

A Publication of the  
National Wildfire  
Coordinating Group



# Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide

PMS 501

May 2015

---



# Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide

May 2015  
PMS 501

---

*Sponsored for NWCG publication by the NWCG Equipment and Technology Branch, National Interagency Aviation Committee, National Interagency Fire Center, 3833 S. Development Ave., Boise ID 83705. Questions regarding content of this publication may be directed to the National Interagency Aviation Committee members listed at <http://www.nwcg.gov/branches/et/niac/index.htm> Revisions and corrections to this guide should be directed to the Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee.*

---

*This publication is posted at <http://www.nwcg.gov>*

*Previous Edition: 2012*

*The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) has approved this information for the guidance of its member agencies and is not responsible for the interpretation or use of this information by anyone except the member agencies.*

*NWCG information is in the public domain. Use of the information, including copying, is permitted. Use of NWCG information within another document is permitted, if NWCG information is accurately cited to the NWCG. The NWCG logo may not be used except on NWCG authorized information. "National Wildfire Coordinating Group", "NWCG", and the NWCG logo are trademarks of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.*

*The use of trade, firm, or corporation names in this publication is for the information and convenience of the reader and does not constitute an endorsement by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group of any product or service to the exclusion of others that may be suitable.*

## **Contents**

Chapter I – Introduction to the Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide.	I-1
Chapter II – Aerial Ignition Position Qualifications.	II-1
Chapter III – Plastic Sphere Dispenser Operations.	III-1
Chapter IV – Helitorch Operations.	IV-1
Appendix A – Plastic Sphere Dispenser Operations.	A-1
Appendix B – Helitorch Operations.	B-1
Appendix C – Material Safety Data Sheets.	C-1
Appendix D – Aerial Ignition Equipment Modifications.	D-1
Appendix E – Regulatory Issues, Transportation Requirements, Inspection Checklists.	E-1
Appendix F – Bonding Procedures.	F-1

## **Chapter I – Introduction to the Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide.**

### **I. Objectives.**

The objectives of the *Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide* (IAIG) are:

- A. Define and standardize procedures and equipment for approved aerial ignition operations for use by all cooperating natural resource agencies.
- B. Ensure that all aerial ignition operations are performed in a safe and efficient manner.
- C. Provide a framework within which areas, regions, states, and local units can provide supplemental, site-specific guidance.
- D. Establish a method to evaluate and approve aerial ignition systems not currently approved and outlined in this guide.

### **II. Scope.**

The IAIG contains procedures that are specific to aerial ignition operations. The procedures and equipment outlined in this guide address both incident and project aerial ignition operations.

### **III. Authority.**

Participating agency aviation manuals contain the authority for implementing this guide.

### **IV. Approved Aerial Ignition Systems.**

All aerial ignition systems must meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements, and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards as well as the required safety modifications outlined in Appendix D, E and F.

The following are the only aerial ignition systems currently approved if updated with current retrofits (reference appendix D) for interagency use by all cooperating natural resource agencies. Interagency Aerial Ignition Unit (IAIU) recommends contacting agency representative prior to equipment purchase.

- Premo Mark III Aerial Ignition Device (PSD).
- SEI Red Dragon (PSD).
- Simplex Helitorch Model 5400 and Batch Mixer.
- Fire-Spec Systems: Spec 2000 Helitorch and Spec 2000 Modular Mix Transfer System. New purchases of Fire Spec equipment are not authorized.
- Isolair Helitorch.
- Firecon Batchmixer and Portable Mix Transfer System.
- Western Helicopter Helitorch (Barrel Helitorch).
- Northern (Canadian) Helitorch (Barrel Helitorch).
- T & T Helitorch (Barrel Helitorch).

- Aerostat PSDS Mark V.
- Agency/bureau or Vendor Mixing and Torch Systems that are in compliance with Appendix D, E and F criteria, and that have been inspected and approved by a representative of the IAIU may be used. Some aerial ignition devices and procedures are still in use that can only be utilized by a specific agency.
- The following aerial ignition devices are only approved for specific bureaus/agencies use (non-interagency) for burning operations conducted by qualified personnel of the agency approving their use: California Division of Forestry (Cal Fire) Helitorch.

## **V. Agency Manufactured or Modified Devices.**

If agency personnel modify a commercially obtained device or construct their own devices, the agency assumes liability for the product. The USDA-FS strictly forbids the altering of any commercial aerial ignition device other than those approved through the Washington Office. The DOI agencies require their personnel to obtain bureau approval to use agency manufactured or modified commercial devices. The bureaus/agencies are responsible for conforming to the procedures described in this guide. See Appendix D for current approved modifications.

## **VI. Manufacturer Modifications.**

Periodically, manufacturers of aerial ignition equipment modify or upgrade their equipment. As an example, Simplex has made several revisions of their helitorch and accessory equipment. Modifications made by the original manufacturer may require special authorization from an agency to be installed. Bureaus and agencies are not required to install new modifications unless the agency or manufacturer requires installation of the modification for safe operation of the device. All manufacturer modifications shall be accompanied by revised operating procedures if applicable.

For approved current aerial ignition components and modifications, reference Appendix D.

## **VII. Aerial Ignition Systems Approval Process.**

An agency/bureau may wish to evaluate an aerial ignition system not covered in the IAIG. While all natural resource agencies are strongly encouraged to use the systems and procedures approved in this guide, the following guidelines shall be used for new proposed aerial ignition system approval:

- A. The sponsoring unit must request, in writing, permission to evaluate the unapproved system. The written request shall be submitted through appropriate channels to their regional/state aviation manager.
  1. The written request must include a project proposal, with risk assessment, which describes the user needs and justification for use of an unapproved system.
  2. A written manufacturer operational manual must be submitted with the request package describing operating procedures, training plan, and a job hazard analysis.
- B. The agency/bureau aviation manager shall submit the proposal to the IAIU through their representative to the group. The IAIU will then forward the proposal to the Aerial Ignition Technical Advisors at Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) and arrange for technical review and evaluation.

