**APPENDIX B**

**NIGHT FLYING GUIDELINES**

**National Policy:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| File Code: | 5700 | | Date: | May 25, 2010 |
| Route To: |  | | | |
|  |  | | | |
| Subject: | Helicopter Night Flying Policy of USDA Forest Service | | | |
|  |  | | | |
| To: | Regional Foresters | | | |
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The memo clarifies existing policy in Forest Service (FS) manual 5716.2.

While the FS does not have agency helicopters equipped to fly at night, we do have cooperator aircraft that fly at night. The cooperator helicopters can accomplish night flying operations on FS protected land under mutual aid agreements, or if the Agency is under unified incident command. Cooperator aircraft for night flights can also be hired through “assistance by hire” arrangements for areas outside the mutual threat zone. These flights are permitted as long as they are conducted safely and meet agency and FAA regulations.

We are looking at the possibility of expanding night flight operations, provided they can be performed safely.

Questions regarding night flying policy should be directed to Larry Brosnan, Assistant Director, Aviation at [lbrosnan@fs.fed.us](mailto:lbrosnan@fs.fed.us) or 202-205-1505

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| */s/ James E. Hubbard* |
| JAMES E. HUBBARD |
| Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry |

**Regional Direction:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| File Code: | 5700 | | Date: | June 7, 2011 |
| Route To: |  | | | |
|  |  | | | |
| Subject: | Helicopter Night Operations Policy | | | |
|  |  | | | |
| To: | Forest Supervisors | | | |
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As we move forward into the 2011 fire season, I would like to reiterate the Chief’s position with regards to night flying operations. The enclosed Chief’s letter dated May 25, 2010, reinforces under all mutual aid agreements that the agency can utilize cooperator aircraft for night operations on Forest Service protected lands or when the agency is under unified incident command. Cooperator aircraft can be hired through “assistance by hire” arrangements for areas outside the mutual threat zone for night flights.

The National Director of Fire and Aviation Management convened a group of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to determine if the agency can expand night flying operations safely. The group completed a strategic risk assessment for night flying helicopter operations and identified four missions that the agency can carry forward for further evaluation. The four missions are:

* Water and retardant dropping using ground fill fixed tank;
* Aerial supervision;
* Aerial ignition using a plastic sphere dispenser;
* Emergency medical transportation (hoist).

While the agency continues to evaluate the four types of night missions, in the interim for 2011, the Region will adopt the Night Flying Guidelines developed by FIRESCOPE when the Forest Service utilizes these cooperators at night. [http://www.firescope.org/specialist-groups/aviation/documents/Night%20Flying%20Guidelines/Night-Flying-Guidelines-Complete.pdf](http://www.firescope.org/specialist-groups/aviation/documents/Night%20Flying%20Guidelines/Night-Flying-Guidelines-Complete.pdf%20)

In addition to the above guidelines, Region 5 will incorporate the Risk Management Process outlined in Chapter 3 of the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide for all night operation missions. A GO/NO GO checklist has been developed for aviation and incident leadership personnel to complete prior to commencing all night operations when utilizing cooperators.

A copy of this checklist is enclosed.

Forests that have Cooperators capable of performing night missions should update their Local Agreements, Annual Operating Plans, and Run Cards to include these missions prior to commencing field operations.

Forest Supervisors 2

Questions regarding night flying policy should be directed to Jeff Power, Regional Aviation Officer at [jmpower@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmpower@fs.fed.us) or 916-640-1031.

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| */s/ Jeanne Wade Evans (for)* |
| RANDY MOORE |
| Regional Forester  Enclosures |

cc: Willie R Thompson

Jeff M Power

Joe Millar

**NVG HELICOPTER OPERATIONS**

**MANDATORY**

**GO/NO-GO CHECKLIST**

The NVG Go/NO-GO checklist must be completed and signed by each Cooperator prior to night operations commencing. If any box is unchecked (the item is NOT accomplished), the entire NVG operation is a No-Go. A check mark inside the box means all aspects of the required procedures are applicable and satisfied. All personnel used during night operations shall be trained and qualified (per Cooperator’s Night Operations Guide/Manual).

1. Organization

An organization chart has been prepared and posted, showing responsibility for functions by name of person responsible.

All helicopter related positions are assigned to personnel fully qualified for the position.

