

300. Experience shows that more aircraft accidents occur while landing or taking off than during any other phase of flight. It follows that special arrangements should exist at all aerodromes to deal quickly and effectively with such accidents. In spite of enormous experience and the development of techniques and equipment during the war, it cannot be said that a full solution of the problem has anywhere been reached. Nevertheless, it is incumbent on all aerodrome authorities to provide the best organisation possible to limit the effects of aircraft fires and to rescue people involved in them. The organisation is expensive in equipment and in personnel.

301. The International Civil Aviation Organisation has given some attention to the problem of prescribing standards of equipment and systems, but the study is by no means complete. Attention is directed to the Report of the Third Session of the Aerodromes, Air Routes, and Grounds Aids (AGA) Division (Doc. 4809), Part VIII of which sets out systems and scales of equipment.

302. While complete security can never be achieved, we strongly recommend that Government should make funds available for the provision of a greatly improved scale of equipment at all the important aerodromes. The equipment includes crash, fire-fighting, and rescue vehicles equipped with extinguishing apparatus, tools, protective clothing, lighting, first aid, and radio communication. The scale of equipment required varies with the amount of traffic and the size of aircraft using the aerodrome.

303. The problem of personnel for the fire-fighting crews is a difficult one. At most aerodromes it will be impossible to provide the whole of the fire-fighting crew on a whole-time basis, and a system of enrolling and training volunteer personnel from among those employed at the aerodrome is inevitable. At international aerodromes and at some internal aerodromes with heavy traffic we consider it necessary to employ a nucleus professional fire and crash crew. At other major aerodromes there should be a special fire officer, who would have the responsibility of organising and training the fire crews and taking charge of operations. Wherever fire-fighting and crash rescue vehicles are provided, drivers and the minimum crew should be employed whole time to stand by during flying hours. At smaller aerodromes the officer in charge of the aerodrome should be responsible and should receive special training to enable him to train other personnel in the volunteer crews and to take charge of operations.

304. It will be appreciated that expenditure on fire and crash rescue equipment is in the nature of an insurance premium, and, although it may be impossible to provide any fully effective system, the State and aerodrome authorities cannot neglect the obvious duty to provide what is possible to minimise loss of life and property.