1. If live burn operations are required as part of the evaluation the sponsor shall submit an approved Project Aviation Safety Plan (PASP) and provide necessary personnel that possess the aerial ignition qualifications listed in *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
- C. After the technical review, the IAIU will submit a letter of recommendation to the Interagency Helicopter Operations Steering Committee (IHOPs) Chair. The IHOPs, will forward a letter to all agencies/bureaus regarding decision of new equipment. The IAIU Chair will formally notify vendor of IHOPs decision.

## VIII. Contracted Aerial Ignition Services.

In the vast majority of cases, prescribed fire on government lands are conducted under the operational control of the government agency responsible for managing the public lands under their trust. In DOI, all commercial aircraft services must be procured through OAS/AQD. It is very rare for end product contracts to be used for prescribed burns.

Some geographic areas have private vendors who own and operate aerial ignition systems. When an agency opts to use aviation contract services providing aerial ignition personnel and/or equipment, the following guidelines shall be observed.

- A. The contractor shall comply with all applicable federal, state, local laws and the IAIG.
- B. Contractors who wish to obtain approval for use of an aerial ignition system that is not listed in Chapter I, Section V of this guide and will be used only by contract personnel shall:
- Submit a request through a sponsor to the appropriate agency/bureau IAIU representative.
  - Make the equipment available to the IAIU for a technical review and evaluation.
  - Make arrangements through the IAIU for flight testing of the equipment with MTDC.
  - Ensure that only contract personnel operate the equipment when used for contract operations.
  - Ensure the approved equipment is included as a listed item on the contract.
  - Develop and provide a risk assessment with the vendor's proposal.
- C. The user unit must ensure that the contractor has been awarded a contract or a modification has been made to an existing procurement document that includes provisions for contracted aerial ignition services and that the equipment has been approved. The helicopter manager will assure that contracted aerial ignition services will be conducted in accordance with the procurement document.
- The requesting unit will provide information to assist the contractor in planning for equipment, personnel, supply needs, location of burn and burn objectives.

This information will include approximate acreage (overall/acres per day), time and dates of proposed burn, location and directions to the burn area, supplies and equipment to be provided by the agency, agency contact names and phone numbers, local support equipment sources and phone numbers (bulk fuel providers, motels, etc.).

- The government will provide at the job-site: pad marker(s), wind indicator(s), fire shelter for pilot, crash rescue kit, evacuation kit, and 40BC fire extinguisher(s) (as per the *Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide* (IHOG). The IHOG is found at [PMS 510 Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide](#).
  - A government Helitorch Manager (HTMG) is a required position and will be provided by the ordering agency unit, and be on site, for all contract helitorch operations, to perform functions listed in the IAIG.
  - The contractor shall have a written standard operating plan (SOP) outlining duties and responsibilities for contractor personnel, equipment and mixing/operating procedures for contractor operations. The SOP and a copy of contractor employee qualifications and training documentation shall be made available for review by the Government Helitorch Manager upon arrival to the job-site and prior to the start of contract work.
  - The Helitorch Manager will inform the Contractor Helitorch Mixing Crew of gel fuel needs, in gallons, throughout the duration of the burn.
  - Gelled fuel deemed unacceptable by the Burn Boss or Helitorch Manager and any residual waste product shall be disposed of at an approved hazardous waste disposal site or, with the Helitorch Manager's and Burn Boss' approval, by incineration within the burn area.
- D. Any deviation from established standard operating procedures or policy requires authorization by the regional aviation officer or state aviation manager.
- E. The user unit must submit a written Project Aviation Safety Plan (PASP) to the appropriate region, state, or agency aviation manager in compliance with agency policy.

## **IX. Organization.**

The chapters of the IAIG are used to identify the approved aerial ignition systems and best practice procedures. The appendices provide the user with operational and administrative forms, checklists, equipment modifications and job aids.

## **X. Review and Revision.**

Users are encouraged to send recommended changes for the IAIG to their aviation program managers at the state, regional, or national level. These recommendations will then be forwarded to the appropriate agency representative of the IAIU.

This guide will be reviewed every three years; revisions will be made as warranted. In the three-year period before the publishing of the new IAIG, new equipment that is fully approved will be posted on the Aerial Ignition website.

**XI. Distribution.**

This publication is available on the National Wildfire Coordinating Group site:

<http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pms501.pdf>.

**XII. Interagency Aerial Ignition Unit Membership List.**

Jeremy Lusher – NPS  
Grand Canyon Nat'l Park  
P.O. Box 129  
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023  
jeremy\_lusher@nps.gov  
928-638-7921 (office)  
928-638-7825 (fax)  
928-606-3452 (cell)

Cory Waters – FWS  
Alligator River NWR  
PO Box 1969  
Manteo, NC 27954  
cory\_waters@fws.gov  
252-473-1744 (office)  
252-475-1375 (fax)  
252-475-0102 (cell)

Scott Fry – FS  
US Forest Service  
1720 Peachtree Road, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30309  
sfry@fs.fed.us  
770-237-0119 Ext. 1002 (office)  
940-210-0155 (cell)

Darren Mathis – BLM  
Arizona State Office  
One North Central Ave Suite 800  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
602-417-9308 (office)  
602-417-9554 (fax)  
435-680-0816 (cell)

Cathy Barta – OAS  
Office of Aviation Services  
920 NE Main Street  
Lewistown, MT. 59457  
catherine\_barta@ios.doi.gov  
(406) 538-1982 (office)  
(208) 995-6116 (cell)

Carlos Nosie – BIA  
Western Regional Office BIA  
2600 N Central Ave. Suite 400  
Phoenix, AZ 85004  
Carlos.Nosie@bia.gov  
602-379-6798 x 1243 (office)  
602-379-6826 (fax)  
602-363-3401 (cell)



**ADVISORS**

Bryan Bitting – BLM – Liaison  
3833 S. Development Ave  
Boise, ID 85705  
bbitting@blm.gov  
208-387-5173 (office)  
208-387-5199 (fax)  
208-890-0829 (cell)

Shawn Steber – Advisor  
MTDC  
5785 Highway 10 West  
Missoula, MT 59808-9361  
smsteber@fs.fed.us  
406-829-6785 (office)

