



A dramatic simulation at SDC2015 underscored the importance of a “living” ERP.

## Dispatch: Creating a ‘Living’ Emergency Response Plan

For flight department personnel, few things are more important than knowing what to do in a worst-case scenario – when a company aircraft is involved in an accident that results in injuries or fatalities. And few things are more critical for companies that use business aviation than having a well-prepared and trained team on the front line of disaster response.

Those important principles were dramatically demonstrated in February at the 2015 NBAA Schedulers & Dispatchers Conference (SDC2015) during the event’s first-ever live-action emergency response simulation.

As Don Chupp, president of emergency response services provider Fireside Partners LLC, explained to the audience: “If you have a trained front line in the flight department, you have an irreplaceable resource to help protect your brand. At least you have a fighting chance” should the real thing ever happen.

As the simulation made clear, expectations – from the public, news media and even families of company employees – are higher than ever about corporate responsibility and the need for close, well-trained support for families and the public.

### A “LIVING” PLAN IS ESSENTIAL

Business aviation personnel need an emergency response plan (ERP) that includes the necessary information, procedures and connections to the overall company’s crisis management protocols. Equally important, the ERP must be a “living” set of practices and steps that are regularly reviewed, refreshed and practiced by the company’s first responders.

Both the plan – and the commitment to keep it fresh – must be in place so that everyone on the company team has the confidence to know what to do in emergency situations.

Any ERP should focus on three key areas – people, participation and perception – by taking the following steps:

- Take care of people, including those directly impacted by an aviation accident, their families, along with fellow employees and other stakeholders.
- Support the accident investigation and comply with the appropriate FAA regulations.
- Communicate effectively, which includes talking in a sensitive way with family members, employees, the media and other stakeholders.

Chupp suggests that those who want a truly effective emergency response plan should:

- Set up a process internally, or through a provider, to know the location of the company’s aircraft at all times in order to gain valuable minutes of awareness that an incident may have occurred.
- Have a round-the-clock phone number and person with knowledge of the company’s flight plans and flight locations.
- Ensure that the company people on the front line are trained in what questions to ask and next steps to take, including how to confirm that an accident has taken place.

Stephen Clark, who was among the volunteer cast members of the ERP simulation, said he was shocked at how many people came up to him after the simulation and said, “We have an ERP plan, but it’s in a binder on a shelf. We don’t train with it.”

Aggie Mitchard, another ERP simulation cast member, agreed that the exercise was a wake-up call for many. “Even a small company can have a plan,” she said. “The important thing is that everyone understands their role. It doesn’t take a lot of time or money to practice it.” ❖

Read more about the SDC2015 live action aviation emergency response simulation at [www.nbaa.org/sdc2015-erp](http://www.nbaa.org/sdc2015-erp).