

2026 Full-Scale Emergency Preparedness Exercise



October 28, 2026



PHOENIX SKY HARBOR
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



Welcome Message



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A.A.E.**

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Aviation
Department

Thank you for joining us for Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport's 2026 Full Scale Triennial Emergency Exercise. This comprehensive exercise is essential to our commitment to public safety and emergency preparedness. Today, you will gain a unique glimpse into the important role a major airport, its stakeholders, and the emergency response community play in safely and efficiently responding to a commercial aircraft accident.

This year's exercise reflects months of careful planning and collaboration among numerous federal, state, county, local, and private sector partners. In addition to testing traditional emergency response procedures, this year's event will introduce expanded coordination activities across several operational areas, including passenger service functions, survivor care operations, and external family assistance activities. Testing these essential functions will demonstrate how many different stakeholders must come together and work effectively in a high-stress, complex operating environment.

Today's scenario will include enhanced realism through live triage, treatment, and transport operations, along with family

assistance and reunification processes. Dedicated passenger service areas will provide information support for inquiring families; secure response zones will host survivor care and coordination activities; and off-site support facilities will be activated to provide space for reunification and extended family assistance services. Together, these operations will help us identify opportunities for improvement and ensure we remain ready to support passengers, families, and employees should a real-world emergency occur.

At the core of our mission is the belief that we are true partners in service to our passengers and our community. Maintaining community trust requires effective preparedness, professionalism, and collaboration. Your participation today is tremendously valuable to our pursuit of these goals.

On behalf of our dedicated Public Safety & Security team and all our emergency responders, thank you for being with us today and for taking part in this critically important exercise.

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What is the Triennial Exercise?

The Triennial Exercise is a federally required, scenario-based emergency response drill conducted under Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 139. This full-scale event tests Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport's coordinated response to a simulated aircraft accident. It activates the Airport Emergency Operations Center (AEOC), deploys fire and medical units, and utilizes volunteers to portray passengers, families, and friends. It is the most comprehensive emergency preparedness activity we conduct and provides the closest simulation to a real-world event without disrupting airport operations.

Why We Do It

Phoenix Sky Harbor conducts this exercise to strengthen airport-wide preparedness and ensure operational excellence:

- Meet or exceed federal requirements outlined in FAR Part 139.
- Provide immersive, hands-on training to airport personnel, airline partners, and mutual-aid responders.
- Evaluate new equipment, procedures, and emergency plans, including the Airport Emergency Plan (AEP) and the Post-Disaster Family Assistance Plan (PDFA).
- Enhance multi-agency coordination, including fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, public information teams, airlines, and federal partners.
- Strengthen Unified Command and AEOC operations to ensure clear, effective coordination during major incidents.
- Improve communications and information flow, both on-scene and at support centers, such as the Passenger Unification Area (PRA), Friends & Relatives Center (FRC), and Airport Family Assistance Center (AFAC).
- Test partner readiness, including how airlines activate both local and corporate emergency response procedures.
- Validate the airport's ability to maintain continuity of operations, even during a major simulated incident.

Training together allows everyone — airport staff, first responders, partner agencies, airlines, and support organizations — to understand how their roles interconnect within the airport's emergency framework. This shared experience strengthens coordination, reinforces best practices, and builds readiness for real-world events.

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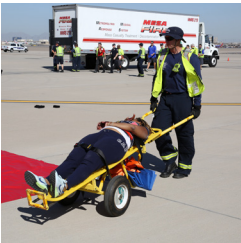


Definitions



Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting

Response (ARFF): The airport's specialized fire-response unit responsible for immediate aircraft-related emergency actions, including fire suppression, rescue operations, and initial on-scene incident stabilization.



Airport Emergency Operations Center

(AEOC): The centralized command and coordination hub activated during airport emergencies. The AEOC brings together airport leadership, operational divisions, airlines, and partner agencies to manage information, resources, and strategic decisions.