Ken Morin – Advisor  
Denver Federal Center  
Building 50 PO Box 25047  
Denver, CO 80225-0047  
kmorin@blm.gov  
303-236-6418 (office)

**AERIAL IGNITION WORKING GROUPS**

Kevin Murray – FS  
US Forest Service  
460 Hi Mountain Road  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
kvmurray@fs.fed.us  
805-481-1280 (office)  
805-481-4986 (fax)  
805-878-1484 (cell)

Kato Howard – BLM  
Alaska Fire Service - BLM  
P.O. Box 35005  
Fort Wainwright AK, 99703  
khoward@blm.gov  
907-356-5862 (office)  
907-356-5711 (fax)  
907-378-8656 (cell)

Rick Sorenson – FS  
US Forest Service  
P.O. Drawer J  
New Meadows, ID 83654  
rgsorenson@fs.fed.us  
208-347-0331 (office)  
208-347-0309 (fax)  
208-634-9420 (cell)

Gary Ravenberg – FS  
U.S. Forest Service  
1749 West 500 South  
Salt Lake City, UT 84104  
gravenburg@fs.fed.us  
801-908-1908 (office)  
801-908-1934 (fax)  
801-560-8195 (cell)

Pete Coman – BLM  
Vale BLM  
100 Oregon St.  
Vale, OR 97918  
jcoman@blm.gov  
541-473-6213 (Off)

## Chapter II – Aerial Ignition Position Qualifications.

### I. Introduction.

This chapter identifies the position prerequisites and qualifications for individuals involved in aerial ignition operations. To meet the minimum qualifications, individuals must be trained, experienced, certified for specific aerial ignition device, and current with that aerial ignition system. Position requirements apply to both incident and prescribed fire operations.

### II. Qualifications.

To be qualified in an aerial ignition position, individuals must be current with all applicable *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement* requirements and meet all the prerequisite training and experience standards. This reference is found at the following link [Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement](#).

### III. Instructor Qualifications.

- A. HTMG lead instructor must be qualified and current as a HTMG on specific aerial ignition device and helicopter manager.
- B. PLDO lead instructor must be qualified and current as a PLDO on specific aerial ignition device and helicopter manager (or less currency as a HMGB).
- C. Instructors must be approved by regional Helicopter Operations Specialist or state/regional Aviation Manager.

### IV. Position Certification.

In the USDA-FS, certification is the responsibility of the Forest Incident Qualification Certification System (IQCS) committee. For DOI bureaus, certification is accomplished through bureau/agency authority in accordance with individual agency policy.

Course leader should have the training documented per agency requirements.

- A. Initial Certification and Training.

Training for helitorch and PSD operations will utilize IAIU approved lesson plans. Certification will be **model specific**. The approved PSD and helitorch lesson plans are available at [BLM National Aviation Office](#).

Training will cover:

1. Organization and communication requirements.
2. Special safety procedures and concerns, including emergencies. A risk assessment shall be completed for the live run exercise mentioned below in bullet # 7.
3. Hazardous materials shipping, storing, and handling procedures and requirements.
4. Equipment testing, bench test, troubleshooting, and maintenance.

5. Briefing and checklist requirements.
6. Manufacturer operational manual (if applicable), procedures and requirements.
7. A “live-run” exercise.
  - For the helitorch, the live run shall consist of a briefing by the Burn Boss and all personnel, mixing, torch test procedures, Pilot briefing, and dropping of gel.
  - For the PLDO, the live run shall consist of briefing the Pilot and Burn Boss, installing and testing the PSD in the helicopter, and dropping plastic spheres.
8. The dropping of gel or plastic spheres may be accomplished either as a training exercise or as part of an actual burn project/wildfire.
9. Helitorch support personnel (mixing crew) reference materials for training, qualifications and experience requirements is located in *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement* and agency manuals.
10. Initial certification and training must be documented on the *Interagency PLDO/Helitorch Module Position Task Book* available at [BLM National Aviation Office](#).

***Note: During the PSD on the job training (OJT) flight a qualified PLDO for the specific aerial ignition device will be onboard the aircraft until the PLDO (T) completes their required OJT and is considered fully qualified.***

B. Annual Approval and Recertification.

1. Annual recertification is required. Once a helitorch position or PLDO has been trained and certified, the required annual recertification shall consist of the following:
  - a. Each helitorch position or PLDO shall review the applicable sections of this guide, as well as agency-specific guidance and direction.
  - b. A recertification training session consisting of items 1 through 6 in chapter II, paragraph IV, section A.
2. Aerial ignition personnel who transfer from one region, state, or area within an agency or who transfer from one agency to another shall show documentation that they have successfully completed the requirements outlined above for certification and training.

C. Currency Requirements.

In addition to initial certification and annual recertification training, each member of a helitorch module or PLDO must perform in the position at least once every three years in accordance with *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*. If an individual does not meet the currency requirement, he or she must complete the initial certification and training.

## V. Additional Positions in Prescribed/Wildfire Aerial Ignition.

- A. Prescribed Burn Boss (RXB 1/2)/Firing Boss (FIRB).  
The PLDO or HTMG works directly for either the RXB 1/2 or FIRB. In wildfire

operations the FIRB reports to the Division, Branch Director, or Operations Section Chief.

1. Prerequisites – See [PMS 310-1 Wildland Fire Qualification System Guide](#). Forest Service personnel also refer to FS Fire and Aviation Management (FAM) Qualification Guide and FSH 5109.17 at: [Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management Qualification Guide](#).
2. Qualifications – Reference: *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement*.
3. Duties and responsibilities – Has complete authority for and directs the firing operation, develops firing plan(s), performs the initial briefing from the firing plan, covers the assignments of each boss/supervisor and Pilot. Instructs the Pilot on the firing sequences and keeps the Pilot informed throughout the entire operation. For PSD operations, may be in a helicopter with the PLDO, in another aircraft, or at some other vantage point. For helitorch operations, may be in another aircraft, or at some other vantage point.

