

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE

1. Introduction

Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) is expected to introduce new aircraft types, operating models, and supporting infrastructure into communities throughout the United States. While many discussions focus on passenger transportation, AAM applications may also include emergency medical transport, cargo delivery, infrastructure inspection, disaster response, and public safety missions.

For local first responders, emergency managers, airport sponsors, and planners, the practical question is whether local agencies understand how to prepare before new aircraft and facilities begin operating.

Many aspects of AAM preparedness will be familiar. Communities have decades of experience responding to conventional aircraft incidents, helicopter emergencies, hazardous materials releases, power outages, severe weather, and transportation accidents. Existing emergency management frameworks, mutual aid agreements, airport emergency plans, and incident command structures remain highly relevant, even in this new and emerging space.

That said, emerging aircraft introduce new considerations. Electric propulsion systems, high-voltage energy storage, automated flight systems, powered-lift aircraft, vertiports, and advanced charging infrastructure may create situations that local responders have not previously encountered. Understanding these differences before an incident occurs can improve coordination, reduce uncertainty, and support safer outcomes.

Preparation requires a basic understanding of how these aircraft operate, how facilities are designed, what types of incidents may occur, and which organizations should be involved in planning and response activities.

The goal of this guide is to provide that foundation.

2. Understanding the Aircraft

Responders are not expected to understand every technical detail of an aircraft. They should, however, understand how different aircraft types are likely to behave during abnormal situations and emergency events.

The way an aircraft responds to a propulsion failure, weather event, system malfunction, or emergency landing can significantly influence responder actions, access requirements, and scene management.

Conventional Fixed-Wing Aircraft

Conventional fixed-wing aircraft generate lift through forward motion. If propulsion is lost, the aircraft does not simply fall from the sky. Instead, pilots are trained to establish and maintain a glide while selecting a suitable landing area. Depending on altitude, weather conditions, and terrain, this may include an airport, roadway, field, or other open area (FAA 2021).

For responders, this means an aircraft experiencing an emergency may travel a significant distance from the point where the problem began. Incidents may occur well beyond airport property and may involve roadway closures, access challenges, or coordination across multiple jurisdictions.

Emergency landings may still result in substantial aircraft damage, fuel leaks, or occupant injuries. However, a controlled emergency landing is not automatically a catastrophic crash event.

Electric Fixed-Wing Aircraft

Electric fixed-wing aircraft, including short takeoff and landing (STOL) variants, generally retain the same aerodynamic characteristics as conventional airplanes. The primary difference for responders is not how the aircraft flies, but the energy systems it carries.

High-voltage batteries, power distribution systems, and charging interfaces introduce hazards that differ from conventional fuel systems. Damaged battery systems may contain stranded energy even after an aircraft comes to rest. Structural damage may also increase the risk of thermal runaway, delayed ignition, or reignition following an incident (NTSB 2020; NREL 2023).

Responders should assume that high-voltage components remain energized until verified otherwise through approved procedures.

Helicopters

Helicopters operate differently from fixed-wing aircraft because lift is produced by the rotor system rather than by fixed wings moving through the air.

In the event of engine failure, helicopters are designed to perform an autorotation. During autorotation, airflow through the rotor system allows the pilot to maintain rotor energy and execute a controlled landing without engine power (FAA 2019).

This capability means that a loss of propulsion does not necessarily result in an uncontrolled descent. Helicopter emergencies may still result in off-airport landings, hard landings, rollover events, or other hazards, but responders should recognize that helicopters are specifically designed with emergency landing procedures that differ substantially from conventional airplanes.

Electric Helicopters

Electric helicopters generally retain the operational and emergency characteristics of conventional helicopters while introducing the same high-voltage and battery considerations associated with other electric aircraft.

Responders should understand that aircraft silence does not necessarily indicate a safe condition. Electric propulsion systems may produce significantly less audible noise than conventional engines while remaining energized and operational.

