



Disaster Relief Best Practices

A Patient AirLift Services (PALS) Humanitarian Relief Program

- **Coordinate all flights with a disaster relief flight charity** - Airspace and Airports are often congested after a disaster. In addition, information changes by the hour. Coordinating with a disaster relief flight charity can insure that resources are being maximized in an effort to save lives and help people.
- **Operate with two pilots** - The details surrounding a disaster relief flight can be challenging. Operate with two pilots to manage the workload.
- **Stay on top of NOTAMS and TFRs** - by checking them regularly, and again prior to departure, for every flight. They can be enforced at any time.
- **Experience is very important during a disaster** - Abnormal conditions during relief efforts call for experienced pilots who are instrument rated and current.
- **Operate aircraft with traffic avoidance systems** - Radar and flight following may or may not be available in the disaster area. In addition, flight operations will likely be in very high volume including private and government aircraft. Additionally, helicopters are often operating in disaster areas causing additional air traffic.
- **Do not depend on fuel in disaster areas** - Often fuel supplies have not been replenished or are in short supply. If fuel is available, there may be long waits to receive it or cash may be required to pay.
- **Prepare for potential mechanical problems ahead of time** - Resources to help fix flat tires or fix aircraft discrepancies will likely not be available. Consider adding a few spare tires and other items that may be needed for any common mechanical issues. You do not want to get stuck in the disaster area due to an aircraft mechanical.
- **Do not load and drop supplies without checking in with a relief flight charity** - Dropping supplies on the ramp of a disaster area airport complicates the relief effort and can hinder ground operations. Please coordinate with the relief flight charities for any supply or volunteer needs. If you are flying supplies for a charity flight organization, use proper weighing equipment and prepare manifests.
- **Avoid unnecessary flights** - If you are flying for curiosity's sake, don't. There are many needs trying to be met after a disaster and adding another aircraft operation can use valuable time and resources needed for other flights.
- **Prepare for uncertain ground circumstances** - Disaster areas are constantly changing. You may arrive at an airport under military control. You may have to deal with security issues on the ground. There may be evacuees at the airport asking for transportation. Be prepared.
- **Recognizing the end of a mission** - One of the most important things a community can do after a disaster is to resume normal economic operations. An abundance of donated supplies or donated flights can cause disruptions to normal local commerce.