

Emergency Situations

In pairs discuss the following questions.

1. What messages have absolute priority over all other messages?
2. How can the pilot inform the controller of emergency/urgency situation?
3. What international emergency codes do you know?

Emergency is a serious event that needs immediate action. Emergency situations can be classified as distress and urgency.

Distress is a condition of imminent danger and requiring immediate assistance. Urgency is a condition of potential distress not requiring immediate assistance.

An emergency situation exists if declared by the pilot. An emergency aircraft has priority over other aircraft. Emergency signals are transmitted on frequency in use or special emergency frequency.

An aircraft in distress sends signal MAYDAY three times and sets transponder code 7700. In case of urgency an aircraft sends signal PAN-PAN three times.

The controller should act in accordance with the documents. He or she must:

- obtain information: aircraft identification and type; nature of the emergency; pilot's intentions
- request the total number on board and endurance
- ask if they need any special assistance
- provide maximum assistance possible
- relay information about the emergency to the emergency services and authorities (if needed).

All stations received the message should monitor the frequency. The controller can impose radio silence. He should relay: "ALL STATIONS, STOP TRANSMITTING MAYDAY".

When the aircraft is no longer in distress, it cancels distress. The controller should relay: "ALL STATIONS, DISTRESS TRAFFIC ENDED. RESUME TRANSMITTING."

Answer the questions.

1. How are emergency situations classified and declared?
2. When do controllers usually impose/declare radio silence? And how do they do that?
3. What phrases does a pilot use to inform ATC that the aircraft and people on board are not in danger any more?
4. When and how do controllers cancel distress status?
5. When do pilots start emergency descent /request diversion?
6. What can you expect from an aircraft with fire on board / with engine failure?
7. What are the reasons of depressurization? How should a controller assist the pilot in this situation?
8. Have you ever controlled/handled any aircraft with emergency on board? Could you say some words about the situation?