

Dubai firefighters to get 20 Jetpacks to fight tower blazes



New Zealand firm signs deal with Dubai Civil Defence to provide latest firefighting tools

Dubai: Dubai has ordered 20 new jetpacks for high-flying firefighters to battle blazes on upper floors of tall skyscrapers, according to a New Zealand aviation company.

The aircraft can stay in the air for more than 45 minutes and reach altitudes of 3,000 feet giving firefighter pilots the ability to douse fires such as the February 21 fire at Torch Tower where flames raced up the exterior of the 79-floor, 352 metre-tall residential building in Dubai Marina.

According to Martin Aircraft Company Limited (Martin Aircraft), the firm inked a deal with Dubai Civil Defence to also include two simulators and operational support and training. Officials didn't release the value of the order but at \$250,000 for each jetpack, the deal could exceed Dh18.3 million (\$5 million), not including extras.

Delivery is set for next year.

In a statement, the firm said a memorandum "was signed on November 9, 2015 at the Dubai Air Show and marks a significant step forward for the advanced delivery of first responder services in the United Arab Emirates. The signing ceremony was attended by Lt Col Ali Hassan Al Mutawa, Director Operations, on behalf of Major General Rashid Thani Al Matroushi, Director-General of Civil Defence, and senior representatives of both the New Zealand and Dubai government, along with the Chief Executive Officer/Managing Director of Martin Aircraft Company Peter Coker."

Neither Martin Aircraft Company or Lt Col Al Mutawa could be reached by Gulf News by phone on Sunday.



However, in a statement released by the company. Lt Col Ali Al Mutawa said: “The vision of Dubai Civil Defence (DCD) is protecting lives, properties and environment and to provide fast professional service, efficient investment of human and material sources to give best results. Dubai is one of the fastest growing future cities in the world with its modern skyscrapers and vast infrastructure. It has always been a world leader in adopting new technology to improve and save people’s lives. The introduction of Martin Jetpacks into our fleet of emergency response vehicles is another example of how Dubai leads the world.”

Martin Aircraft CEO Coker said his firm’s jetpack offers “a significant operational advantage being able to carry commercial payloads of up to 120kg”.

Coker lauded the UAE’s “strong and visionary leadership that has recognised the importance and utility of our technology”.

Versatile firefighting tool

According to the company, the “Martin Jetpack is a disruptive technology, much like the helicopter was when first developed, with substantial capabilities and is able to be flown by a pilot or via remote control.

The Jetpack can take off and land vertically (VTOL) and because of its small dimensions, it can operate in confined spaces such as close to or between buildings, near trees or in confined areas that other VTOL aircraft such as helicopters cannot access.

This highly responsive tactical air asset allows for rapid deployment for Civil Defence roles such as intelligent surveillance, initial intervention, heavy lift payload drone, high rise rescue, and rapid deployment of specialist teams”.