Powered-Lift Aircraft

Powered-lift aircraft represent one of the newest categories of civil aviation aircraft and include many of the vehicles commonly associated with Advanced Air Mobility. Unlike conventional airplanes or helicopters, powered-lift aircraft may combine characteristics of both. Depending on design, they may transition between vertical and forward flight, use distributed electric propulsion, or employ other novel flight architectures.

Because the development and certification of powered-lift aircraft is still evolving, community stakeholders should not assume that all powered-lift aircraft behave the same way during emergencies.

FAA certification guidance recognizes that emergency landing capability may be achieved through gliding, autorotation, or another equivalent means depending on the aircraft design. Some aircraft may be capable of continued flight following a partial propulsion failure. Others may rely on different emergency landing concepts altogether (FAA 2025).

The most important responder takeaway is that powered-lift aircraft should be treated as aircraft-specific systems. Emergency procedures, shutdown methods, battery configurations, and responder guidance may vary significantly between manufacturers and models.

Communities considering powered-lift operations should collaborate with operators to obtain aircraft-specific emergency response information before service begins.

Small Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS)

Small UAS generally operate at low altitudes and often incorporate automated contingency procedures. Depending on the aircraft and operating authorization, these procedures may include returning to a designated location, holding position, or performing a controlled descent following a system malfunction.

Incidents involving small UAS are generally less severe than incidents involving larger aircraft, but they may still create hazards for people, vehicles, infrastructure, or emergency operations as falling aircraft still contain enough kinetic energy to cause damage to property and injury to people.

Large UAS

Large UAS introduce a different set of considerations. These aircraft may carry substantial payloads, operate beyond visual line of sight, and rely heavily on remote operators, communications systems, and automated safety functions.

Unlike small recreational drones, large UAS may operate from dedicated facilities, support cargo missions, or interact directly with airport infrastructure.

Responders should not assume that all UAS incidents involve small consumer drones. The scale, energy, and operational complexity of large UAS systems can more closely resemble conventional aviation operations than recreational drone activity.

3. Understanding the Facility

Aircraft incidents are shaped not only by the aircraft, but by the place where the aircraft is operating. Airports, heliports, vertiports, and drone facilities are designed around more than routine arrivals and departures. Their layouts also account for abnormal operations, emergency access, obstacle protection, aircraft movement, fire response, and separation from people, vehicles, and buildings.

For local governments and first responders, this is one of the most important planning lessons: aviation design standards are not decorative. Safety areas, clear zones, approach and departure paths, fire access routes, rooftop access points, and separation distances exist because aircraft do not always operate under ideal conditions.

Airports

Existing airports may be the first locations where many communities encounter AAM operations, especially electric conventional takeoff and landing aircraft, electric short takeoff and landing aircraft, future powered-lift operations, and likely even cargo UAS.

Airport design standards address runways, taxiways, object-free areas, runway safety areas, vehicle service roads, markings, lighting, and emergency access. These features help reduce risk during routine operations and provide additional protection during abnormal events such as rejected takeoffs, hard landings, runway excursions, disabled aircraft, or emergency response activity (FAA 2022).

Emergency access is especially important. Airport layouts should allow emergency vehicles to reach aircraft movement areas quickly and safely. In communities considering AAM operations at existing airports, airport sponsors and local emergency responders should review whether emergency access remains adequate when new charging equipment, vertiport areas, UAS operations, or staging areas are added.

AAM-related improvements should not block emergency routes, reduce vehicle maneuvering space, create new obstacles, or complicate access to runways, taxiways, ramps, or aircraft parking areas.

Heliports

Heliports and helistops provide useful precedent for many AAM planning questions because they already support vertical flight operations in constrained settings, including hospitals, emergency service facilities, urban areas, and private sites.

Heliport design guidance addresses touchdown and liftoff areas (TLOF), final approach and takeoff areas (FATO), safety areas, approach and departure paths, lighting, markings, rooftop access, and emergency considerations (FAA 2024a). These features help reduce risk during normal and abnormal operations.