Pilot, aircraft and support personnel meet agency requirements,

Flight Operations

When applicable, pilot familiarization flight

* Made during daylight, at least 30 minutes before darkness
* Landings and take-offs from all approved fill/fuel sites.

Helicopter siren(s) operational

All fire line reconnaissance missions have been approved by the IC and Air Operations Branch Director (any reconnaissance will be at 1000 AGL or higher).

Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) in place when appropriate.

All pilots meet duty day and flight hour limitations. (1.4/1)

2. Helibase Operations

Operating procedures have been established for helicoptermovement around helibase.

Procedures have been established for maintaining aircraft separation in airspace surrounding helibase.

Flight following procedures have been established.

A Cooperator-qualified Crewmember has been assigned to each fill or fuel site.

Helibase security assured

Located in an area with safe approach and departure paths.

Free of aerial hazards in an area that allows a minimum of fifty feet separation between rotor tips, on multi-aircraft operations.

Traffic control (vehicle, personnel, aircraft) in place.

Dust abatement measures taken.

3. Communications

A communications plan has been completed and approved to include at minimum the following frequencies:

* Air-to air
* Air-to-ground frequency has been established
* Take off and landing
* Command

All helicopter radios are compatible with the communication plan.

4. Briefings

At a minimum, all Air Operations personnel and all pilots have been

briefed on, and understand:

Overhead responsibilities and authority.

General operating procedures

Following procedures.

Flight routes.

Check in points.

Area flight hazards posted.

Radio frequency assignments and communications plan

Interactions between pilots and ground personnel.

Helibase personnel assignments.

Incident Action Plan and maps reviewed

Overhead and pilots cautioned of dangers of directing drops directly on crews

Fire line crews informed of night operations.

5. Approved Fill / Fuel Sites

Located in an area with safe approach and departure paths.

Free of aerial hazards. In an area that allows a minimum of fifty feet separation between rotor tips, on multi-aircraft operations.

Traffic control (vehicle, personnel, aircraft) in place.

Dust abatement measures taken.

Proper fueling techniques in place.

6. Crash/Rescue

Crash/Rescue plan prepared and posted.

All personnel briefed.

Fire rescue equipment present and operational.

## 2011 – 2012

USFS VLAT (DC-10)

OPERATING PLAN



Reviewed by:\_\_\_*/s/ Scott Fisher*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_8/15/11\_

Scott Fisher, Airtanker Program Manager

Accepted by:\_\_\_\_*/s/ Pat Norbury*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_8/15/11\_

Pat Norbury, NAOO

VLAT Operating Plan

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Note: This plan is an effort to provide guidance for most but not all operational situations. Where it does not address a particular situation, personnel identified in this plan should be consulted to follow best practices for this resource and comply with the contract. CAL FIRE also provides an operating plan for use when under their contract.

VLAT Operating Plan\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Objectives

The purpose of this plan is to describe the operations for the DC-10, a Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT), under a Call-When-Needed (CWN) contract to the US Forest Service.

These aircraft are approved through the Interagency Airtanker Board (IAB) and capable of dispensing a minimum of 11,000 gallons of long term retardant, gel, or water in single or multiple pass deliveries. The VLAT tank system can provide coverage levels 1 through 8 to a going wildland fire. VLATs have tanking systems that will perform in various wildland fire scenarios. Key mission elements include: indirect, parallel, or direct retardant line application; perimeter and anchor application on moderate to high intensity fires; pretreatment or offset of indirect line and burnout operations; and/or urban interface pretreatment for structures or other improvements.

II Responsibility

* + 1. When under contract to the US Forest Service (FS) the agency will retain oversight for:
       1. VLAT aircraft approval under the contract.
       2. Pilot approval under the contract.
       3. Pilot operating standards.
       4. VLAT Maintenance through FS Aviation Maintenance Inspectors (AMI).
       5. Designation of VLAT approved Leadplane Pilots (LP).
       6. VLAT contract administration and performance.
       7. The Airtanker Program Manager (COR) may delegate authority to a Project Inspector (PI) onsite to fulfill contract roles.
    2. The Host Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) will retain operational control and insure that:
       1. A VLAT qualified LP is available to direct all dispensing operations
       2. A qualified Air Tanker Base Manager (ATBM) is assigned
    3. This contract is written as a “Turn Key” operation and the contractor may be required to provide everything with the exception of the following items:
       1. An approved LP, which will normally be provided by the government
       2. The FS may provide a portable retardant base or assign the VLAT to operate from an existing Air Tanker Base (ATB) when it is advantageous to the government.

