

When the worst happens...



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Even in an industry as dedicated to safety as aviation, accidents are an unfortunate fact of life. Tragedies can happen. An unfortunate consequence of air transport's exceptional safety record is that few airlines employ staff who have had experience of responding to such accidents. Expert, calm heads are needed.

Moving in to help when the worst happens, Kenyon International Emergency Services provides emergency response services to its members across the world, including European airlines. Not only can Kenyon act during and after a disaster, but the company will also help third parties to establish a preparatory emergency response plan to put into action should the worst happen.

From three principal locations in the US, UK and Australia, Kenyon offers specialist personnel and logistical resources to assist clients in managing many of their post-accident responsibilities. The company is able to mobilise personnel across the world and can often, therefore, arrive at incidents in remote or difficult locations more rapidly than an airline's own team. Kenyon's services include the care of families, the recovery and disposition of people killed, the provision of emergency call centres and the processing of personal effects, as well as victim identification and repatriation. The company will also organise grief counselling and memorial services if necessary.

So many matters need to be managed in the response to an incident or accident. The logistical challenges alone can be

immense. Complex issues of sensitivity must be considered when interacting with the family and friends of people who have been injured or killed. Kenyon addresses all of these matters, looking back on 88 years of experience in managing the responses to international transportation accidents. The company's first involvement in aviation disaster was in providing services to Imperial Airways (UK) when an air crash claimed seven lives in 1929.

Kenyon not only works in the field of transportation emergency response management but also assists parties, including national governments, in responding to crises such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks. The company was, for example, involved in the responses to the tragedies of 9-11 (2001), the Asian tsunami (2004) and Hurricane Katrina (2005), as well as completing a nine-month operation assisting the International Commission on Missing Persons by establishing programmes to aid in the identification of over 20,000 victims of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. In the past decade alone, Kenyon's assistance has been called upon across the world, from Australia and Thailand to the US, the UK, Tanzania and South Africa.

The ERA Emergency Response Preparedness Standards

Working alongside the ERA Directorate, Kenyon's expertise has been vital in the preparation of the new ERA Emergency Response Preparedness Standards. The standards comprehensively outline the preparations an airline or airport must

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make in the areas of management, human support and assistance, crisis communications, business continuity, alliances and codeshares, insurance, airports and ground handling agents.

Complementing the ERA Emergency Response Preparedness Standards, Kenyon is offering ERA members discounted fees on an independent 'Crisis Management Appraisal'. The goal is to assist airlines in understanding the challenges of an emergency and in preparing to react appropriately. A number of ERA member airports and airlines have already begun discussions with Kenyon to undertake the appraisal.

As Robert Jensen, president of Kenyon International Emergency Services, says: "I believe that an independent evaluation of an airline or airport's systems and procedures by experts in the crisis management field can significantly enhance that company's ultimate capability to respond effectively."

For further information about the ERA Emergency Response Preparedness Standards, please contact Nick Mower, ERA's general manager, technical services, at tech.services@eraa.org. The standards can now be found in full in the 'Publications' section of the ERA website at www.eraa.org ■