**Note: Prescribed fire positions “recommend” minimum training for FIRB to include attendance at aerial ignition workshop, or Helitorch/PLDO training.**

B. Pilot.

The Pilot works directly for the helicopter manager in conjunction with the RXB1/2 / FIRB. There is a developed curriculum for Pilot PSD and Helitorch training available on the web at [PMS 501 Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide](#)

1. Prerequisites – Both the Pilot and aircraft must be carded for the intended mission by approved Pilot and Maintenance Agency Inspector. Before operations commence, the Pilot shall receive a briefing on the operational objectives and ground flight procedures, familiarization with fire behavior/fire shelter, deployment and terminology used during burning. Examples of inspection criteria include:
  - Exhibits a basic knowledge of wildland and prescribed fire operations.
  - Exhibits knowledge of communications and coordination required with the RXB1/2 FIRB and HTPT.
  - Exhibits knowledge of limitation section of the flight manual regarding limitations to flight with doors off.
  - Exhibits knowledge of helitorch/PSD operations installation and emergency procedures
  - Demonstrates the ability to maintain a constant airspeed and altitude above the ground while staying within the burn area.
  - Demonstrates the ability to maintain reserve power/airspeed in the event of an emergency.
  - Explains how to set up flight patterns according to the relative winds in relation to the terrain.

- Is aware of problems encountered with steep hillsides, and the relation of convective and radiant heat.
- Is aware of the possibility of Loss of Tail Rotor Effectiveness (LTE) in slow descending turns or turning downwind.

## **Chapter III – Plastic Sphere Dispenser Operations.**

### **I. Introduction.**

The PSD machine was developed to provide a method of igniting ground fuels, in a short time, on large acreage without causing undue damage to the over story. This method was required to be cost effective, environmentally acceptable, and readily available.

### **II. Description.**

The spheres are made of high impact polystyrene, containing approximately 3.0 grams of potassium permanganate. The rate of chemical reaction is dependent on the particle size and concentration of the chemicals involved. Undiluted, ethylene-glycol based antifreeze is required. It provides a reliable ignition and a time delay of at least 20 seconds.

### **III. Dispenser Function.**

The PSD injects ethylene-glycol into the plastic sphere, initiating an exothermic reaction and then expels the primed sphere from the aircraft. The machine can be regulated to control the number of spheres being dispensed, establishing ignition patterns on the ground. Power to the PSD is supplied by the aircraft's 24-volt electrical system. For additional information refer to the appropriate manufacturer's manual.

### **IV. Safety Precautions.**

- A. PSD operations require helicopter flight below 500 feet above ground level (AGL) and less than 50 mph. Hovering out-of-ground effect (HOGE) is the typical flight profile. The Pilot must keep altitude, airspeed, wind direction and aircraft capabilities and limitations in mind during all phases of flight operations. Thorough briefings prior to operations are required.
- B. All PSD Units must have a means to jettison the flammable components in an emergency situation.
- C. The glycol tank must be filled and tightly capped at least 25 feet away from the aircraft.
- D. Absolutely no batteries will be carried in the cabin to power the PSD. The PSD must be powered through the aircraft's electrical system.
- E. Provide crash rescue and evacuation equipment at helibase/helispot (reference IHOG).
- F. A 40-B: C rated fire extinguisher (reference IHOG) will be available on site.
- G. Extra supplies of glycol will not be carried in the cabin during burning operations.
- H. A metal container, and at least five gallons of water, will be available during testing for containment of plastic spheres.
- I. Ignition lag time should not be less than 20 seconds.

- J. The maximum, recommended helicopter speed should not exceed 50 mph (45 Knots) during ignition operations. Slow the aircraft speed to the planned application speed when the firing operations are in progress.
- K. The recommended operational flight altitude is 300' AGL.
- L. Do not disassemble ANY PSD components during flight.
- M. Potassium permanganate is a strong oxidizer; it should be stored in a cool, dry place and must be kept completely separate from ethylene-glycol. While in transit PSD spheres and glycol must be located in separate compartments to eliminate the possibility of inadvertent ignition.
- N. The area to be ignited must be clear of people and equipment.
- O. The PLDO shall wear an approved restraint in the helicopter, complete with approved tether and attached to an approved hard point during firing.
- P. Fire shelters for each occupant must be carried in the aircraft during operations.

***Note: The following agencies require the operator to wear a secondary restraint during operation: USDA-FS, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. If your agency is not identified, refer to the approving agency official for agency/bureau-specific direction. Seat belts must be worn AT ALL TIMES.***

Secondary restraint devices: The secondary restraint device may consist of either an approved full body harness or gunners strap. The harness tether must adjust to prevent the harness from extending past the plane of the door sill of the helicopter.

Approved harnesses will meet 29 CFR 1910.66, or 1926.502, or ANSI Z 359.1 Additionally, it is recommended that these devices have no plastic parts or pass thru buckles. In conjunction with the approved harness, a tether and tether attachment, #MTDC-993 is needed.

Approved Gunners Strap will meet: #MTDC-984

Source: Tether and tether attachment and gunners strap - Missoula Technology and Development Center (MTDC) Rappel Specialist @ 406-329-3900 or John Day Airbase @ 541-547-3384.

***CAUTION: An inadequate quantity of ethylene-glycol injected into the plastic sphere can induce a violent reaction that can cause the sphere to spin or roll and spray a hot mixture of potassium permanganate and glycol a considerable distance.***

## **V. Advantages and Disadvantages of the PSD in relation to the Helitorch.**

- Advantages:
  - Logistically less complicated--plastic spheres can be safely and easily transported in bulk quantity to the burn site.
  - Separate helibase is not required for PSD setup and operation.
  - Essentially a self-contained operation.

