

# CHAPTER 12

## Airspace Agreements

### I. Introduction

When Special Use Airspace (SUA), Military Training Routes (MTR), Slow Routes (SR), and/or Low Altitude Tactical Navigation (LATN) Areas are located over lands within an agency's jurisdiction or within their area of normal flight operations (fire or nonfire), the agency should consider instituting an agreement with the appropriate DoD entity.

An airspace agreement will have a name depending on its purpose. The FAA and DoD frequently enter into LOAs (Letters of Agreement) which specify airspace responsibilities. Other agencies utilize MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding) and IAs (Interagency Agreements) to facilitate cooperation between agencies. Agency Aviation Managers should work closely with their Agency Agreement Specialists to ascertain they are following specific agency protocol for agreements and utilizing the proper instrument for the purpose.

Airspace agreements are usually nonmonetary and establish protocol for emergency and non-emergency contacts.

It is prudent that all agencies be a party to a common airspace agreement with the DoD when land management or wildland firefighting agencies share or overlap boundaries within jurisdictions that underlie DoD managed or assigned airspace. Use and coordination with DoD Military Representatives, as well as the appropriate agency Aviation Managers, is highly recommended.

The agreement should be signed by the appropriate level of authority within the land management agency (consult with agency procurement office and/or agreement specialist). The commander of a military unit is the responsible agent in these documents. Though others within the unit may be identified for particular tasks, the commander is the signatory. If that person doesn't agree to support the agreement, none of the units assigned to the commander will be bound to execute its terms.

Airspace agreements provide local level leadership a tool within the interagency cooperative process to define protocols that consistently address recurring activities, coordination of time critical responses and resolving unforeseen issues of mutual concern.

In addition to establishing procedural protocol for deconflicting airspace or coordinating TFRs, the airspace agreement identifies each agencies specific responsibilities. This is particularly important in providing continuity when either local level resource management agency or DOD leadership changes. This Guide provides a wide array of cooperative methods and processes for local leadership to tailor agreements in order to meet their specific area's interagency challenges. Airspace agreements should sufficiently define responsibilities, methods, procedures and local points of contact (POCs).

Specific protocols contained in the agreements could affect tactical air crews (i.e. Air Tankers, Lead Planes, Air Tacticals, SEATs, and or Helicopter crews). Local Aviation Managers should ensure that Air Bases where these resources are likely to be deployed from are given a copy of the agreement and that air crews are briefed.

*Agency Personnel should be aware that several agencies specify mandatory clauses when drafting airspace agreements. Local level officials should ensure that these required clauses are integrated into the agreement.*

The joint development of local coordination guides (in "flip-book" format) distill the action items directed by the agreement into quick referral checklists and are often a logical and prudent way to effectively implement the agreements. These action checklists facilitate execution of time critical actions by dispatchers and military airspace scheduling offices.

A generic format for developing local level interagency airspace coordination agreements is provided in this chapter. To supplement the agreement, a local coordination guide could segregate specific DoD/Land Management Airspace scenarios with specific operational directives contained within the body of the agreement.

Categories may include :

#### **A. Dispatch Operational Procedures**

- Non-Fire Scheduled Missions
- Fire Reconnaissance (No TFR in place).
- Fire Operations (TFR in place)
- Deconfliction of Airspace
- Implementation of TFRs

**B. Operational Procedures (Fire or Non-Fire) for Air and Flight Crews**

**C. DoD Operational Procedures**

- Non-Fire Planned Missions
- Non-Fire Priority Missions
- Fire Reconnaissance (No TFR in place)
- Fire Operations (TFR in place)

**II. Template for Airspace Cooperative Agreements**

The following sample will provide you with the types of information you will need to provide to your agency procurement office/agreement specialist.

**SAMPLE FORMAT**

**SUBJECT: Interagency Airspace Coordination**

**I. Participating Agencies and Units**

Provide list of involved agencies and units for this agreement

**II. Purpose—Introduction or Background**

Provide a one or two paragraphs outlining introduction and background of agreement.

**III. Objective**

Specify goals you wish to achieve by this agreement.

**IV. Cancellation**

List any prior agreements that are cancelled, superceded or modified by the new agreement. List protocols for modification or cancellation of this agreement.

## SAMPLE FORMAT (CONT'D)

### **V. Scope**

List the specific agency and DoD organizations/offices, airspace units and resource management areas subject to the agreement. Include a description of airspace.

### **VI. Authority List**

List laws and regulations that authorize or permit organizations to enter into Interagency agreements.

### **VII. Responsibilities**

#### **A. Management Authority And Responsibility**

1. Agency Aviation Manager or Assigned Agency Airspace Coordination Specialist
  - a. Designate as the agency contact to coordinate procedures and airspace scheduling through military airspace scheduling office.
  - b. Designate as the agency focal point for recommending amendments to the agreement.
  - c. Designate as the point of contact (POC) for the military to coordinate amendments to the agreement.
  - d. Coordinator with military on all airspace conflicts, incident conclusions or findings regarding airspace conflicts.
2. Military Airspace Manager
  - a. Designate the focal point for military on airspace matters and the agreement. Designate as POC for resource agencies on matters pertaining to the agreement.

## SAMPLE FORMAT (CONT'D)

- b. Designate, with military flight safety office as well as appropriate military command and control organization safety representatives as investigators of airspace incidents, conflicts when SUA is involved.

