

CalDART October 26, 2019 Exercise Press Release

The California DART Network (CalDART) is holding its first Bay Area wide earthquake disaster response exercise October 26, 2019. Disaster Airlift Response Team (DART) Operators based at 5 local Airports will connect the region's 29 airports with a variety of disaster response activities. CalDART President Paul Marshall said, "In this exercise, we will improve our disaster air transport logistics skills, build relationships within the community, and become better prepared to help the region respond to the challenges of a major earthquake."

Participating DART Operators are based at San Martin Airport (Santa Clara County), Watsonville Airport (Santa Cruz County), Reid Hillview Airport (City of San Jose), Half Moon Bay Airport (San Mateo County), and a group of Marin, Sonoma and Napa airports. Mutual aid will be provided by the Torrance DART flying in from southern California, the Alameda County Sheriff's Air Squadron, and Livermore Valley Airmen's Association demonstrating the power of cooperative agreements between pilot groups. The purpose of the exercise is to test the readiness of the DART teams and show community organizations how to use their local airports in a disaster.

Each DART Operator is organizing its own exercise while coordinating activities with the other DART Operators. Local Amateur Radio Operators will relay 2-way messages between airports providing communications links to each DART Operator. Operations will simulate airlifting of:

- first responders from the cities where they live to the cities where they work,
- disaster workers from outside regions into the airports closest to where they are needed,
- food and supplies for agencies and organizations cut off from their normal supply channels.

The Second Harvest Food Bank of Silicon Valley is trucking food from its San Jose warehouse to Reid Hillview Airport, where it will be flown to customers near 3 other airports near Watsonville, Gilroy, and Half Moon Bay. Other exercise activities include receiving passengers and cargo, load planning, coordinating and dispatching logistics and flight requests, and managing the flight line.

There are approximately 250 general aviation airports in CA, and many of them could form a DART Operator if enough pilots can support it. Pilots can also form a regional DART Operator made up of pilots from several airports in their area. Becoming a DART Supporter is another way to participate in the CalDART Network. Supporters can encourage pilots at their airport to volunteer for other DART Operator's mobilizations or contact activated DART Operators to offer aid to their local community airport. Another way to participate is to become a CalDART member to stay informed and connected to CalDART's activities. CalDART needs help from pilots and ground volunteers alike. Ground volunteers need no aviation experience. Another important way to participate is through donations to CalDART on its web page: <https://caldart.org/support-caldart-2/189-2/>

CalDART was born in the aftermath of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Earthquake damage closed most of the 6 major highways into Watsonville and Santa Cruz temporarily cutting them off from the relief help they needed. Bay Area pilots quickly formed ad hoc airlift relief flights bringing needed supplies and disaster support personnel in until the roads could be repaired, and major relief could flow into the cities. Pilots at the San Martin Airport created the first DART team to be better prepared for the next disaster, and the Watsonville team followed shortly thereafter. DART Operators can now be found throughout California, and Washington.

For further exercise information, visit caldart.org or contact: paul.marshall@caldart.org