Airport Family Assistance Center (AFAC):

A designated facility that provides support services to survivors, families, and loved ones following an aviation incident. Services may include reunification, counseling, information updates, and post-disaster family assistance.

Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR):

Regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that govern airport operations, safety, and certification. FAR Part 139 outlines requirements for emergency preparedness, ARFF capability, and triennial full-scale emergency exercises.

Friends & Relative Center (FRC):

A temporary reception area established at the airport where family and friends of passengers initially gather to receive information, support, and direction following an incident.

Incident Command System (ICS):

A standardized, nationally adopted emergency-response framework that organizes on-scene operations into clear roles such as Incident Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance. ICS ensures structured,

coordinated response between multiple agencies.

Logistical Command Center (LCC):

A support center activated to manage logistics needs during an incident, such as equipment, supplies, facilities, transportation, and resource allocation. It works closely with AEOC and Unified Command.

Joint Information Center (JIC):

A centralized public information and media coordination point where communication professionals from multiple agencies work together to produce consistent, accurate messaging for the public and media.

Passenger Gathering Area (PGA):

A secure location where survivors and non-injured passengers are transported after leaving the incident site. The PGA provides accountability, initial support, and controlled movement into subsequent assistance centers.

Passenger Reunification Center (PRA):

A designated space where uninjured passengers reunify with family members or representatives. PRA staff help verify identities, provide information, and support reunification processes.

Post-Disaster Family Assistance (PDFA):

A coordinated service framework that supports survivors and families following an aviation incident. PDFA includes reunification, counseling, information sharing, credentialing, and long-term family support operations.

Unified Command (UC):

A joint decision-making structure where multiple agencies with jurisdictional authority, such as Fire, Police, Airport Operations, and others, share command responsibilities, collaborate on objectives, and direct response activities as a unified team.

The Scenario

On Wednesday, October 28, 2026, a runway collision occurs between a general aviation aircraft and a commercial airliner at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

The impact destroys the general aviation aircraft and causes significant damage to the commercial aircraft, including major fuselage and landing gear damage and a fire in the right engine. Multiple injuries and fatalities are reported.

A Major ARFF Response is initiated, and numerous disaster response units are dispatched to support the incident. The exercise will be toned as an immediate Alert III.

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Goals

- Meet or exceed all requirements under FAR Part 139.
- Strengthen multi-agency preparedness and coordination for large-scale emergency incidents.
- Validate and improve the Airport Emergency Plan through a full-scale, scenario-based exercise.

Objectives

- Provide hands-on training to airport personnel, airline partners, and mutual-aid responders, including PDFA planning and response.
- Exercise and evaluate new equipment, procedures, and response methods.
- Test UC initiation, coordination, and decision-making.
- Conduct full or partial activations of the EOC and LCC.
- Strengthen communication and coordination across all participating agencies.
- Provide airlines an opportunity to test local and corporate emergency response procedures.
- Validate partner integration and multi-agency response operations.
- Test public information functions, including JIC coordination.





Sequence of Events

Morning Preparation

- 0900: Registration and check-in open; volunteers, guests, and observers arrive
- 0900: Victim preparation begin
- 1000: Aircraft and support equipment positioned; coordination team briefing held
- 1030: Registration completed; security teams move to staging; safety briefings begin
- 1100: Volunteers screened and begin boarding buses
- 1130: Volunteers and VIPs transported; victim actors positioned on and around aircraft
- 1155: Final victim placement and crash mannequins staged

Exercise Launch

- 1220: Exercise controllers complete final checks
- 1228: Simulated aircraft arrival and crash; Alert III declared; smoke deployed; ENS activated
- 1230: Phoenix Tower Activates the Crash Circuit; exercise officially begins