- PLDO and possibly one assistant are the only personnel required.
- Safety and hazardous material handling procedures are less complicated than those for the helitorch.
- Requires little setup time apart from installation of PSD machine in helicopter.
- PLDO is able to immediately assess and/or address minor problems without returning to helipad.
- Equipment costs less than helitorch unit.
- Operator can see how many plastic spheres are left in the hopper, and can approximate how much ignition time is left before having to return to helipad.
- Possible to lay very long ignition lines if necessary.
- Less cost in support staff, setup, and demobilization time than helitorches.
- Minimum damage to tree canopy resulting from ignition procedures. Understory Burning – Plastic sphere dispensed ignition may be used in any stand that can be burned by conventional methods. The plastic sphere ignition system is an excellent tool for hazard fuel reduction in pine plantations. This system is safe, efficient, and economical and users can burn with less risk to the plantation than by using the helitorch.
- Narrow burning windows can be better utilized due to shorter setup time.
- RXB1/2 or FIRB can be on board during ignition sequences. Command and control can more easily be maintained.
- Burning is possible in less accessible areas, reducing hazards to ground personnel. Burns where, due to size, poor access, safety considerations, etc., use of PSD may result in a lower cost per acre.
- Disadvantages:
  - Plastic spheres burn for a shorter time on the ground than do gelled fuels.
  - Even a dense drop pattern of plastic spheres cannot duplicate the characteristics of the helitorch drop pattern.
  - Firelines take longer to form and interact with each other.
  - The Pilot cannot jettison the PSD.
  - The PLDO can manually jettison the PSD in the event of an emergency.
  - PSD requires continuous attention of the PLDO to watch for proper operation and keep the balls in the hopper.
  - Possibility of fires developing in the PSD.



## VI. PSD System Organization.

See the Organization Charts in Appendix A for required positions to be filled for both prescribed and wildland fire aerial ignition.

### A. PLDO.

1. Position Responsibilities- Serves as PLDO to the RXB1/2 or FIRB. PLDO may have collateral duties as the helicopter manager. The helicopter manager/PLDO briefs Pilot, (including the use of the fire shelter) identifies safety requirements at the operations briefing, monitors overall operation and provides information on aerial safety procedures to be used by the RXB1/2 or FIRB. The PLDO is responsible for the preparation, installation, operation, maintenance, and care of the PSD. The PLDO verifies for the RXB1/2 or FIRB that prescribed spacing of ignition is occurring and makes the necessary adjustments as directed. Determines if malfunction occurs and acts accordingly. The PLDO will communicate with the Pilot and RXB1/2 or FIRB on all procedures associated with operation and/or emergencies occurring during the operation.

### B. Helicopter Manager.

1. Position Responsibilities. Duties and responsibilities are outlined in the IHOG. The Helicopter Manager may have collateral duties as the PLDO.

### C. Pilot.

1. Position Responsibility- the Pilot will follow the ignition plan under the direction of the RXB1/2 or FIRB. The Pilot-in-Command is responsible for all matters related to aircraft operations and safety, PSD installation oversight, and helicopter load calculation.

### D. Helibase/Helispot Support (as needed, reference Appendix A Organization Chart.)

1. Helibase/Helispot Fire Protection.
  - a. At a minimum, one 40-B:C rated fire extinguisher (IHOG) and five gallons of water will be positioned at the helibase/helispot.
  - b. Provide crash rescue and evacuation equipment at helibase/helispot (IHOG).
2. Radio Operator
  - c. Will be positioned at the helibase/helispot.
  - d. Will initiate radio communications with Burn Boss and dispatch.
3. Helibase/Helispot Manager – Depending on operational complexity, a HEB2 may be advisable in addition to the required PLDO.
4. Additional PLDO – Based on complexity, size of burn, and weather factors, an additional PLDO may be advisable.

## VII. Bench Testing and Cleaning.

Bench tests should be performed prior to actual burn.

A. Review manufacturer manual and procedures for bench testing.

1. Bench testing should occur in an appropriate safe area.

**CAUTION: Place metal bucket under chute. Do not put water in bucket.**

2. Empty plastic spheres from machine utilized for calibration. Testing and training can be obtained from manufacturer.
3. Temperature and humidity may affect ignition delay, causing delays to be greater than 20 seconds. Colder temperatures will cause longer ignitions, often as long as 40 to 60 seconds. This is an appropriate ignition timeframe if all spheres are igniting.
4. Calibration instructions are contained in manufacturer's manual.
5. During machine start-up, it is normal for two of the first four spheres that pass through the machine to not be injected with sufficient glycol to promote ignition due to the cam sequence and slipper block location. It is recommended to promote priming of the glycol pump by running for 30 seconds prior to adding balls into the slipper blocks for testing purposes.

B. Cleaning should follow the bench test in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.

## VIII. Preparation for Aerial Ignition.

A. Preparation of Helicopter.

1. Remove appropriate door(s).
2. Remove all loose cushions and other loose materials.

**Caution: Do not use other containers, i.e., Ziploc® bags, tubs, trash cans, cardboard containers, plastic bags, etc.**

3. Locate and assure proper electrical connections.
4. Utilize approved aircraft hard point anchor or install tether attachments to hard points per instructions on MTDC drawing #-993 (See appendix A).
5. Install secondary restraint using approved carabiner and adjust tether length. A properly adjusted tether shall insure that the operator is restrained inside the aircraft if the seat belt should become unbuckled during flight.

**Note: Only PLDO will have control (electrical or manual) of the machine.**

B. Preparation of Aerial Ignition Device (PSD).

1. Fill glycol tank at least 25 feet from aircraft.
2. Fill water storage tank.
3. Ensure adequate supply of plastic spheres is available to complete project.

4. Ensure one-gallon container of water and seatbelt cutter is on board, secured, and are readily accessible.
5. Fire shelters for all occupants must be on board and accessible, and one or more hand tools are recommended.

C. Common Installation Procedures.

The PSD is designed to be operated from the right rear of a Bell 206 series Jet/Long Ranger/407 helicopter but can be used in most helicopter makes and models.

1. Install in doorway with exit chute attached and overhanging.
2. Attach tie-down strap.
  - e. Y end attached to PSD beside exit chute, fasten from the inside out.
  - f. Pass strap under the fuselage, making sure it clears all wiring and accessories attached to the bottom of the aircraft.
  - g. Return through the opposite door.
  - h. Fasten to buckle attached to machine.
  - i. Cinch tight and secure loose ends.
3. Connect power supply cord.
4. Perform electrical power check by turning on drive switch and hopper feed switch. Manual assist must rotate in direction of arrow.
5. Recheck the installation.
6. Ensure a seat belt cutter is available and accessible to the PLDO.

