

# AVIATION ACCIDENT CHECKLIST



Australian Government  
Australian Transport Safety Bureau

Civil Ph: 1800 011 034

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Australian Government  
Department of Defence

Military Ph: 0410 626 357

## WARNING

Be aware that an accident site may contain potential hazards. Do no more than is necessary to preserve life without endangering your own. Seek advice from the ATSB or Defence on any hazards that may be present.



# AVIATION

## WHAT TO DO:

### Emergency response

**Ensure normal emergency response notifications are completed: Police, Fire (including HAZMAT), Ambulance; telephone: 000 ATSB: 1800 011 034 or DDAAFS: 0410 626 357**

### Remember:

- Exercise extreme caution: aviation accident sites contain potential hazards including flammable and toxic materials and may also contain explosives.
- Approach the aircraft cautiously, from upwind; this will help reduce your exposure to fumes. If possible approach from the opposite direction of the aircraft's flight path.
- Do no more than is necessary to preserve life without endangering your own. Seek advice from the ATSB or Defence on any hazards that may be present.
- NOTHING should be disturbed other than that necessary to rescue survivors or preserve life and suppress post-crash fires.
- Within the limits imposed by actions necessary to preserve life, photograph, video, sketch or make mental notes of wreckage to pass to the investigators, before disturbing it. DO NOT become a casualty yourself!
- Note the location and condition of safety harnesses and positions of survivors before they are moved.
- Every piece of the aircraft, its location and exact position, is important in determining the sequence of events and the contributing factors that led to the accident.



# ACCIDENT

- Secure the accident site by placing a cordon around all scattered wreckage (50 m), as well as other evidence such as marks made by the aircraft, and ground scars, as important evidence can be gained from instrument reading, soot and fire patterns, location of fatalities, ground scars etc.
- If it is known that it may be some time before the investigators arrive, contact the ATSB or the DDAAFS to ascertain if it may be appropriate to give important witnesses a tape recorder, let them sit in a room by themselves and record their recollection of events (to preserve perishable evidence – witness memory). Request that they do not speak to other witnesses/people – if possible keep them apart until they have recorded their recollections. Note that this is somewhat dependent on the circumstances – the physical and mental wellbeing of the witness is the highest priority.
- Obtain names, addresses, contact numbers and intended movements of witnesses, and note in particular any witnesses who may have photographic or video evidence of the accident.



### **Agricultural aircraft:**

- The two major concerns are fire from the aircraft fuel and chemicals spilt from the load.
- Approach the aircraft cautiously, from upwind; this will help reduce your exposure to fumes. If possible approach from the opposite direction of the aircraft's flight path.
- Be aware of powerlines that may have been struck during the accident – they may be lying on the ground and could be 'live'.

### **If fatalities have occurred:**

- Check with the coroner or their representative (usually the police) before taking any action to remove bodies.
- Check with the ATSB or Defence Investigator in-charge to ascertain whether there are any special requirements for in-situ pathological examination before removing bodies.

### **If bodies are removed before an ATSB or Defence investigator arrives:**

- Carefully record the posture and position of each victim, with photographs, video and/or sketches.
- Photograph or sketch any marks on the ground or wreckage that may be affected during the removal of any victims or the actions of attending emergency services personnel.
- Leave the wreckage as undisturbed as possible when removing victims.
- Ensure bodies are decontaminated of hazardous substances prior to removal from accident site.