Emergency Response Operations

- 1233: ARFF responds; fire suppression and rescue operations begin
- 1234: Airport Emergency Operations Center (AEOC) activated
- 1235 AEOC coordination; partner agencies
- 1240: and airline emergency plans activated
- 1240: Triage, treatment, and patient transport operations begin; family reception processes begin
- 1245: Initial patient transports to hospitals; delayed patients staged for bus transport

Mid-Exercise Coordination

- 1300: Volunteers and staff transported to PGA
- 1300 Red Cross, Chaplain, and support
- 1310: staff arrive; care operations begin
- 1315: First family transport departs for AFAC
- 1330 Survivor reunification continues; FRC
- 1355: begins deactivation

Transition to Recovery

- 1400 Surviving passengers and staff
- 1415: transported; reunifications continue at AFAC
- 1430: Tactical operations conclude; recovery and demobilization begin
- 1500 Volunteer transport and
- 1515: final PDFa activities
- 1545: Hotwash conducted at multiple sites

Exercise Conclusion

- 1615: Volunteers transported back to 44th Street PHX Sky Train® Station
- 1630: Exercise ends





Mock Incident Site

The 2026 Emergency Preparedness Exercise is being conducted on the South Air Cargo ramp, located south of Runway 7R/25L. This exercise is a multi-agency exercise. Airport first responders comprised of Phoenix Fire, Phoenix Police, U.S. Customs and Border

Protection, and Aviation Department staff will immediately respond and execute fire rescue, treatment, triage, and transport of the accident victims. The first responders function using UC, ICS, with the ranking Fire Chief acting as the overall Incident Commander.

Triage Status

People on Board:

- 120 passengers
- Six crew: two pilots and four flight attendants

Injuries:

- 50 injured
- Eight deceased
- 70 non-injured passengers

Transport:

- 50 passengers will be transported to a local hospital via ambulance and bus.
- No air ambulance will be used in this exercise.

Exercise Locations



Thank You from the Tri-Ex Planning Committee

The Tri-Ex Planning Committee extends heartfelt appreciation to everyone who contributed to the development and coordination of this year's Full-Scale Emergency Exercise. Preparing an exercise of this magnitude requires months of collaboration, detailed planning, and a shared commitment to strengthening Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport's emergency readiness.

This effort brings together numerous divisions, partner agencies, and subject-matter experts, all working toward a common goal: ensuring the safety, resilience, and preparedness of our airport community. The time, creativity, and attention to detail invested in this exercise are evident

throughout every component of the plan, from scenario design and logistics to communications, volunteer coordination, and operational integration.

The success of the Tri-Ex depends on the dedication of a team willing to think ahead, solve complex challenges, and support one another. That spirit of collaboration is reflected in every aspect of this exercise and reinforces the strength of the partnerships that make our airport a leader in emergency preparedness.

Thank you to all who played a role in making this year's Tri-Ex possible. Your work makes a meaningful difference and is deeply appreciated.

- ACE Parking
- Airport Chaplaincy
- American Airlines
- American Red Cross
- Arizona Air National Guard
- Arizona Coalition for Healthcare Emergency Response (AZCHER)
- Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA)
- Arizona Department of Health Services
- Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council (AZSILC)
- Arizona State University College of Nursing and Health Innovations
- City of Phoenix Office of Emergency Management
- City of Phoenix Aviation Department
- City of Prescott
- Coyote Crisis Collaborative
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- Dignity Health
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Federal Express (FedEx)
- Kind Hospitality
- Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management (MCDEM)
- Maricopa County Department of Public Health
- Maricopa Medical Reserve Corp
- Maricopa Integrated Health Systems
- Marriott Phoenix Airport
- Mesa Fire Department
- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)
- National Weather Service (NWS)
- Phoenix Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)
- Phoenix Police Department
- Phoenix Fire Department
- PHXTV (PHX Channel 11)
- Scottsdale Fire Department
- SSP America
- Tempe Fire Department
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- United Parcel Service (UPS)
- United Service Organizations (USO)
- Valleywise Health

