtained and passed to D&D:

- a. Originator's full name;
- b. Originator's address;
- c. Originator's phone number;
- d. Exact details of what they witnessed.

<sup>3</sup> Not applicable if the Aircraft called up on the VHF / UHF Emergency frequency.

<sup>4</sup> Aerodrome Emergency Services includes Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) and Aerodrome Emergency Medical Services.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to the MMATM Chapter 5: Emergency Actions and Procedures.

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10. **Crash or Incident Narrative.** To ensure vital information is not lost and to assist in any subsequent investigation, personnel directly involved with the crash / Incident **should** ensure all relevant details and any actions taken are accurately recorded in the Air Traffic Watch Log (RAF F6658).
11. **Meteorological (Met) Crash Reports.** When a crash takes place on, or in the vicinity of, an Aerodrome, ATC **should** inform the duty Met Officer without delay requesting a crash actual report to be produced and ATC **should** record the report in the Air Traffic Watch Log (RAF F6658).
12. **Aerodrome Inspection after Crash.** Following any required post crash management activity and when authorized to do so, an inspection of the crash area **should** be made iaw RA 3264<sup>6</sup> prior to the recommencement of flying, to ensure that any Foreign Object Debris has been recovered and the relevant surfaces of the Movement Area are fit for use.
13. **Information Requests.** Personnel **should not** make a statement, offer any information, or give answers to any questions regarding an Aircraft crash / Incident to unauthorized personnel. The dissemination of any information regarding an Aircraft crash / Incident **should** be restricted to authorized personnel / agencies to whom the original crash message was passed. Any additional inquiries **should** be referred to the relevant individual defined in Local Orders.

**Guidance  
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14. The circumstances of each Aircraft emergency can vary to such an extent that detailed instructions cannot be given for every situation; therefore Controllers will use their own judgement when handling an emergency / crash situation.
15. To assist the Controller in ensuring that all pertinent information has been retrieved when handling an abnormal or emergency situation, the use of a checklist detailing what information and follow on actions are required is strongly recommended.

<sup>6</sup> Refer to RA 3264 – Aerodrome Inspections.

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