For emergency preparedness, rooftop and elevated facilities require particular attention. Responders should understand how to access the landing area, how patients or occupants would be removed, whether doors and access points allow emergency egress, and how fire or smoke could affect the building below.

It's important to recognize that some facilities may have been designed around conventional helicopters and may not automatically accommodate powered-lift aircraft, electric helicopters, or aircraft with different dimensions, downwash characteristics, battery systems, or loading requirements. This is an evolving area and change is expected as aircraft performance and other considerations are formalized.

Vertiports

Vertiports introduce additional design and emergency planning considerations. FAA Engineering Brief 105A provides interim guidance for vertiport design and recognizes that the industry is still developing operational data for many powered-lift aircraft (FAA 2024b).

Vertiport design currently includes TLOFs, FATO, safety areas, markings, lighting, passenger access, charging areas, aircraft parking, emergency access, and areas intended to manage downwash and outwash. These features help keep people, vehicles, loose objects, and infrastructure away from areas where aircraft movement and rotor or propulsor effects may create hazards.

Downwash and outwash deserve specific attention. Some powered-lift aircraft may generate strong localized air movement during takeoff, landing, hover, or transition. Facility layouts may need to restrict pedestrian movement, secure loose objects, and maintain clear areas around aircraft operating surfaces.

Charging infrastructure also changes the facility environment. Vertiports may include high-voltage charging equipment, battery energy storage systems, utility interconnections,

backup power, and other electrical systems. These systems should be located and managed so that responders can identify hazards, isolate power where appropriate, and access the aircraft or facility without unnecessary exposure.

Drone Facilities

Drone facilities may range from small launch and recovery areas to larger droneports (not a formally defined term as of this writing), delivery hubs, cargo facilities, or UAS operating areas at existing airports.

The emergency planning implications depend heavily on aircraft size, payload, operating environment, and level of automation. A small UAS launch area may require relatively modest planning. A large UAS cargo facility may require much more attention to aircraft movement, vehicle access, charging or fueling, payload handling, communications, and perimeter control.

Planning questions at the community should begin with the aircraft, payload, operating model, and likely incident scenarios.

Design Deviations and Risk Mitigation

Some aviation facilities may not be able to meet every preferred design criterion due to site constraints, existing development, terrain, utilities, building structure, or community context. Design deviations are not automatically unacceptable. They do, however, require careful review.

A design deviation should prompt a clear discussion of:

- what standard is not being met;
- what risk is being introduced;
- what mitigation is proposed;
- who is responsible for approving, maintaining, and monitoring that mitigation; and
- whether operators and emergency responders understand the resulting operating environment.

Examples of mitigations may include adjusted operating procedures, additional markings (for obstructions), restricted access areas, enhanced lighting, physical barriers, emergency response staging, operational limits, or increased training and coordination.

AAM facilities should not be treated as simple pads, rooftops, parking-lot conversions, or charging depots. They are aviation facilities. Their design affects incident probability, responder access, scene safety, and the ability to protect occupants and nearby communities.

Questions to Consider

- Can emergency vehicles reach the aircraft operating area without delay?
- Are access gates, keys, codes, or security procedures already coordinated with responders?
- Are charging equipment and high-voltage systems clearly identified?
- Can responders reach rooftop or elevated facilities safely?
- Are downwash, outwash, and loose-object hazards addressed?
- Will new equipment, fencing, parking, or passenger areas block emergency routes?
- If a design standard cannot be fully met, what mitigation is being used instead?
- Have local responders walked the site before operations begin?

4. Understanding the Incident

AAM-related incidents may involve a precautionary landing, a disabled aircraft, a battery fault, a charging system issue, a UAS crash, or an off-airport landing with limited damage. Others may involve significant structural damage, fire, injuries, or multiple agencies responding across jurisdictional boundaries.

The most useful preparedness question is not whether an incident fits a familiar category. It is whether responders understand the aircraft, facility, energy systems, access points, and responsible parties before they arrive on scene.

