

Searching for a downed Aircraft

- Look UP, down and all around!
 - entire planes have been found up in a tree
 - not to mention the parts skimmed off during its descent
- the debris field of a downed aircraft can be huge.
 - consider the speed at which they probably approached the ground
 - many crashes begin with skimming the tops of trees, which like to remove souvenirs imperative to operation, causing further downward movement of the aircraft until the ground decides to take what's left of aircraft and passengers
- Most small aircraft crashes end in death.
- Impact is more often than not followed by a brief, intense flash-fire.
 - Reason #1 why you *don't* eat BBQ Chicken at a downed aircraft search
 - Bodies that didn't survive the impact and fire-- the *other* white meat.

Crash Site Procedures

I bet the main reason the police keep people away from a plane crash is they don't want anybody walking in and lying down in the crash stuff, then, when somebody comes up, act like they just woke up and go, "What was THAT?!"
--Jack Handy, SNL

SAFETY FIRST: Yours, Your Team, the Patient

Find Scene procedure for a lost person search

- Approach/Preserve Scene
- Stabilize the patient
- Treat as a crime scene if subject is dead or there is evidence of other foul play
 - limit the number of people on scene
 - Medic and FTL only are to approach the patient until scene is cleared
 - Medic considerations
 - The Medic is the member of the field team or Evac team with highest certifications. The Medic on an Evac Team must possess certification of EMT or higher, valid in the jurisdiction in which the rescue is occurring.
 - Local EMS providers may take over from Medic only if they are of equal or higher training
 - Medic has final authority over whether patient may be safely moved

- take the same route out as you took in—flag your route
 - DOCUMENT everything, especially for a Status 3
 - if an evac is required, determine the best route out to road/helispot and flag that route
- Secure the area
 - flagging tape a boarder around the perimeter
 - station FTMs around border

Find Scene procedure for a downed aircraft search

- Basically the same as lost person, with some added hazards.
- Approach scene from uphill, upwind.
- Aircraft can be very unstable
 - May slide downhill
 - Aircraft or parts in the trees may fall at any moment.
- Fuel can leak out
 - fumes can be toxic and affect searchers on scene
 - very flammable
- If safe, count victims
 - If possible, count heads. If not, go for torsos.
 - Counting arms or legs is ineffective as people have multiple, whereas they only have one head or torso.
 - determine if there are subjects unaccounted for who may have wandered away from the wreckage
- Status 3s make this a Crime Scene, subject to State Police, NTSB and FAA investigations
- Everything onscene is evidence.
 - Keep the number of people in the chain of evidence to a minimum.
 - The more people who handle a scene or a clue, the less viable it becomes.
- Equipment that might come in handy in case you end up at a crash site
 - Old clothing (all of it) and shoes that you wouldn't mind having burned post-incident
 - Spare clothes for afterwards
 - Safety glasses
 - Dusk mask or bandana for a mask
 - Vic's Vapor Rub applied just under the nose does wonders for the stench
 - (he may look like BBQ, but he doesn't smell nearly as tasty)
 - multiple pairs of *good* latex gloves
 - inexpensive, thick leather gloves
 - disposable aprons
 - large rubber gloves
 - multiple trash bags, heavy grade
 - container of waterless, antibacterial soap
- Personal Safety Guidelines

- Gloves worn; 2 layers latex, leather gloves, and if handling body parts, rubber gloves.
- Consider bio-hazards and infection control
 - Downed aircraft are harder to find than you might think.
 - Bodies will often sit for days before we find and evac them
 - Wreckage is full of jagged edges, not to mention the briars you climbed through to get there.
 - Decomposition + Wounds = Staph infections
 - Take care of it IMMEDIATELY
 - Get away from body and wreckage
 - Decontaminate yourself
 - Use anti-bacterial soap, etc. to clean wound site
 - Cover with sterile dressing
 - Don't allow anyone to touch your skin who hasn't decontaminated
 - You *can't* be too careful
 - Decontamination for the super-cautious (better safe than sorry!!!)
 - If it's easier, get a friend (wearing latex gloves) to help
 - Remove gloves and put in trash bag.
 - Scrub hands with soap and put on new pair of gloves
 - Remove clothing and it in a fresh trash bag (from your 10 essentials!)
 - Don't let anything contaminated touch the outside of the bag.
 - Put latex gloves in bag, fold bag over and put in another bag.
 - Take a shower and scrub down, putting on fresh clothes when done.
 - Contaminated bag of goodies can be given to local rescue squad to get rid of as hazardous material.
 - Be aware of psychological/emotional stress that may affect you and your team members both on scene and in the aftermath of the incident.
 - On scene, don't be surprised to hear "gallows humor" that, under normal circumstances might seem inappropriate. In this case, it is a means of dealing with undue stress and should be tolerated.
 - Don't be offended by others getting angry or frustrated with the situation. Be aware and, if it gets too bad, recommend that they take some time out.
 - Be aware of yourself and don't push yourself too far.
 - Know your limits before you test them onscene!