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**REVA Air Ambulance Practice Drill Boosts Community Coordination**

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — **Practice situation:** at 9:15 a.m. on a sunny Saturday morning in July, REVA Air Ambulance’s Emergency Operations received a Level 3 alert from the FXE Air Control Tower: An incoming Lear Jet on final approach had collided with a helicopter on Runway 13 of Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport.

Fortunately, the accident was no accident: It was REVA Air Ambulance’s staged but highly realistic simulation. The drill was designed by Dominic Acevedo, REVA’s Director of Flight Safety, and aimed at exercising a coordinated emergency response with REVA’s community of supporting emergency responders at both the city of Fort Lauderdale and its airport—one of the busiest public, non-commercial bases in the nation.



According to Acevedo, REVA’s emergency program review requires only a “table-top exercise,” the kind held in a conference room with participants pouring over three-ring binders, thick with SYSOPS—no



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need to hold a live event carried out in real time on a black asphalt runway with “casualties” and real equipment.

“A table-top review is a good procedure, but we wanted to do more,” Acevedo said. “We added the goals to our program of increasing community readiness and growing the level of expertise among community responders. To achieve this, we began working back in October with airport management to make the review as realistic and broad-based as possible.” Thus, instead of hunkering down in an air-conditioned conference room, the REVA team invited more than two dozen representatives from the full spectrum of community first responders to hit the hot tarmac with them in order to recover, triage, treat, and transport nine “dead” and “injured”—men and women made up with realistic injuries (“moulage”)—from the “wreckage” of a crashed plane.

“The result was a success,” Acevedo said. “It was so well received by everyone involved that REVA has been asked to do this again with other scenarios, including a TSA drill with the airport. In fact, our July 9 simulation was the airport’s first field exercise with specific community coordination for an Alert 3 event—a full-on response to a plane crash,” Acevedo said.

REVA’s realistic, real-time drill involved FXE Air Traffic Control for the initial alert, followed by responses from REVA, the city of Fort Lauderdale Emergency Management, Fire and Rescue Station 53 and multiple responses by trucks and equipment from Rescue 35, Rescue 247, Engine 35, and Ladder 35, and a sergeant, a lieutenant, and two captains from Fort Lauderdale Police who established a perimeter for the operations.

REVA supplied the Lear Jet for the “crash” and was able to demonstrate operations involving the aircraft’s doors and access hatches, enabling emergency personnel from the city and airport to improve their equipment knowledge and sharpen their rescue skills, an invaluable contribution to FXE safety operations, according to Airport Assistant Manager Spenser Thornton.

Thornton said the airport staff was “able to test our emergency operations plan, while sharpening our tactical response, decision-making procedures, and coordination with internal and external agencies. We would like to thank Reva Air Ambulance for their invaluable assistance and participation. Providing the aircraft, the volunteers, and the moulaged victims, heightened the realism and authenticity of the drill, while enabling participants to gain maximum value from the exercise. While we certainly hope that



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we will never have to deal with an emergency like the one simulated in the drill, it is important to know that, should the need arise, we are capable of carrying out an effective response.”

Other specific outcomes of the program review included updating REVA’s voice communication protocols. “The procedures have emphasized using land–lines and specifically limited cell–phone usage. This week’s drill showed the importance of formally integrating smart phones with their next–generation audio and visual communications into our emergency procedures,” Acevedo said. In addition, he noted that the real–time exercise prompted REVA’s chief operating officer, Shannon Schell, to propose that REVA establish a dedicated conference line during emergency situations to carry a voice recording of the latest information and directives that any member of the responding teams could call, thus keeping everyone informed in a highly efficient and accurate way.

REVA’s program review this month was only the most recent in the company’s 20–year history of not merely meeting but actively working to exceed industry safety standards. REVA’s culture of safety has resulted in an unmatched record for its planes, patients, and crew: 25,000+ global, medical transports aboard the nation’s largest fleet of air ambulance jets and fixed–wing medical flights with a perfect safety record.

To learn more about REVA and its award-winning team of medical providers and fleet of ICU-equipped jets, visit the website at [www.flyreva.com](http://www.flyreva.com) or call its U.S. Headquarters in Fort Lauderdale at 1-800-752-4195.

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