

This Disaster Drill will Assist Aviation, Law Enforcement, First Responders in Incident Preparedness

The Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) working together with the Rhode Island Emergency Management (RIEMA) will hold a Disaster Preparedness Exercise at T.F. Green Airport on Saturday, September 18th beginning at 9:00a.m.

“This exercise is important in testing our preparedness and responsiveness in the event of an incident or accident. We are always working to improve communication and cooperation between RIAC, first responders, and City and State agencies,” said RIAC president and CEO Kevin Dillon. “The safety and security of our passengers is our top priority. We recognize the importance of this exercise and appreciate the cooperation of all agencies.”

Upwards of 300 people and more than 25 agencies will be involved in the exercise. The event will be conducted as if it were an actual accident, with federal, state and local agencies responding accordingly. Additionally, area hospitals will participate as in the case of an actual emergency. The exercise, expected to last several hours, will be held primarily on the north side of the airfield at the intersection of two Taxiways with emergency vehicle staging areas adjacent to the airport.

The drill involves the active collaboration of more than 25 agencies, including: the FAA, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the RI Army National Guard, RI State Police, RIEMA, the RI Department of Health, the Hospital Association of Rhode Island, RIAC Police and Aircraft Rescue and Firefighters, City of Warwick Police and Fire and a host of mutual aid units from area fire departments. Special thanks to FEDEX and the RI Air National Guard for providing the aircraft utilized in the exercise.

This year’s drill will feature and test new technologies such as a patient tracking system which

helps to triage patients into the statewide hospital system, allowing for better staff preparedness and timely communication of information to family members. Approximately 50 “victims” will be transported to hospitals throughout the state.

“Neighbors should note that there will be increased activity in and around the airport on September 18th,” said John Thomas, chief of the RIAC Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting (ARFF) unit who is coordinating the event. “Do not be alarmed, many emergency vehicles are part of the drill and will be enacting an emergency response. This exercise is intended to review proper protocol in the event of a disaster and also to reassure travelers and others that the airport is prepared if an unfortunate event were to occur.”

The Mock Disaster Exercise is a coordinated effort of state and local police, fire, rescue and emergency management personnel from across Rhode Island, designed to enhance the capability of Rhode Island crisis managers and first responders. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires that all airports perform such an exercise every three years to receive the agency’s safety certification. The exercise is funded by the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program.

Please note, a designated media viewing area will be established for those news outlets that wish to attend and cover this exercise. Media must contact RIAC at least 24 hours in advance to receive security clearance and to be escorted onto the airfield.