

## **Media Advisory – Sept. 25, 2008**

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### **Paine Field disaster drill proves emergency preparedness**

Snohomish County Airport’s fire department successfully rescued about 70 “victims” Thursday at Paine Field as part of a federally required disaster exercise.

The Paine Field Fire Department collaborated with about 30 emergency and law-enforcement agencies to complete the drill during a steady downpour of rain.

Under the scenario, about 70 passengers – played by drama students from Kamiak High School – were aboard a large-frame aircraft when it overran the Paine Field runway, landing near a wetland less than a quarter-mile away.

Firefighters and rescue crews triaged patients escaping from a smoking cockpit and front-end of an actual 767, creating a high level of realism for emergency crews. At the same time, additional emergency personnel performed a water rescue of passengers from a pond near the debris field.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires the fire department to complete such a large-scale drill once every three years. Thursday’s drill has been deemed a success at local levels, but FAA officials will receive a full report within a month for review and feedback.

Ongoing training is an important part of the Paine Field Fire Department’s regimen, and preparation requires strong ties with other agencies to provide support.

“We enjoy a positive relationship with our countywide emergency network and would not be able to provide this level of response without their cooperation and support,” said Jeff Bohnet, public-safety manager at Paine Field Airport.

Among those participating Thursday were fire crews from Boeing, Everett, Fire District 1, Lynnwood, Edmonds, Mukilteo, Fire District #22, North County Fire and EMS, as well as law enforcement from the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office and the city of Everett, and ambulance services from Rural Metro and AMR. Community Transit provided buses for transporting victims to local area hospitals.

Other players included the American Red Cross, Snohomish County Emergency Management Department, SNOFAC, SNOCOM, RACES, CERT and all Paine Field support services. In all, more than 150 individuals responded in some capacity to Thursday’s drill.

In a real emergency, all these agencies would be called upon to quickly rescue, assess and treat victims.

Paine Field officials will review comments from the FAA and incorporate suggested changes into their daily routines and emergency preparedness plans. They also will use feedback to create realistic training exercises in the future.

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