Emergency Landing Does Not Always Mean Crash

In aviation, an emergency landing may be controlled, precautionary, or damaging. A conventional fixed-wing aircraft may glide to a runway, road, field, or other open area. A helicopter may autorotate to a landing area. A powered-lift aircraft may use an aircraft-specific means of achieving a controlled emergency landing. A UAS may follow an automated contingency procedure.

Off-Airport Incidents

Some incidents may occur away from an airport, heliport, vertiport, or drone facility. This is especially relevant for aircraft operating between communities, along low-altitude corridors, near medical facilities, or in rural areas.

Off-airport incidents may create access and coordination challenges. The scene may be located on a road, field, private property, rooftop, canyon area, industrial site, or public gathering area. Jurisdiction may be unclear at first. Law enforcement may need to secure the scene. Fire and EMS may need access routes. Public works may be needed for road closures. The operator may need to provide aircraft-specific technical information.

Communities should consider how off-airport incidents would be handled before operations begin.

Hard Landings, Runway Excursions, and Disabled Aircraft

A hard landing may damage landing gear, battery compartments, rotors, propulsors, or aircraft structures. A runway excursion may leave an aircraft in grass, soft ground, snow, or an area difficult for emergency vehicles to reach. A disabled aircraft may block a runway, vertiport, taxiway, charging area, or emergency access route.

Battery and Charging Incidents

Electric aircraft and supporting infrastructure introduce high-voltage and battery-related hazards. Damaged batteries may retain stranded energy. Thermal runaway may produce heat, smoke, toxic gases, fire, or delayed reignition. Charging equipment and battery energy storage systems may also create electrical hazards independent of the aircraft itself (NTSB 2020; NREL 2023).

Damaged battery systems may require extended monitoring, isolation, technical support, and coordination with the operator, manufacturer, facility owner, utility provider, and fire officials.

The intent of this guide does not prescribe battery fire suppression tactics. Communities should rely on adopted codes, department procedures, aircraft-specific emergency response guides, and applicable standards for tactical response. NFPA 418 and related materials are great resources that are working to address these issues.

UAS Incidents

UAS incidents may involve aircraft of very different sizes and missions. A small UAS incident may involve a falling drone, damaged battery, minor property damage, or interference with emergency operations. A large UAS incident may involve heavier aircraft, cargo payloads, remote operators, communication links, and dedicated operating facilities. The aircraft weight, payload, energy system, location, and mission profile should shape the response.

Scene Management Considerations

AAM incidents may require responders to manage both aviation hazards and ordinary incident-scene risks. Examples include crowd control, road closures, utility isolation, fire suppression, patient care, aircraft stabilization, debris protection, evidence preservation, and coordination with aviation authorities.

In some incidents, the safest immediate action may be to establish a perimeter, keep the public away, preserve access for technical personnel, and wait for aircraft-specific guidance before approaching or moving components.

Questions to Consider

- Could an aircraft emergency occur away from the facility?
- Who can provide aircraft-specific emergency response information?
- Does the local dispatch center know whom to contact?

- Who has authority to isolate power at the facility?
- Are damaged batteries or charging systems likely to require extended monitoring?
- How would responders secure a UAS incident involving cargo or hazardous payloads?
- Who coordinates with FAA, NTSB, airport management, the operator, or the facility owner after an incident?
- What locations may require road closures, crowd control, or mutual aid?

5. Who Responds?

AAM incidents will rarely belong to one agency alone. Even a relatively minor incident may involve aviation, fire response, EMS, law enforcement, facility access, utility systems, public information, and coordination with state or federal agencies, such as the FAA or the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

The specific response will depend on where the incident occurs and what type of operation is involved. An event at an airport may be managed through the airport sponsor's emergency procedures. A rooftop vertiport incident may involve the fire department, building owner, facility operator, EMS, law enforcement, and utility provider. An off-airport UAS incident may involve local law enforcement, fire, emergency management, the aircraft operator, FAA notification, and property owners. Therefore, it is helpful to clarify roles before operations begin.

