



City of Yakima

# **News Release**

**Subject: Yakima Airport Operations Impacted by Traffic Accident**

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## **Commercial Flights at Yakima Airport to Resume**

Commercial flights will resume this evening at the Yakima Air Terminal-McAllister Field, but the air traffic control tower at the airport is closed because of damage it sustained during a motor vehicle accident early Friday morning.

FAA inspectors have determined the control tower cannot be occupied at this time because structural support beams inside it were damaged when a vehicle impacted the tower at about 3:00 am today.

“Even though the tower cannot be accessed, flights are able to resume at the airport,” said City of Yakima Communications and Public Affairs Director Randy Beehler. “Pilots can announce their locations to each other via radio. They are trained to utilize an airport even without the assistance of air traffic controllers,” said Beehler.

At about 3:00 am Friday, the driver of a vehicle traveling at an extremely high rate of speed eastbound on Washington Avenue was unable to maintain control of the vehicle through the curve at 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The vehicle veered off the road, hit two power transformers, and eventually impacted the air traffic control tower a few feet off the ground. A tire that had become detached from the vehicle impacted the control tower about 15 feet off the ground.

The passenger and driver of the vehicle were both transported to Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital with extensive injuries. The Yakima Police Department announced this afternoon that the driver has died. The condition of the passenger is not known at this time.

Damage done to the electricity transformers during the accident resulted in power being cut to the control tower, air terminal building, and other facilities near the airport. Power was restored at about 2:00 pm today.

Updates regarding the status of the tower will be provided on the City’s various communications platforms. Passengers can visit <https://flyykm.com/> for the latest flight information.