

Prepared When It Mattered Most

Airport Service Worker Daniel Rodriguez was working alone at Brackett Field Airport in La Verne when he heard an urgent radio call and klaxon alarm. A small single-engine plane had lost power mid-flight and was diverting for an emergency landing.

"It's more of a reaction than time to think," Rodriguez said. "We've been trained to respond to accidents, so the training just kind of takes over."

Rodriguez immediately notified the air traffic control tower and drove to the scene.

When he arrived, the pilot and passenger had already exited the aircraft on their own. Rodriguez confirmed to the tower that neither required medical attention and transported them to the terminal so they could contact their families.

"It was a pretty rough landing," Rodriguez said, "so for them to walk away from that was pretty impressive."

With everyone safe, Rodriguez shifted into coordination mode. He facilitated

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the City of La Verne's fire department inspection, notified the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board, and oversaw the removal of the damaged aircraft from the runway.

Once the runway was cleared and it was safe to resume operations, Rodriguez coordinated with the tower to reopen the airport, minimizing disruptions to airport operations.

Rodriguez's swift response and professionalism earned him the 2026 Mario Sanchez Safety Award.

"Daniel's response to that incident and his cool, calm, collected, and really confident demeanor in that response represents the focus and emphasis on safety in what he does and what all of our airport service workers do," said Jason Morgan Chief of Aviation Division.

"When an emergency event like that happens, it's great to see that my team is on top of it—that they handle these situations with professionalism," said David Price, airport project coordinator for Brackett Field Airport. "That they're on the spot whenever they're needed."



Daniel Rodriguez