Major Aviation Disasters

Presented by Gunnar J. Kuepper

Strategies To Save Lives and Control the Incident
Aviation Disaster strikes everywhere

- On airport premises
- In dense-populated areas
- In smaller cities
- In rural regions
- In water
- In mountains

New York City

Dec. 16, 1960
Mid-Air Collision TWA Jet with UAL DC-8, 134 people died
Pan-American Boeing 707
LOW-IMPACT Crash on
January 30, 1974

- On route from Auckland,
  New Zealand to Los
  Angeles, California
- Scheduled stop at Pago-
  Pago airport in American
  Samoa
- Crashed in stormy weather
  short of the runway
- 101 PEOPLE aboard
  survived the impact unhurt
- But 97 persons perished
  due to the subsequent fire
  and smoke conditions
- Finally just 4 persons
  survived
Common Problems

- Lack of Planning
- Lack of Training
- Lack of Communication
- Lack of Coordination
- Lack of Resources
Incident Priorities

- Saving lives
- Preventing escalation & further damage
- Relieving pain & suffering
- Protecting property, the environment & the economy
- Maintaining essential services
- Informing the public
- Supporting recovery
- Facilitating investigation & their inquiries
- Evaluating activities & identifying lessons learned
- Restoring normalcy
Airport/ Community Response Operations: Get to know your Neighbors

Aircraft Familiarization:
- Design & Construction, Emergency Exits, Evacuation Procedures, Firefighting & Rescue Tactics, Hazards

Airport Familiarization:
- Access Routes & Gates, Staging areas & Rendezvous Points, Airport Environment & Buildings
- Airport Emergency Services: Capabilities, Staffing & Equipment

EXCHANGE INFORMATION

Fire Station at Indianapolis Int'l Airport, 1999
Crisis Communications

Develop procedures to provide accurate and coordinated information to the media, affected public/employees, etc.

“The media can become your best friend or your worst enemy in a crisis situation”

Eschede, Northern Germany
National and International Media

High-Speed Train Crash, June 1998: On-Site Press Conference
Specific Hazards

- Jet fuel could always ignite
- Sharp metal debris could cut
- High pressure hydraulic lines
- Engine force could blast objects / people away
- Damaged aircraft structures could collapse and/or roll over
- Unknown Freight: radioactive materials, chemicals, biological samples
- Biohazmats: blood, tissue, feces, etc.
- Post traumatic stress disorder

British Midland Airways Boeing 737 near East Midlands Airport

Jan. 8, 1989
47 people died, 71 survived
Training and Exercises

ON A REGULAR BASIS

- Joint Drills, Lectures, and Training
- Tabletop Exercises and Scenarios for Command Personnel
- Full Scale Exercises
- Performance Evaluations
- Review the Plan
Managing Major Aviation Disasters

Airplane crashes are often survivable. The final decision of life or death for its occupants is made by fast and skilled response. The only solution to saving lives and reducing the pain for our families, for our friends, for our colleagues, and for the people we do not even know yet, is joint planning and training, and a comprehensive emergency program. We are in charge of making the difference, and we should take that matter very seriously.