Airport sponsors and facility owners should identify who is responsible for emergency access, aircraft movement areas, facility shutdowns, charging infrastructure, public notifications, and operator coordination. Fire departments and EMS agencies should know how to reach the facility, who can provide aircraft-specific information, and who has authority to isolate energy systems. Law enforcement should understand how scene security, crowd control, traffic management, and evidence preservation may apply. Emergency managers can help integrate AAM incidents into existing emergency operations plans, mutual aid agreements, and multi-agency coordination structures. Much of this may already be established and just needs to be calibrated.

Utility providers should also be part of the conversation where electric aircraft, charging equipment, microgrids, or battery energy storage systems are involved. The ability to isolate power, understand equipment ownership, and manage electrical hazards may be critical during an incident.

For uncrewed aircraft operations, the operator or remote pilot may not be physically present at the scene. Responders should know how to contact the operator, determine what the aircraft was carrying, identify whether batteries or payloads present additional hazards, and understand whether other aircraft may still be operating in the area.

A simple contact pathway can prevent confusion. Local responders do not need a complex governance structure for every possible incident, but they do need reliable answers to basic questions:

- Who owns the facility?
- Who operates the aircraft?
- Who can shut down or isolate power?
- Who can provide aircraft-specific emergency response guidance?
- Who coordinates with the FAA, NTSB, airport sponsor, or state agencies?
- Who communicates with the public?
- These relationships should be tested before the first incident, not discovered during one.

6. Preparing Before an Incident Occurs

Preparedness begins before aircraft arrive, before facilities open, and especially before the first emergency call. Communities do not need to create an entirely new emergency management system for AAM. They should instead update existing emergency plans, mutual aid agreements, facility review processes, and training programs so they account for emerging aircraft and infrastructure.

The first step is to identify where AAM-related incidents could occur. This includes airports, heliports, vertiports, drone facilities, charging areas, corridors between communities, hospital access points, logistics sites, and potential off-airport landing areas. A map of likely operating areas can help responders identify access constraints, jurisdictional boundaries, staging locations, sensitive receptors, utility infrastructure, and nearby public facilities.

Airport sponsors and facility operators can provide local responders with site plans, emergency access routes, gate access procedures, contact information, charging equipment locations, utility shutoff points, aircraft parking areas, and any aircraft-specific emergency response guidance available from operators or manufacturers.

For powered-lift aircraft, electric aircraft, and large UAS, this pre-incident information may be especially important. Emergency responders should understand where high-voltage systems may be located, how batteries or payloads may be isolated, whether the aircraft may contain hazardous cargo, and who can provide technical support during an incident.

Emergency planning should also consider response time. Communities can use concepts borrowed from major commercial service airports as a planning reference: if a facility is far from the nearest fire station, has difficult access, sits on a rooftop, or includes high-voltage infrastructure, response time should be discussed before the facility is approved or operated.

Pre-designated emergency landing areas (PELAs) may also be useful, especially for emergency medical, rural, or disaster-response operations. FAA heliport guidance recognizes the value of identifying potential emergency landing areas before they are needed. For communities, the practical value is simple: responders, operators, and planners can evaluate access, obstacles, slopes, surface conditions, communications, and patient transfer points before an emergency occurs.

Preparedness should also include dispatch coordination. Dispatch centers should become familiar with how to classify AAM-related calls, which agencies to notify, and how to reach the aircraft operator, facility owner, airport sponsor, or utility provider. A call involving a drone crash with a small package is different from a call involving a large UAS cargo aircraft, a rooftop vertiport incident, or a damaged electric aircraft battery.

