

SCAPA DART

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South County Airport Pilots Association (SCAPA)
Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART)
Mission

The South County Airport Pilots Association (SCAPA) Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART) stands ready to provide volunteer emergency airlift services to aid local communities; disaster response after a cataclysmic event which impairs regional surface transportation.
How we fly

SCAPA DART sets up a ground and flight operation supported by participating volunteers and pilots. We fly no-charge transport missions with airplanes and helicopters operating under CFR Part 91 flight regulations. We match the capabilities and capacities of pilots and their aircraft to the people and goods who need to go somewhere after a disaster. We check the pilot license, medical, and insurance of participating pilots, and log the weights of materiel and people to assign payloads within the operating envelope of participating aircraft. All participating pilots, volunteers, and passengers acknowledge the risks involved and sign release-of-liability waivers. Pilots certify that they will fly according to CFR Part 91 rules.

General Aviation pilots assist after the Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989

We were inspired to form the SCAPA DART by the experiences of our pilots who participated in the Disaster Airlift for Watsonville and Santa Cruz after the Loma Prieta Earthquake of 1989. These cities were totally cut off for several days.
[link to video]

This ad hoc airlift flew one half million pounds of urgently needed food and supplies into Watsonville in just a few days.
Mutual aid with other pilot organizations

We encourage pilot associations at all airports to set up their own Disaster Airlift Response Teams. To that extent, we make our Disaster Airlift Response Plan freely available to help other organizations get a quick start on getting organized. We have contacts with people in 13 different pilot organizations where we have each indicated that we would attempt to utilize our resources to provide aid if one of our organization's local community has a disaster occur which impairs regional transportation.

The Evolution of SCAPA DART

The idea of having this SCAPA DART was first discussed by the SCAPA Board of Directors in 2008. After struggling with how to approach this issue, the first Disaster Airlift Response Plan (DARP) was authored by Co-Chair Rod Pharis and presented at the initial Disaster Airlift Response Team table top training session in June of 2011. The plan underwent further development, was reissued, and then a first practice mobilization was conducted in November, 2013.

Local SCAPA DART volunteers participating in the November 2013 DART mobilization exercise.

After further development, the DARP was reissued as version 2.0. Outside organizations began to take notice of what we were doing, and in 2014, the SCAPA DART was awarded \$10,000 from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) Foundation and \$5,000 from the Northrop Grumman Corporation to assist us in acquiring needed capital equipment and supplies. With the further efforts of Co-Chair Paul Marshall, the SCAPA DART acquired its equipment and developed numerous contacts within the regional emergency management community.

SCAPA DART's second mobilization exercise was successfully held on April 25, 2015, with exercise objectives including mobilization, setup and dispatch, coordination via Ham radio net with numerous local agencies, and the active participation of local emergency response agencies and organizations, hospitals, charities, and volunteers. Practice missions were flown simulating the local transport of emergency workers, transportation of food and supplies from as far away as Washington State, and the transportation of ambulatory injured people to distant hospitals.

DART volunteers and local emergency services organization observers during the 2015 DART exercise

For a more complete view of the day long April 25th 2015 DART Mobilization Exercise, explore the April 25th 2015 Disaster Mobilization Exercise: The Day in Timeline and Pictures.

SCAPA DART Background Information

Press Release for the 2015 DART Mobilization Exercise

April 25th 2015 Disaster Mobilization Exercise: The Day in Timeline and Pictures

2015 DART Exercise Operations Plan

SCAPA DART conducted another activation exercise on October 1st, 2016. DART volunteers set up the operations tent, established radio contact with emergency operations centers and neighboring airports, received, organized, and assembled exercise relief supplies to match the capabilities of volunteer pilot's aircraft, and the dispatched those payloads aboard exercise relief flights. The 2016 SCAPA DART exercise also coordinated with real-world operations at San Martin airport, as firefighting ops were underway at the field fighting a local wildfire. At the end of the exercise, all the food and supplies donated for exercise payloads was in turn donated by SCAPA DART to a local food bank. A volunteer produced video of the 2016 SCAPA DART Exercise can be access here.

SCAPA DART's E16 2018 mobilization exercise was held on April 7th 2018. More than 44 DART volunteers mobilized, set up, conducted operations. For details, see the 2018 April 7 DART exercise summary and photos. Lessons learned are being actively collected, and a new revision to the Disaster Airlift Response Plan (DARP) is in progress integrating the results.

Overview for starting a Disaster Airlift Response Team at your airport

Disaster Airlift Response Plan version 2.0

SCCEMA Honors Paul Marshall

FEMA honors SCAPA DART
Generous Funding

None of the volunteer time and effort of these local pilots would be nearly as effective without the assistance of generous sponsorship from local and nationwide organizations. The pilots and ground volunteers of SCAPA DART thank our major funding sponsors, The AOPA Foundation and the Northrop Grumman Corporation. Funding for DART is also provided by individual donations to SCAPA, a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