***Note: Pilot must inspect and approve installation of PSD prior to flight operations. Alternative mounting and securing procedures not identified in this section shall be approved prior to use at regional/state level.***

***Note: All helicopters may use belly strap or approved model specific hard points. If not using manufacturers belly strap security systems must have 4 to 1 strength ratio and be approved by an aviation maintenance inspector.***

## IX. Preflight Test Procedures.

- A. Sphere ignition delay time need not be checked in the Preflight Test if Bench Test has been performed.

***CAUTION: Do not conduct this test near refueling area or in flashy ground fuels.***

- B. Test procedures are as follows:
1. Place metal container under the exit chute.
  2. Connect power leads.

3. Power on – A/C.
4. Start up the PSD.
5. Deposit one sphere in a slipper block/shuttle block to track calibration.
6. Once the sphere has dropped into the metal container, remove it from the vicinity of the aircraft.
7. Time ignition delay by measuring time of injection to ignition.
8. Repeat as necessary.
9. Check system for leaks.
10. Test PSD emergency water system.
11. Secure Machine.
12. Fill hopper with spheres.
13. Check intercom communications and air-to-ground communications.
14. Pre-mission briefing discussing the risk assessment and mitigations that includes Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE), emergency procedures, HOGE power required, and weight & balance, etc.

*Note: In addition, specific crash procedures and crash seating positions should be discussed for aircraft being used.*

## **X. In-Flight Operations**

- A. Dry Run over Burn Area Procedures.
  1. Check ignition area is clear of personnel.
  2. Identify burn area boundaries.
  3. Ensure communication with ground personnel.
  4. Make practice run of the first firing sequence.
  5. Coordinate machine speed and sphere spacing to be used on first run with RXB1/2 or FIRB.
  6. Identify helispots and emergency landing areas.
  7. After a dry run and prior to aerial firing the crew will evaluate the risk assessment mitigations and readjust as necessary (this does not require formal documentation). The RXB1/2 or FIRB will confirm that all ground personnel are clear of the area and that firing may commence.

## **XI. In-flight Procedures.**

- A. RXB1/2 or FIRB communicates to PLDO, “Prepare to fire; activate machine.”
1. Operator actions:
    - j. Activate machine
    - k. PLDO communicates toRXB1/2 or FIRB, “Ready to fire.”
  2. RXB1/2 or FIRB communicates to PLDO to “Start firing/Number of chutes or machine speed”
  3. PLDO replies, “Firing/Number of chutes or machine speed.”
  4. Operator monitors machine operation and refills hopper as needed. Operator observes spheres after they have made contact with the ground to confirm ignition.
  5. When appropriate, RXB1/2 or FIRB communicates, “Prepare to stop firing.”
  6. PLDO places hand on controls and communicates, “Ready to stop.”
  7. RXB1/2 or FIRB gives the order “Stop firing.”
  8. Operator closes chutes and responds, “Firing stopped.”
  9. Operator observes last sphere clear of the PSD and relays, “Machine cleared.”
  10. RXB1/2 or FIRB gives order to PLDO to “secure machine” or “prepare to fire.”
  11. Operator gives appropriate response.
  12. Conduct a post mission debriefing that includes a review and update of hazards and risk mitigations.

*Note: Step 9 is important to prevent inadvertent dropping of spheres outside of burn area boundaries.*

## **XII. Emergency Procedures.**

- A. Operator notifies Pilot of problem and gives brief description.
1. Pilot maintains a/c flight in burn area until emergency is resolved.
  2. Operator closes chute feed handles.
  3. If problem is a jammed machine, operator pulls manual assist wheel outward and rotates forward then backward. If obstruction clears, turn on drive motor, check circuit breaker, and notify Pilot and RXB 1/2 FIRB crew before resuming operations.
  4. If fire starts, operator pushes red button (emergency water) and holds button depressed for up to 30 seconds. If necessary, uses additional container of water to extinguish fire by pouring down feed chutes in hopper. If problem persists, land as soon as possible.
  5. Notify Pilot of problem status and take appropriate actions.

### XIII. Ignition Operations.

- A. The RXB1/2 or FIRB gives the directions where spheres are to be placed in the burn area. This should be made clear during the dry run before any firing begins. It is important that all parties (RXB1/2 or FIRB/Pilot, and PLDO) understand where the firing is to be performed. This includes starting points, ending points, and desired placement and spacing.
- B. PSD operations require helicopter flight below 500 feet AGL and less than 50 mph. The Pilot must keep altitude, airspeed, wind direction and aircraft capabilities and limitations in mind during all phases of flight operations. Thorough briefings prior to operations are required. The maximum, PSD manufacturer, recommended helicopter speed should not exceed 50 mph during ignition operations. Slow the aircraft speed to the planned application speed when the firing operation is in progress. **The PSD manufacturer recommended operational flight altitude is 300' AGL.**
- C. The RXB1/2 or FIRB gives direction to the Pilot once the firing run has begun and during the dry run to assure correct placement of the injected spheres.
- D. Occupants of the helicopter shall be limited to the Pilot, PLDO, and RXB1/2 or FIRB. Additional occupants may include instructor or trainees if essential to the mission.
- E. The switches on the PSD are not required to be turned off when the PSD helicopter stays within the burn area boundary or crosses a fire control line with the intent of returning for another live firing run. The Operator's right hand must remain on the feed control levers in the closed position. If leaving the burn area the machine will be completely shut off and deactivated.
- F. Power Requirements
  - 1. 24-volt DC (control housing, motor, and pumps are coded red).
  - 2. 12-volt DC (control housing, motor, and pumps are coded blue).