The best pre-incident planning usually answers a few practical questions:

- Who owns or operates the facility?
- What aircraft or UAS types are expected?
- Where are emergency access points?
- Where are high-voltage systems, chargers, or energy storage systems?
- Who can isolate power?
- Who has aircraft-specific emergency response information?
- Where could an off-facility emergency landing occur?
- How will dispatch notify the right agencies?
- What mutual aid may be needed?
- Which local plans or procedures need to be updated?

For communities at the earliest stages of AAM planning, these questions do not need perfect answers. They do need to be asked early enough that facility siting, design, operations, and emergency planning can influence one another.

7. Training and Exercises

Training for AAM-related incidents should focus on practical familiarity: responders should understand the aircraft, the facility, the access points, the energy systems, and the people to call when something goes wrong.

The most useful training may be simple. A fire department walkthrough of a vertiport can identify access routes, shutoff locations, charging equipment, staging areas, rooftop access, and patient movement paths. A tabletop exercise can test whether dispatch, fire, EMS, law enforcement, the airport sponsor, the operator, and the utility provider know how to coordinate. A short aircraft familiarization session can help responders understand where high-voltage systems, batteries, emergency cutoffs, rotors, propulsors, or payloads may be located. This happens regularly at legacy airports and heliports when a new or novel type of aircraft is onsite.

Aircraft-specific emergency response guides should be available before operations begin. These guides can help responders understand shutdown procedures, battery locations, high-voltage hazards, safe approach areas, and areas to avoid during extrication or fire response. Where aircraft-specific guidance is not yet available, communities should treat that as a planning gap.

Exercises should include both facility incidents and off-facility scenarios. A tabletop exercise limited to the vertiport may miss the more difficult situation: an aircraft lands on a road, in a field, near a hospital, on private property, or in another jurisdiction. These scenarios can test notification pathways, scene security, traffic control, public information, operator coordination, and technical support.

For UAS operations, training should also address remote operators and payloads. Responders may need to determine who operated the aircraft, what it was carrying, whether additional aircraft are still in the area, and whether the incident affects emergency operations, public roads, utilities, or critical infrastructure.

Training should be repeated as aircraft, facilities, operators, and standards evolve. AAM is not a static technology area. New aircraft designs, battery systems, operating models, and facility layouts are expected. Periodic site visits and exercises can help keep responders current without requiring large new training programs.

Useful training and exercise activities may include:

- facility walkthroughs with fire, EMS, law enforcement, and emergency management;
- tabletop exercises involving the operator, facility owner, airport sponsor, utility provider, and dispatch;
- review of aircraft-specific emergency response guides;
- identification of high-voltage systems, shutoffs, and isolation procedures;
- review of likely off-facility incident locations;
- coordination with mutual aid partners;
- discussion of public information and media coordination;
- updates when aircraft, operators, or facility layouts change.

The best training outcome is not perfect expertise. It is familiarity, contact, and confidence before an incident occurs.

8. Community Resilience and Dual-Use Infrastructure

AAM infrastructure may eventually support more than routine transportation. If planned carefully, some facilities could also contribute to community resilience during emergencies, disasters, utility disruptions, or severe weather events, rather than simply being a source of potential incidents.

This does not mean every vertiport, drone facility, or airport improvement should be treated as an emergency management asset. It does mean communities should consider whether new aviation infrastructure can provide secondary benefits when investments are already being made.

Electric aviation facilities may require significant electrical service, charging equipment, backup power, and sometimes battery energy storage. In some locations, these systems could support broader resilience objectives, such as backup power for critical facilities, emergency staging areas, communications support, or temporary charging for public safety vehicles.

Weather monitoring is another potential dual-use benefit. AAM operations are expected to be sensitive to low-altitude weather, wind, visibility, icing, heat, and localized terrain effects. Sensors installed to support aviation safety may also help emergency managers, public works departments, and planners better understand wildfire smoke, hazardous plumes, extreme heat, canyon winds, or localized storm conditions.