### **B. Provide details of Responsibilities as a Result of Negotiations**

1. Name of Agency (complete the following for each agency)
  - a. POCs and their roles
  - b. Air traffic control & coordination requirements
    - i. FAA coordination concerning issuance of temporary flight restrictions
    - ii. Transponder codes/squawks
  - c. Coordination with military airspace scheduling offices.
    - i. Long term, planned flight operations
    - ii. Rapid Response flight operations
  - d. Reporting incidents/accidents
  - e. Method to ensure all personnel involved are briefed on the purpose and procedures of the agreement.
2. Involved DoD Organizations (complete the following for each unit, department, etc.)
  - a. ATC, advisory, and/or monitoring services for airspace users (if applicable)
  - b. TFR NOTAM information dissemination to military units
  - c. Administrative (pre-planned) and real-time (emergency) scheduling of agency's air operations activities within agreement airspace.
  - d. Ensure all personnel involved are briefed on the purpose and procedures of the agreement.

## SAMPLE FORMAT (CONT'D)

### **VIII. Coordination Procedures (Non-Fire Or Fire Recon—Without a TFR)**

#### **A. Natural Resource Management Agency Responsibilities**

1. Between dispatchers or aviation managers and Military Airspace Scheduling Office
  - a. Scheduling timeline protocols
  - b. Forwarding of flight planning and area of operations information
2. Coordination and communications with Military Air Traffic Control facilities
  - a. ATC transponder code protocols
  - b. Radio communications requirements
    - i. Prior to entering agreement airspace
    - ii. While within airspace
    - iii. Exiting airspace
3. Coordination with Range Operations Centers (as applicable)

#### **B. Military Airspace Scheduling Office Responsibilities**

1. Advise resource agency dispatchers or aviation managers of projected or known military flight activities within the times and areas they have identified.
2. Coordinate resource agency flight activities with all DoD units scheduled to operate in the affected airspace.
3. Protocols to handle airspace scheduling conflicts
  - a. Within Restricted Areas
  - b. Within MOAs
  - c. Within MTRs

## **SAMPLE FORMAT (CONT'D)**

### **C. Military ATC (If Available) Responsibilities**

1. Transponder code assignment protocols
  - a. Assignment to aircraft
  - b. Relay to range control
2. Local altimeter setting
3. VFR flight advisory or flight following services
  - a. Level of service appropriate for radar equipment certification
  - b. Services provided "time permitting"
  - c. Coordination of level of service provided to resource agency aircraft

### **D. Range Operations Center Responsibilities (if available)**

1. Protocols for Resource Agency aircraft within MOAs
  - a. Communications
  - b. Coordination
2. Protocols for Resource Agency aircraft within Restricted Areas
  - a. Communications
  - b. Coordination
3. Coordination with Military ATC (if available)
  - a. Resource Agency aircraft route of ranges and MOAs.

## SAMPLE FORMAT (CONT'D)

### IX. Coordination Procedures (Fire Response—With A TFR)

#### A. Agency Responsibilities

1. Immediately advise the Military ATC facility (if applicable), Range Operations Center (if applicable), and Range Control of the reported fire, requested TFR and/or reconnaissance route. Include latitude and longitude information when available.
2. Request a TFR with the appropriate ARTCC. Request that latitude and longitude information be included in the NOTAM.
3. Fax a copy of the approved TFR to Military ATC facility (if applicable), Range Operations Center (if applicable), and Range Control.
4. If necessary, establish an agency liaison representative to work with the appropriate military command and control agencies to establish ingress/egress routes and services required to facilitate emergency response activity.
5. Advise appropriate military command and control agencies of any modifications to or cancellations of TFRs.
6. Ensure that resource agency aircraft contact the appropriate military command and control agencies prior to entering airspace and advise as to type aircraft and proposed route to area of operations.
7. Ensure all resource agency aircraft obtain permission to operate within restricted areas.
  - a. Scheduling timeline protocols
  - b. Forwarding of flight planning and area of operations information

## SAMPLE FORMAT (CONT'D)

### **B. Military ATC (If Available) Responsibilities**

1. Notify Range Operations Center (if available) and/or Range Control of any TFRs that may affect operation to, from or within SUA.
2. Notify Base Operations and Supervisors of Flying (SOF) upon receipt of information regarding new or existing TFRs.
3. Issue applicable TFR restrictions to aircraft flying in vicinity of a TFR area and facilitate communication between Range Operations Center and/or Range Control and the resource agencies regarding deconfliction/advisory information.
4. Notify Base Operations and SOFs upon receipt of information indicating impending restrictions or closure of MTR(s) and SRs due to TFR. Repeat notification upon receipt of NOTAMs associated with MTR(s) and/or SRs.
5. Provide an ATC liaison to coordinate ingress/egress routes and services as requested by the resource agency.
6. Be the approving authority for resource agency aircraft ingress/egress of restricted areas.
7. Assign transponder codes to resource agency aircraft and advise them of MOA/Range status.
8. Provide the local altimeter setting
9. VFR flight advisory or flight following services; consider:
  - a. Level of service appropriate for radar equipment certification
  - b. Services provided on a time permitting basis?
  - c. Coordination of level of service provided to resource agency aircraft.

## **SAMPLE FORMAT (CONT'D)**

### **C. Range Operations Center Responsibilities (if available):**

1. Comply with TFRs as issued by the FAA and relay TFR establishment, changes and cancellation to all aircraft.
2. Relay TFR restrictions to all Military ATC facility (if available) and air crews (whether airborne or scheduled).
3. Coordinate with MTR schedulers to restrict or close MTRs and SRs affected by TFR.

### **X. Cancellation Of TFR**

Outline protocols as applicable for FAA ARTCC, Military ATC facility (if available), Range Operations Center (if available), and/or Range Control.

### **XI. Incident/Accident**

Outline protocols for incident or accident situations.

### **XII. Education And Awareness**

Outline procedures to enhance education and awareness such are site visits, preseason meetings, year-end meetings, training opportunities, etc.

### **XIII. Termination or Renewal of Agreement**

Outline protocols for termination or renewal of agreement. Provide for yearly reviews.