*Note: A specially built crate is provided with each PSD machine for maximum protection during shipping and storage of the equipment in the field.*

### XIV. Additional Information.

- A. Reference for Red Dragon: [SEI Industries Ltd., Canada](#)
- B. Reference for Premo Mark III: [SEI Industries Ltd., Canada](#)
- C. Reference for Aerostat Mark V: Aerostat, Inc., 8830 Airport Blvd, Leesburg, FL. 34788. Tel. 352-787-1348. Fax 352-787-4666.
- D. All information listed below can be found in appendix A.
  - 1. Ignition spacing.
  - 2. Maintenance and service.
  - 3. Troubleshooting PSDs.

4. Equipment specifications.
5. Tool kits.

## **XV. PSD Installation Procedures (General).**

Installation of the PSD will be specific to individual helicopter models. Model specific procedures are outlined in Section XVII. Consult the manufacturer installation procedures for those helicopters not listed in this guide.

***Note: All helicopters may use belly strap or approved model specific hard points. If not using manufacturers belly strap security systems must have 4 to 1 strength ratio and be approved by an aviation maintenance inspector.***

The following applies to all PSD installations:

- A. The PLDO must read the Operator's Manual before installation.
- B. The PLDO and the Pilot must read the limitations section of the flight manual and be familiar with the limitation of flight with the door(s) removed.
- C. Helicopters shall be equipped with a power source for PSD.  
A bulkhead mounted MS 3112E- 12 3S, 3-pin connector shall be provided. Pin B shall be airframe ground. Pin A shall be +28 V.C. for a 28-volt aircraft system. Pin C shall be +14 for a 14-volt aircraft system. The circuit shall be protected by a 5-amp circuit breaker. The mating connector for the Government-furnished PSD shall be an MS 3116E-12-3P wired with the same pin assignments. Reference a wiring diagram in the aircraft procurement document.
- D. Unit weight is approximately 100 pounds for the Premo Mark III and 70 pounds for the Red Dragon with all reservoirs and hopper filled.
- E. The mounting area must be cleaned, which includes vacuuming if there is powder from broken spheres and cleaning any glycol that may have spilled on the floor from previous installation. All carpet and porous floor coverings must be removed.
- F. A one-gallon container of water and a seat belt cutter must be carried on board and be secured and readily accessible to the PLDO.
- G. Fire shelters for all occupants on helicopter.

***CAUTION: Do not service the machine with glycol while it is installed in the helicopter.***

***CAUTION: Under no circumstances will extra ethylene glycol (antifreeze) be carried in the same compartment with plastic spheres.***

## **XVI. Installation Procedures for Specific Helicopter Types.**

***Note: Listed below are installation procedures for some common aircraft utilized for PSD Operations. Any helicopter may be utilized if it is carded and Agency approved for PSD operations. Alternative mounting and securing procedures not identified in this section shall be approved prior to use at regional/state level. Refer to aircraft flight manual for door removal and limitations.***

- A. Bell 206 and 407 Series Helicopters.

**Note: Consult flight manual for doors-off limitations and center of gravity.**

1. Remove right rear door of helicopter.
  2. Use duct tape or other means to protect the paint finish around the right rear doorsill (consult with Pilot/vendor before doing this).
  3. Place the PSD mainframe over the doorsill and connect the Y-end buckles of the hold-down strap to the slots in the mainframe. Do not tighten the hold-down strap.
  4. Install exit chute. Tighten and lock nuts.
  5. Install hopper on the mainframe and make electrical hookup between units.
  6. Slide the assembled PSD as far forward as possible to provide legroom between machine and rear seat. Some helicopters have a cabin fire extinguisher mounted on the rear of the Pilot's seat and it may interfere with the opening of the hopper lid. The fire extinguisher must be removed from its holder and secured on the floor, or the machine must be slid far enough aft to allow the hopper lid to open. Either option must ensure enough room for access to the PSD control panel.
  7. Connect and tighten the belly hold-down strap making sure the strap is not twisted and does not interfere with any external fittings, wiring, or release cables.
  8. Make sure the PSD switches are in the OFF position, and connect the power supply plug from the helicopter to the PSD.
  9. Turn the PSD on and watch the rotation of the hand wheel. Rotation in the direction of the arrow indicates correct polarity. To change the direction of rotation, reverse the plug wiring on the PSD (black wire is positive and the white wire grounds the chassis).
  10. Proceed with ignition timing tests, briefings, etc.
  11. All manufacturers' safety precautions must be adhered to during operation of the PSD.
- B. Hughes 369 (McDonnell-Douglas) 500 Series Helicopters.

**Note: Consult flight manual for doors-off limitations and center of gravity.**

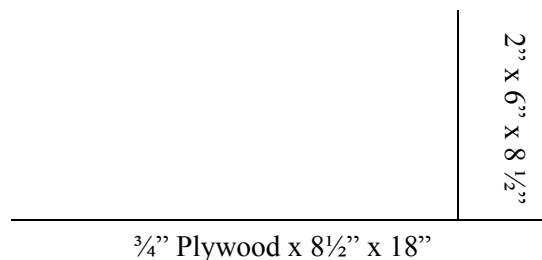
1. A plywood adapter board must be constructed to mount the PSD in the Hughes 500 Series helicopters (see figure 1).
2. Remove right rear door of helicopter.
3. Use duct tape or other means to protect the paint finish around the right rear doorsill (consult with Pilot).
4. Place the adapter on the floor and the PSD mainframe on the adapter and connect the Y-end clips of the hold-down strap to the slots in the mainframe. Do not tighten the hold-down strap.
5. Install exit chute. Tighten and lock nuts.
6. Install the hopper on the mainframe and make electrical hookup between the two units.



7. Slide the assembled PSD as far forward as possible to provide legroom between machine and rear seat. The fire extinguisher may need to be removed from its holder and secured on the floor, or the machine must be slid far enough aft to allow the hopper lid to open. Either option must ensure enough room for access to the PSD control panel on the side of the mainframe.
8. Connect and tighten the belly hold-down strap ensuring it is not twisted and does not interfere with any external fittings, wiring, or release cables.
9. Make sure the PSD switches are in the OFF position and connect the power supply plug from the helicopter to the PSD.
10. CAUTION: A metal container shall be placed under the exit chute at this time to catch any spheres that may be triggered from the PSD during the polarity check.
11. Turn the PSD on and watch the rotation of the wheel. Rotation in the direction of the arrow indicates correct polarity. To change the direction of rotation, reverse the plug wiring on the PSD (black wire is positive and the white wire grounds the chassis).
12. Proceed with ignition timing tests, briefings, etc.
13. Manufacturer's safety precautions must be adhered to during operation of the PSD.

