

ORDER

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
GREAT LAKES REGION**

GL 7200.3

1/20/78

SUBJ: EMERGENCY FLIGHT ASSISTANCE SERVICE

1. PURPOSE. This Order mandates air traffic facility actions aimed at increasing overall preparedness and improving effectiveness in handling in-flight emergencies.

2. DISTRIBUTION. This Order is distributed to all Air Traffic field facilities and to the Branch level in the Air Traffic Division.

3. BACKGROUND. In-flight emergencies present the most nebulous situations our air traffic specialists face. No document can be written prescribing a solution to every possible situation. However, advance preparation by all our personnel to handle these situations can facilitate initiation of effective action in minimum time. When faced with a situation of this nature, basic information should be solicited, general guidelines followed, and internal FAA actions initiated in nearly every case.

4. ACTION. Facilities shall accomplish the following actions:

a. All Air Traffic facilities shall maintain a checklist for handling in-flight emergencies. Minimum data to be included is outlined in 7110.65, paragraph 1570 and 7110.10, paragraph 400. This checklist shall be readily accessible to operational positions. A sample checklist is contained in Appendix 1.

b. The potential for each air traffic specialist to become involved in critical in-flight emergencies is real. The time to prepare for this involvement is BEFORE it occurs. The confusion factor in each emergency may be amplified or nullified by the response the specialist applies. Each Air Traffic facility shall conduct annual refresher training for all specialists on emergency assistance service. This training shall include, as a minimum, briefing on the following data.

(1) REACT. Be alert for these situations to develop. Concise/specific requests for assistance are rare. Pilots, particularly those low in experience, may be reluctant to confess their predicament. Be alert for understatements, unsureness, etc., which reflect a bona fide emergency is developing.

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(2) ACT. Take action. Insofar as possible and practical, alert and involve any and all parties who can be of help as early as possible. Maximum effort means maximum use of available resources. Radar can be an invaluable tool with a lost aircraft, but totally ineffective if the radar equipped facility is not involved until too late. The same applies for facilities in the Direction Finding Net.

(3) FACT. Determine what you are dealing with. Use the established emergency checklist. The confusion factor can be avoided if you determine the critical items in a logical order.

(4) TACT. Nearly as important as what you say is how you say it. Anxiety is probably already a problem for the pilot. The manner used in issuing/soliciting information should help, not add to, this problem.

(5) DO/DON'T. Particularly for VFR rated pilots caught either on top or in deteriorating or IFR weather, certain do's and don'ts are very important. The following items are not all inclusive; however, they do provide points to consider:

(a) DO

1 Use a reassuring tone. Speak slowly. Avoid prolonged frequency silence. Let the pilot know you are still with him.

2 Try to keep the aircraft in VFR conditions and headed toward VFR, if fuel permits.

3 Stress the use of attitude indicator (artificial horizon), to keep wings level and aircraft in level flight.

4 Avoid turns in clouds, if possible. Attempt to direct necessary descents through the clouds on a single heading.

5 Check gyro compass against magnetic compass before entering clouds and at 10 minute intervals. Ask the pilot to keep the aircraft steady for approximately 30 seconds before adjustments are made.

6 Keep the pilot updated on what you are planning so he can concur or refuse if unacceptable. Avoid surprises.

7 Encourage the pilot to use his checklist, if available. He should check mixture, fuel, pitot heat, and carburetor heat prior to entering clouds, descent, and landing approach. This is particularly important before he begins climb/descent through a cloud layer while the aircraft is in VFR conditions. The confusion of the moment may cause the pilot to overlook this important information. A little prompting may help you both.

(b) DON'T

- 1 Give a series of instructions in one transmission.
- 2 Ask non-pertinent questions or ask for unnecessary acknowledgements.
- 3 Direct simultaneous turn and climb/descent.
- 4 Direct the pilot to execute a turn while in the clouds if it can be avoided.
- 5 Over-rely on "hole control". Attempting to assist a pilot through a cloud layer by having him maneuver to where a "hole may be" can certainly compound an already delicate situation.
- 6 Quit too quick. Follow through on the assist and insure to your full satisfaction the situation has been resolved. Have you assisted the pilot through the overcast but left him slightly disoriented and on his own? Was the airport he reported seeing actually an airport and did he land safely? Don't be reluctant to take the extra step.

c. Each facility shall designate a responsible office to review each flight assist in which the facility is involved. The review should concentrate on such areas as effectiveness of service provided, areas where improvement is required, inter-facility effectiveness when more than one facility is involved, adequacy of equipment and procedures, etc. Recommendations for corrective action to improve the overall program should be promptly forwarded to the Air Traffic Division.


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Appendix 1

APPENDIX 1. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE CHECKLIST

PURPOSE. This appendix illustrates a recommended emergency checklist required by paragraph 4 of the basic order. We suggest facilities reproduce copies of this sample, enclose them in plastic, and post in locations readily accessible to the operating positions.

Start assistance as soon as enough information has been obtained upon which to act. Information requirements will vary, depending on the existing situation. Minimum required information for in-flight emergencies is:

- (1) Aircraft identification and type. _____
- (2) Weather, as reported by pilot. _____
- (3) Nature of emergency. _____
- (4) Aircraft altitude. _____
- (5) Pilot's desires. _____
- (6) Fuel remaining, in time. _____

After initiating action, obtain the following information from the pilot or aircraft operator if necessary:

- (1) Pilot capability for IFR flight. _____
- (2) Time and place of last known position. _____
- (3) Heading since last known position. _____
- (4) Airspeed. _____
- (5) Point of departure and destination. _____
- (6) Navigation equipment capability. _____
- (7) Navaid signals received. _____
- (8) Visible landmarks. _____
- (9) Aircraft color. _____
- (10) Number of people on board. _____
- (11) Emergency equipment on board. _____

(FLIGHT ASSIST INFORMATION ON REVERSE)

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APPENDIX 1. FLIGHT ASSISTS

No document can be written prescribing a solution to every possible situation, however, basic information should be solicited and general guidelines followed. The time to prepare for involvement in an in-flight emergency is before it occurs. The confusion factor in each emergency may be amplified or nullified by the response the specialist applies. The following is provided to aid each specialist in being prepared to better handle an emergency situation.

1. Concise/specific requests for assistance are rare. Pilots, particularly those low in experience, may be reluctant to express their predicament. Be alert for understatements and unsureness.
2. Involve any and all parties who can be of help as early as possible.
3. Determine what you are dealing with. Use the Emergency Checklist on the reverse side.
4. Nearly as important as what you say is how you say it. Anxiety is probably already a problem for the pilot. Use a reassuring tone. Speak slowly. Avoid prolonged frequency silence.
5. Try to keep the aircraft in VFR conditions and headed toward VFR if fuel permits.
6. Stress the use of attitude indicator (artificial horizon) to keep wings level and aircraft in level flight.
7. If possible, avoid turns in clouds and attempt to direct necessary descents through clouds on a single heading.
8. Check the gyro compass against the magnetic compass before entering clouds and at ten minute intervals. Ask the pilot to keep the aircraft steady for approximately 30 seconds before adjustments are made.
9. Keep the pilot updated on what you are planning so that he can concur or refuse.
10. Encourage the pilot to use his own checklist if he has one available. He should check mixture, fuel, pitot heat, and carburetor heat prior to entering clouds.
11. Do not give a series of instructions in one transmission.
12. Follow through on the assist and insure to your full satisfaction the situation has been resolved. Make sure when the assist is complete that the pilot knows where he is and has fuel to make his desired destination. Do not be reluctant to take the extra step.

(INFORMATION TO BE OBTAINED ON REVERSE SIDE)