Drone facilities and vertiports may also support emergency logistics in limited circumstances. Potential uses include movement of medical supplies, small cargo, inspection equipment, emergency communications equipment, or other time-sensitive materials. These uses should be planned realistically. Aviation infrastructure can support emergency logistics, but it does not replace roads, ambulances, helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, or existing disaster response systems.

The resiliency value of AAM infrastructure depends on planning choices made early. Communities should ask whether proposed facilities can support emergency access, backup power, communications, weather awareness, medical logistics, or disaster coordination. These benefits are easier to build in at the beginning than retrofit later.

AAM facilities should also be evaluated carefully so they do not create new vulnerabilities. A facility that depends on fragile power systems, difficult access, weak communications, or unresolved emergency procedures may add complexity during a disaster instead of reducing it.

Potential dual-use questions include:

- Can the facility provide backup power or support a microgrid?
- Could weather sensors support public safety or emergency management needs?
- Could the site serve as a staging area during disasters?
- Could the facility support medical logistics or emergency supply movement?
- Are communications systems resilient during power or network outages?
- Would responders have access to the facility during an emergency?
- Can the facility operate safely during smoke, high winds, snow, heat, or other local hazards?

The strongest resilience strategy is to make sure that, where aviation infrastructure is built, it is designed to strengthen the community rather than create another fragile system.

9. Common Misconceptions

AAM introduces enough new terminology that it is easy for communities, responders, and elected officials to talk past one another. The following misconceptions are common and should be corrected early during planning.

A loss of power means the aircraft falls from the sky.

Aircraft behavior depends on aircraft type and design. Fixed-wing aircraft may glide. Helicopters may autorotate. Powered-lift aircraft may use aircraft-specific emergency landing concepts. UAS may follow automated contingency procedures. The response plan should be based on the aircraft actually operating in the community.

A controlled emergency landing means the scene is safe.

A controlled landing may still damage landing gear, batteries, rotors, propulsors, payloads, or structures. Occupants may be protected while the aircraft itself is damaged.

If the flames are out, the battery hazard is over.

Lithium-ion battery systems may retain stranded energy. Thermal runaway, delayed ignition, or reignition may remain possible after visible flames are extinguished.

A vertiport is just a helipad with chargers.

Vertiports may involve different aircraft dimensions, downwash and outwash considerations, passenger circulation, charging infrastructure, battery energy storage, utility interconnections, and evolving design standards.

Every incident will happen at the facility.

Some incidents may occur between facilities, along low-altitude corridors, near hospitals, on roads, in fields, on rooftops, or in other jurisdictions.

Small UAS and large UAS create the same response problem.

A small UAS incident may involve a lightweight drone, minor property damage, or a damaged battery. A large UAS incident may involve heavier aircraft, cargo payloads, remote operations, and more complex scene management.

Existing emergency plans already cover everything.

Existing emergency plans are the right starting point, but they may need updates for aircraft-specific guidance, high-voltage systems, charging infrastructure, facility access, dispatch procedures, and operator coordination.

A manufacturer hotline is enough.

Responder guidance should be available before an incident. Emergency response guides, site plans, shutoff locations, contact pathways, and facility walkthroughs are more useful than trying to solve the problem during an active incident.

Design standards are optional details.

Safety areas, access routes, clear zones, markings, and separation distances are part of the safety system. When standards cannot be fully met, the accepted deviation and related mitigation should be clear to operators, facility owners, and responders.

10. Closing Guidance

AAM will not require every community to build a new emergency response system. It will require communities to update existing preparedness practices so that responders understand the aircraft, the facility, the energy systems, and the coordination pathways before operations begin.

The most effective public safety strategy is early coordination. Local governments, airport sponsors, operators, fire departments, EMS agencies, law enforcement, emergency managers, utility providers, and dispatch centers should work together before service begins to identify access needs, response roles, aircraft-specific guidance, training opportunities, and unresolved risks.

AAM preparedness should be practical, not speculative. Communities should focus on the aircraft and facilities proposed in their area, the agencies that would respond, and the actions that can be taken now to reduce confusion during an incident.