III Mission Ordering Procedures

The DC-10 is normally based at Victorville Airport (VCV). The assigned LP may be collocated or based at a nearby base. Cal Fire has a temporary ATB located in VCV to provide support on initial call up. In ROSS the DC-10 is called up by NICC for the FS CWN contract. Requests for the DC-10 will be made to the Coordinator on Duty (COD) at NICC by the GACC interested in its use.

* + 1. While located at its home base, VCV:
       1. OSCC will be responsible for the dispatch and daily status of the aircraft, and the LP assigned in ROSS.
       2. The Contractor will be responsible for all other personnel and logistical support of the Victorville ATB and its crews.
       3. Note: As determined by OSCC, the DC-10 may be repositioned to San Bernardino ATB as an alternate operating location.
    2. While deployed to other GACCs:
       1. The Host GACC will be responsible for the dispatch and daily status of the aircraft, and the LP assigned in ROSS.
       2. The Host ATB will be responsible for all other personnel and logistical support at the Host ATB.
       3. A Project Inspector (PI) may be assigned at the Host ATB to accomplish contract roles for the CO and COR.
       4. If a location is used that does not have an existing ATB from which the DC-10 can operate, the agency in consultation with the GACC will determine if the Contractor or the Area will provide the portable retardant base.
    3. Ordering while on contract.
       1. Ordering will follow the normal process to request airtanker support. An incident will place an order for a VLAT to the appropriate Dispatch Center. The Dispatch Center will notify the GACC Aviation Coordinator or the COD when an order is received to use the VLAT.
       2. If a dispatch is cancelled after loading, but prior to takeoff, the DC-10 may decide to sit loaded until the next dispatch is received or until a release from call up is given.
       3. When a mission is cancelled after the aircraft is airborne, the load may be diverted to another incident or will be jettisoned.
       4. Once airborne, both the DC-10 and the assigned LP may be diverted to new incidents following GACC or local procedures. Diverts while aircraft are airborne will be done using AIRGUARD (168.6250 Tone 1 <110.9 Tx/Rx>). Information necessary for a diversion shall be relayed to the VLAT in a timely manner.

IV Designated Operating Locations

VLAT operating locations are influenced by runway length and weight bearing capacity, ramp capacity, entry and exit clearances, and support available. When called up, offload capacity must be increased to 10,000 gallons for the occasion when it is needed. Location and ambient conditions may affect the endurance or distance of response and the load capacity. Established ATBs provide the best circumstances for immediate call up of the DC-10. The pre designated operation locations are:

**Victorville, CA – Southern California Logistics Airport (VCV)**

**San Bernardino, CA – San Bernardino International Airport (SBD)**

**Sacramento, CA –McClellan Airfield (MCC)**

**Moses Lake, WA – Grant County International Airport (MWH)**

**Boise, ID – Boise Air Terminal / Gowen Field (BOI)**

**Phoenix – Mesa, AZ – Williams Gateway (IWA)**

**Ogden, UT – Hill AFB (HIF)**

Other locations under consideration are ABQ, HLN, BIL, PIH, and GJT. Regional Aviation Officers (RAO) may want to suggest additional locations and should forward them to the FS Airtanker Program Manager. Midland, TX (MAF) was used in 2011 under the Cal Fire contract and was suitable with the addition of a portable retardant operation.

