



Fire Watch

Los Angeles Fire Department Newsletter

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Los Angeles Fire Department
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Our Mission

“To preserve life and property, promote public safety, foster economic growth through leadership, management and actions, as an all-risk fire and life safety response provider.”

The Los Angeles Fire Department Newsletter is published monthly by the Planning Section.

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Los Angeles Fire Department Airport Fire Protection LAX

Los Angeles Municipal Airport was opened in 1928 and was originally known as Mines Field. After World War II, the Los Angeles Municipal Airport, became known as Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). During the War, it was used extensively by the Army, Air Force, Navy, and local aircraft manufacturers, and continued to function as a commercial airport. The military Air Transport Command and the Air Technical Service Command conducted operations at the airport. Additionally, the facility was also used as a large military air freight terminal.



Fire Station 80 has provided fire protection to LAX since October 16, 1941. The original station was a five-room bungalow belonging to the City's Engineering Department. A 1918 Seagrave, 750 GPM, triple combination pumper with a 60-gallon chemical tank (basically a large fire extinguisher on wheels containing

sulfuric acid and baking soda) was assigned to the fire station. In 1943, a “crash wagon” was assigned to Fire Station 80 requiring the addition of an out-building. A “lean-to” for the rig was added and, presto, a new company was born.





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Fire Station 80 was originally located on the south side of the airport, but was moved to a more central location to better cover the center of the south runways. On May 29, 1956, a new Fire Station 80 was dedicated and was located at 10435 South Sepulveda Boulevard. Ten years later, *Eighties North*, a sub-station located at the intersection of "Taxiway Sierra" (a plane taxi-way) and "Service Road Echo" (a vehicle service road) was activated for rapid response to the north runways.



FIRE STATION 80 CIRCA 1943

One of LAX's most notable aircraft emergencies occurred in March,

more lives would have been lost. Today, Fire Station 80 is located in the center of the airport, just west of the main terminal complex, and was opened on May 21, 1985. The opening caused the

passengers died when an incoming US Air Boeing 737 collided with a smaller SkyWest Metroliner commuter plane. The US Air 737 landed on top of the commuter plane crushing it and dragging it in flames into the side of abandoned Fire Station *Eighties North*. The crash claimed all 12 people on the smaller commuter plane and 22 of the 89 passengers aboard the US Air flight. Many lessons were learned from this incident. These lessons have led to more aggressive aircraft rescue and firefighting tactics and strategies.

In part, due to the growth of the airline industry, and the Federal



1998 EMERGENCY 1, FOAM 1

1978, which involved a Continental flight bound for Honolulu with 197 passengers aboard. As the DC-10 was taking off, two firefighters stationed at *Eighties North*, witnessed the blow out of two tires on the aircraft. Recognizing the imminent danger the plane and its passengers faced, they pursued the plane down the runway in their apparatus. As a result of the blowouts, the landing gear collapsed causing the plane to skid off the runway, tip over, break the right wing, and catch on fire. After extinguishing the fire, it was discovered the entire left side of the plane was damaged and two passengers had died. These were the first fatalities in the 50-year history of LAX. If not for the quick action of the crash crew, many

closing of the *Eighties North* sub-station.



1979 OSKOSH, FOAM 3

"Old" *Eighties North* was the site of LAX's most tragic event. On February 1, 1991, thirty-four

Aviation Administration (FAA) goal to increase aircraft passenger survivability during post-crash fires,



a state-of-the-art Live Fire Training Facility was designed and built in 1994 at a cost of \$4 million. This FAA approved facility is located on the Southwest corner of the LAX property.

Since September 11, 2001, LAX is considered to be the number one target on the west coast for terrorist activities and, therefore, has brought a new dimension of hazards for the members of Fire Station 80. Continuous vigilance and training have become Fire Station 80's daily challenge.

