
America's Safest Airport?

Airline Employee, Passenger Save Holiday Traveler at Sky Harbor

November 26, 2007—Phoenix, AZ—A 62-year-old man from Ohio was saved by a fellow passenger and an airline employee using cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and an automated External Defibrillator (AED) while on board a plane departing Sky Harbor over the Thanksgiving Holiday.

The man was on board a Mesa Airlines flight, operating as US Airways Express, last Wednesday evening (Nov. 21). The man collapsed in sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) as the plane was pulling out from the gate, preparing for takeoff. Another passenger, an off-duty paramedic, checked the man for a pulse and began CPR when he did not detect a heartbeat. The pilot pulled the plane back to the gate. A quick-thinking Mesa Airlines employee retrieved an AED, activated it, then continued CPR.

Phoenix Police Airport officers responded and offered assistance. Phoenix Fire Department paramedics on bicycles also arrived on the scene in less than three minutes and determined that the man's pulse had been restored. Paramedics from Phoenix Fire Engine 19 based at Sky Harbor transported the man to the hospital, where he was reported to be in stable condition.

This was the 19th AED save at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport since December 2000, when the devices were installed. Sky Harbor has more than 75 AEDs available in public areas and employee work spaces. Airliners are equipped with the devices, and officers with the Phoenix Police Airport Bureau and Fire Department bicycle teams carry AEDs with them at the airport. Phoenix Firefighters have trained more than 2,000 Airport employees and volunteer Navigators on CPR and proper use of AEDs.