

## The importance of being prepared for the worst

**“We must retain an ability to react to the unexpected – for there is, paradoxically, nothing more certain than the unexpected – with all that implies in terms of organisation and training” – the words of General Sir John Stanier, previously Chief of the General Staff of the British Army.**

Airlines, ground handling companies and airports must be prepared for the unexpected; nothing is more certain than the fact that aviation emergency response contingency plans could need to be implemented at any time. Such contingency plans should therefore be an integrated part of daily operations and be supported by systematic annual training to ensure all personnel are mentally prepared to face the worst possible scenario.

Mike Seear of Kenyon International Emergency Services would certainly agree with General Sir John Stanier. Seear recently ran one of Kenyon’s regular exercise planning workshops in which ERA participated, as part of our continuing joint ERA/Kenyon initiative to improve and promote industry crisis planning standards for ERA members.

Seear’s expertise is exceptional; before working for Kenyon and following a distinguished military career, he had previously worked for a number of years for SAS as an aviation emergency specialist and was instrumental in ensuring that the Scandinavian carrier’s crisis training

and planning adequately prepared the airline to respond to the tragic accident at Milan Linate Airport (Italy) in 2001.

### Proven progress

The workshop rationale was to demonstrate that personnel subjected to effective training will undoubtedly improve their crisis management performance when involved in handling a ‘live’ emergency situation. Local emergency response plans involving all agencies should be subject to regular testing by imaginative and realistic exercises.

Good exercises are not a test of individuals but of organisational and procedural shortfalls. Proactive improvements should be encouraged, particularly to ensure that the interface

between airline organisation and external agencies works during abnormal events.

Such training is therefore cyclic and regular training should be budgeted for and resourced for accordingly.

The workshop asserted that emergency response training exercises should involve plans and planning; education and training; exercise and review; and amendment and improvement.

Over the two days of the workshop, participants undertook a variety of exercise formats to prepare them to run contingency planning exercises in their own organisations and to supplement existing emergency planning activities. ■



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Details of ERA’s ‘Emergency Response Preparedness Standards’ (pictured), and of Kenyon’s portfolio of training, planning and tactical support services that have been specially negotiated for ERA members, can be obtained by contacting [technical.services@eraa.org](mailto:technical.services@eraa.org) or [garnert@kenyoninternational.com](mailto:garnert@kenyoninternational.com)

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