Today, Fire Station 80 provides Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting (ARFF) services to LAX. The primary mission of the station is to provide rapid response to the scene of any aircraft emergency. Other responsibilities include response to fuel spills, bomb threats, hijackings and other terrorist activity, aircraft fires, airborne medical emergencies, radiological and hazardous materials incidents, evacuation assistance, and VIP

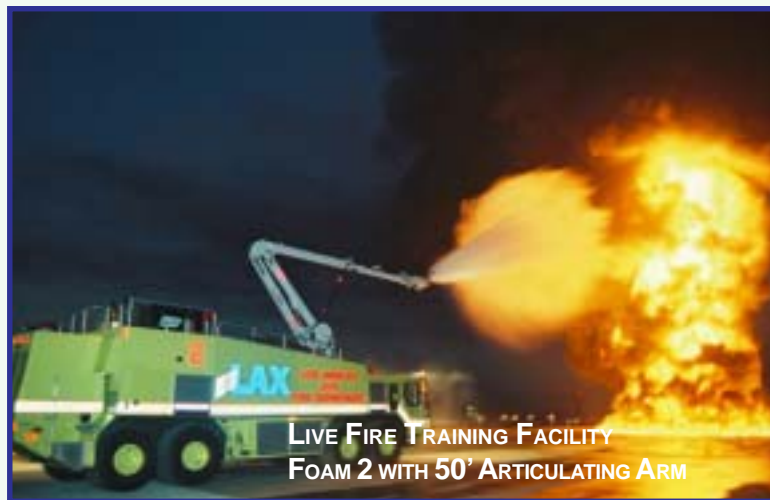
standbys. The Department of Airports contracted with the LAFD to provide 14 fully qualified professional firefighters each day to staff the 5 ARFF apparatus.

Modern ARFF apparatus carry 4,000 gallons of water plus large quantities of firefighting foam and



FOAM 1

capability, while Foam 180 carries a handheld infrared camera. Also assigned is an airstair truck (F-550 Ford 4x4) equipped with a hydraulically operated two-section elevating stairway. This platform provides access to aircraft cabin doorsill heights ranging from 8' to 19' above ground level. Two decontamination truck/trailer combination vehicles assigned to Fire Station 80 are capable of aiding up to 1,000 people per hour. Firefighters (with a DMV Class "A" license) transport these trailers or units anywhere in the



LIVE FIRE TRAINING FACILITY
FOAM 2 WITH 50' ARTICULATING ARM

dry chemical powder. Modern technical advances include titanium-tipped penetrator "snozzles" mounted on a 50-foot articulating arm.

These apparatus are also equipped with both infrared and color imagers. The rapid intervention vehicle has forward-looking infrared

City to combat chemical accidents or terrorist incidents. The 42 Department members who staff Fire Station 80 are recognized as among the finest ARFF specialists in the country.

LAX has two runways to the north of the terminal complex and two runways to the south of the terminal complex. Approximately one mile exists between the two sets of runways. Nine terminals (111 passenger gates) form the center core of the complex. There are 20 remote passenger gates on the west end of the airport property, and 28 passenger gates east of the main terminal complex. These



STANDBY FOR AIRFORCE 1



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areas of the airport cover approximately 3,425 acres. The FAA requires at least one ARFF apparatus capable of arriving at the mid-point of the furthest runway within three minutes. All other ARFF apparatus must arrive within four minutes. In 2003, LAX was the third busiest passenger airport in the world, handling nearly 55 million passengers.

Additionally, LAX was the second busiest cargo airport in the nation handling more than two million tons of cargo. There were over 750,000 take-offs and landings in 2003.

The "LAX Master Plan" projects substantial changes to the airport with continuous

increases in aircraft activity. In the future, it is anticipated Fire Station 80 will be required to increase resources and become two separate ARFF stations with additional ARFF apparatus.

The efficiency of extinguishing agents for aircraft firefighting has evolved over time, from previously used protein foams, to today's 3% Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) and other halogenated products. These products produce spectacular suppression results and afford greater firefighter

safety. These agents are easier to apply and are excellent surfactants. During fire testing, it was determined that protein foam required 60 seconds to extinguish the same fire that was extinguished by AFFF 6% in 11 seconds.

With the advancement of new technology, the airline industry continues to expand. The Department is determined to remain proactive in maintaining equipment, apparatus and the knowledge of airport safety to the highest degree. Today's aircraft are larger in size and superior in technology to the planes of the past. More passengers pass through the gates, commercial airfreight traffic has



nearly doubled, and airport expansion programs are planned, all of which present greater challenges for the firefighting forces of Fire Station 80.

Department personnel stationed at LAX are a group of individuals who take pride in a unique facet of LAFD service. They are to be commended for their loyalty and pride in what they do, and their ability to continue to meet new challenges daily.

Special thanks to the Historical Society and their efforts to preserve the history of the LAFD and making information easily accessible via the Intranet. Additionally, a special thanks to the members of Fire Station 80 who provided invaluable time, research and insight into the history and everyday operations of Fire Station 80.