V Support Requirements

* + 1. Ground Personnel will follow the Interagency Airtanker Base Operation Guide (IABOG)
       1. The DC-10 is self supported at each base by the DC-10 contractor.
       2. A qualified Air Tanker Base Manager (ATBM) will be assigned for each VLAT base.
       3. The ATBM or a designated PI will be responsible for daily time keeping and documentation of estimated VLAT costs.
    2. Lead Plane
       1. When flying tactical missions during daylight hours, the VLAT will be under the supervision of a VLAT approved LP or an ASM with a VLAT approved LP at the controls.
       2. FS and BLM (and the Contractor may) have LPs who are approved to lead the VLAT. (See Appendix B).
    3. Frequencies/Communications
       1. The airtanker crew must be able to operate and be familiar with the capabilities of the VHF-FM radio prior to being dispatched on fires. An operable VHF-FM radio is required for performance.
       2. VHF-FM and VHF-AM frequencies will be furnished to aircraft crews at time of mission dispatch. Forest Service Air Guard (168.6250 Tone 110.9 Tx / Rx) shall be monitored at all times. National Flight Following will also be monitored to the maximum extent possible.
       3. The VLAT will enter transponder code of 1255 on fire dispatches unless ATC assigns a different discrete code.
    4. Maintenance
       1. All maintenance needs for the DC-10 will be accomplished by the Contractor. Prompt notification should be given by the contractor to the ATBM of any maintenance, scheduled or unscheduled that will be performed on the DC-10.
       2. Return to contract availability will occur in coordination with the Regional FS AMI
       3. Un-availability will count against the contractor if the aircraft are not available for a minimum 9 hours a day.
    5. Aircraft Fueling
       1. Type of fuel required is commercial Jet A.
       2. Contractor will be provided a DLA (DoD) fuel card or an account change will be made to the state issued card for payment by the FS. The Contractor shall have an alternate means for payment.
       3. Simultaneous fueling and retardant loading may be permitted on the VLAT when fueling takes place with a closed circuit, and fuel operations take place on the side of the aircraft opposite from the retardant loading. The Contractor will submit a plan and risk assessment to the CO for simultaneous fueling and retardant loading prior to this occurring. The ATBM has delegated authority to approve this operation for their base after reviewing the Contractor materials.
    6. Security

The contractor is responsible for 24 hour security of the aircraft and associated equipment in support of this contract. The government will advise and assist when possible.

VI Mission Requirements

* + 1. All operations on incidents will adhere to standard operating procedures established for air tankers as defined in the “Interagency Aerial Supervision Guide”.
       1. Personnel other than required flight crew members and those essential to the mission shall NOT fly on aircraft during dispensing missions without approval of the Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry.
       2. The VLAT will follow all policies regarding the Fire Traffic Area (FTA). A call 20 NM prior to the FTA is requested so that the ATGS or LP can direct the VLAT to hold or continue inbound. The LP will use procedures to minimize wake turbulence associated with heavy aircraft.
       3. The suggested drop speed for the DC-10 will be 150 knots. The minimum is 140 knots per the STC.
       4. The suggested drop altitude for the CD-10 is 250 feet AGL. The minimum drop altitude is 200 feet above the vegetation or any obstacles.
       5. Unless directed otherwise, when jettisoning the load under non urgent basis, the DC-10 will drop above 500 feet AGL in the jettison area designated by the ATBM or aircraft dispatcher. A LP is not required for jettison.
       6. If the jettison location is designated by the dispatcher to be a fire incident, clearance from the aircraft in control over the incident must be obtained prior to entering the FTA.
       7. Emergency jettison of the load, not in the fire area, must be reported to the on duty Leadplane Pilot, ATGS and or ATBM for documentation and agency notifications. Information relayed shall include the time, location of drop (latitude and longitude), volume, and estimated altitude.
    2. Flight and Duty Limitations follow federal policy. Refer to the contract for specifics, however in summary; two scheduled days off every 14 day (twelve and two), normal duty day of 9 hours with the option to extend up to 14 hours, 10 hours of rest prior to duty, 8 hours maximum flight time per day, 42 maximum flight hours in a 6 day period, and arrival for dispensing is limited to 30 min before sunrise to 30 min after sunset.
    3. Accident/Incident Reporting Procedures
       1. When an aircraft under contract is involved in a mishap or incident, the FS policy on accident/incident reporting will be followed.
       2. All incidents will be reported to the FS Regional Aviation Safety Manager as soon as possible.
       3. All incident reporting will be made following the standard SAFECOM process.
    4. Public Information Releases

Agency personnel will work in cooperation with a designated Information Officer to provide the necessary media coverage of VLAT operations.

VII Mission Business Operations

* + 1. The Host ATBM or the designated PI will maintain payment documentation for this contract.
    2. The Host ATBM or the designated PI will ensure entry of all flight/incident data into ABS.

VIII Call Up and Release/Demobilization

* + 1. Call Up and Release/Demobilization shall be coordinated through the COD at NICC.
    2. Budgetary constraints may influence release and deactivation of the contract aircraft.

IX Fireline Considerations

Safety precautions exercised by fire line personnel will be the same as those used when working with other Airtankers. Refer to the NWCG Fireline Handbook under the section on Safety.

