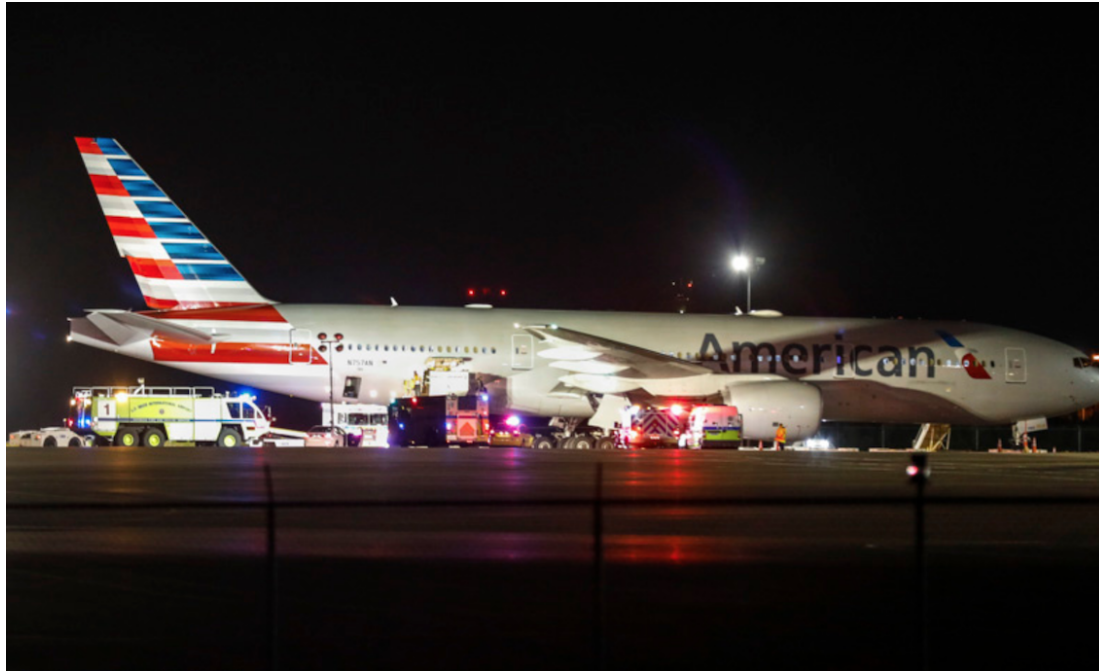


Do you use Bermuda (TXKF) as a NAT alternate at night?

David Mumford
8 February, 2018



The Bermuda AIP says that they have Fire Category 9 from 07-23 local time, but also that “during uncontrolled hours of operations BFRS/ARFF will be called out at CAT 9”.

So does this mean that Fire Category 9 is essentially ALWAYS available? And how long does it really take to call them out in an emergency?

We got an answer to that question the other day, when an American Airlines B777-200 en-route from JFK/New York to SBGL/Rio de Janeiro had to make an emergency divert to TXKF/Bermuda due to a suspected fire in the cargo hold.

ATC cleared the flight direct to TXKF/Bermuda. They advised the crew that the tower at the airport was not staffed at the time (although the runway has pilot controlled runway lighting), but that emergency services had been alerted and would be on standby for their arrival.

38 minutes later, at 12.18 am, the flight landed, and the emergency services were indeed there as promised.

The whole cargo fire thing turned out to be a false alarm, although we’re very thankful to one of the passengers-the supermodel Joan Smalls-for **documenting the ordeal on social media**.

We contacted the airport authority to check exactly how long they really need for emergency divers, and whether they really do provide Fire Cat 9 in these situations. Here is their response:

“ARFF is available 24hrs and yes will be staffed at the appropriate level to be cat 9 at all times. After 2300 Local Time when the local airport is uncontrolled , ARFF requires 20 minutes for call out for such events like diversions.”

So there you have it. You can always rely on Fire Cat 9 at TXKF – just make sure you give them at least 20

minutes notice!