X Dispatch and Operations Guidelines

* + 1. The DC-10 crew will respond without delay from the time the contractor is notified by ATBM of an ordered dispatch.
    2. The DC-10 shall maintain an on-board capability to accept dispatch and divert information via VHF-FM radio. An operable VHF-FM radio is required for performance.
    3. The VLAT shall maintain an automated flight following (AFF) capability and will comply with accepted flight following procedures.
    4. When flying tactical missions and during daylight hours, the VLAT will be under the supervision of an approved VLAT LP.
    5. LP, ASM, and ATGS, and incident aircraft will be made aware of notable wake turbulence generated by the VLAT. Aerial supervisors shall allow the standard 3 to 5 minutes separation between aircraft.
    6. LP, ASM, and ATGS, and personnel on the ground will assist in performance evaluation of the VLAT, by completing a “VLAT” Evaluation Form for the DC-10. (Attach in Appendix)

Appendix A Points of Contacts

* + 1. Scott Fisher ([sfisher01@fs.fed.us](mailto:sfisher01@fs.fed.us)) 208-387-5968 wk, 208-850-0495 cell (FS AT Program Manager)
    2. Matt Olson ([mdolson@fs.fed.us](mailto:mdolson@fs.fed.us)) 208-387-5835 wk, 208-407-6002 cell (Contracting Officer)
    3. Leslie Casavan ([lcasavan@fs.fed.us](mailto:lcasavan@fs.fed.us)) 909-382-4974 wk, 909-289-4195 cell (SBD ATB Manager)
    4. Caleb Berry ([caberry@fs.fed.us](mailto:caberry@fs.fed.us)) 520-202-2703 wk, 520-334-8742 cell (First Call PI for VLAT)
    5. Jeff Power ([jmpower@fs.fes.us](mailto:jmpower@fs.fes.us)) 916-640-1031 wk, 916-207-8623 cell (FS RAO Region 5)
    6. Dan Johnson ([djohnson11@fs.fed.us](mailto:djohnson11@fs.fed.us)) 530-226-2734 wk, 630-945-8033 cell (FS LP & Supv Pilot R5)

Appendix B VLAT Approved FS and BLM Leadplane Pilots

The Forest Service pilots identified below are approved to conduct leads for VLATs. Each pilot has completed initial and/or recurrent training in accordance with the Forest Service syllabus. The approval letter can be found on the FS Intranet at: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/contractpa/NIFC/index.php>

Kevin Meekin Lead 1-2

Thomas French Lead 3-3

Dave Spliethof Lead 5-8

Dan Johnson Lead 5-9

The BLM pilots identified below are approved by their office to conduct leads for VLATs.

Mike Lynn Lead B-5

Greg House Lead B-6

Ryan Curl Lead B-7

***As a note:*** *While not currently provided for in the FS contract, when called up under the CAL Fire DC-10 contract the following contract pilots may conduct leads for the DC-10: Bob Coward, Lynn Flock, and Rick Haagenson.*

Appendix C VLAT Evaluation Form (next page)

**Airtanker Number**: 910 or 911 **Registration**: N450AX or N17085  **Serial Number:** 46942 or 47957

**Assigned Base**: Victorville, CA **Aircraft Type:** DC-10 **Manufacture:** McDonnell Douglas

**Fire Incident:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Location**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Captain:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **First Officer:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**FIRE OPERATIONS** Did Not Meet Expectation Average Exceeded Expectation

I/A Response Time: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Reload Turn Times: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

DC-10 Maneuverability: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Steep Terrain Operations: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

**Drop Patterns**

Light Fuels: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Moderate Fuels: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Heavy Fuels: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Uniformity of Coverage: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

**MAINTENANCE**

Maintenance Reliability: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Tank Ground Handling: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Tank Breakdowns: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Tank Leakage: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Tank System Reliability: 1 2 3 4 5 N/A

**PRODUCT DISPENSED**

RetardantWater  Foam  Gel  Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**EVALUATOR COMMENTS / OBSERVATIONS**

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**EVALUATOR**  Air Attack  Lead Plane  Crew Boss  Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Airtanker Base Manager  Division Supervisor Incident Commander  Air Operations  Air Support

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_\_--\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ex: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please provide one copy to 10 Tanker company representative and **Fax to 208-387-5735** or forward original through agency channels to: USFS Airtanker Program Manager, National Interagency Fire Center, 3833 S Development Ave., Boise ID 83705