### Figure III-1 – Adapter Plate.

Adapter plate example for Hughes 500; construction is of 1-inch welded aluminum or on a 3/4-inch plywood base. Dimensions of bottom plywood 3/4" x 8 1/2" x 18".



## C. Aerospatiale 350-355 Series.

**Note: Consult flight manual for doors-off limitations and center of gravity.**

1. A one-foot extension must be added to the hold-down strap when using this type of helicopter. The extension must be added to the short buckle portion that is attached to the PSD. The smooth, flat portion of the hold-down strap must pass through the doorframe without hanging up. Or place tie-down strap over rear of mainframe; find floor hard points on each side of mainframe attach tie-down strap ends to approved aircraft hard points.
2. Remove right forward and right rear doors of the helicopter.
3. Use duct tape or other means to protect the paint finish around the right rear doorsill. Consult with Pilot.
4. Place PSD mainframe on the floor and connect the Y-end clips of the hold-down strap to the slots in the mainframe. Do not tighten the hold-down strap.
5. Install exit chute. Tighten and lock nuts.
6. Install the hopper on the mainframe and make electrical hookup between the two units.
7. Connect and tighten the belly hold-down strap making sure the strap is not twisted and does not interfere with any external fittings, wiring, or release cables.
8. Make sure PSD switches are in the OFF position, and connect the power supply plug from the helicopter to the PSD.
9. CAUTION: A metal container shall be placed under the exit chute at this time to catch any spheres that may be triggered from the PSD during the polarity check.
10. Turn the PSD on and watch the rotation of the hand wheel; rotation in the direction of the arrow indicates correct polarity. To change the direction of rotation, reverse the plug wiring on the PSD (black wire is positive and the white wire grounds the chassis).
11. Proceed with ignition timing tests, briefings, etc.
12. All manufacturers' safety precautions must be adhered to during operation of the PSD.

## D. Bell Medium (205, 210, 212, 214, 412).

**Note: Consult flight manual for open door limitation and center of gravity.**

1. Slide right and left door open.
2. Place the adapter plate on the floor next to doorsill.
3. Use duct tape or other means to protect the paint finish around the doorsill.
4. Place PSD mainframe onto adapter plate.
5. Install the hopper on to the mainframe and make electrical hookup between the two units.

6. Place tie-down strap over rear of mainframe (Premo MK III); find floor hard points on each side of mainframe. Attach tie-down strap ends to hard points and secure mainframe or connect the Y-end buckle of the hold down strap to the slots in the mainframe (Red Dragon). Connect and tighten the belly hold-down strap making sure the strap is not twisted and does not interfere with any external fittings, wires, or release cables.
7. Install exit chute. Tighten and lock nuts.
8. Ensure there is enough room for access to the PSD control panel (Premo MK III).
9. Make sure PSD switches are in the OFF position, and connect the power supply plug from the helicopter to the PSD machine.

***CAUTION: A metal container shall be placed under the exit chute at this time to catch any spheres that may be triggered from the PSD during the polarity check.***

10. Turn the PSD on and watch the rotation of the hand wheel; rotation in the direction of the arrow indicates correct polarity. To change the direction of rotation, reverse the plug wiring on the PSD (black wire is positive and the white wire grounds to the chassis).
11. Proceed with the ignition timing tests, briefing, etc.
12. All manufactures safety precautions must be adhered to during operation of the PSD.

## **XVII. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).**

See Appendix C.

***Note: Manufacturer states that the spheres have an indefinite shelf life; they have tested spheres that have been in storage for 20 years with favorable results. The main environmental effects that can cause problems are humidity, extreme temperature variations, and exposure to ultraviolet light. Discoloration of the sphere is a sign of exposure to moisture which causes the potassium permanganate to cling to the sides. This does not necessarily mean that the spheres won't function properly. Old spheres that are brittle may still be ok for use. Anticipate a dirty machine. The more brittle the spheres become the more apt the machine is to jam. Poor ignition of spheres is generally caused by over injection of glycol. Bench testing prior to use will give indications of sphere condition (brittleness).***

***Note: The manufacture recommends following local hazmat protocol for disposal of spheres. There is not a manufacture sponsored recycling program for spheres.***

***Note: STORAGE PROCEDURES: Follow manufacturer's recommendations or local agency/bureau procedures.***

## **Chapter IV – Helitorch Operations.**

### **I. Introduction.**

The Helitorch is a gelled fuel aerial ignition device that is attached to a helicopter's external cargo hook. The ignition and fuel feed are controlled by the pilot through a simple electrical connector on the belly of the helicopter, usually the water bucket plug. The complete system is jettisonable by the pilot in case of emergency.

### **II. Description.**

Adding fuel-thickening compounds to raw fuel reduces the volatility and is therefore more manageable for dispersment. This increases the safety of handling the fuel, improves its drop characteristics, puts more fuel onto the ground (rather than burning off in the air), and increases residual burning time allowing the aircraft to be flown higher and faster than some other aerial ignition systems.

### **III. Function.**

This aerial ignition device is a tool used in backfiring and burnout operations for wildfires and is also a mainstay to the prescribed fire arena for reduction of hazard fuels. It is a very effective tool but must be used by very skilled, qualified pilots and trained, qualified field personnel for a safe operation.

### **IV. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Helitorch in relation to PSD.**

- Advantages
  - Sites where burn areas have sparse or patchy fuel distribution and high fuel moisture content, the pattern of fire laid down by the torch can provide a greater chance of ignition and under some conditions reduce emissions.
  - Convection column can be developed quicker, increasing control over the fire.
  - Thickened fuel provides a longer residual burning time on the ground.
  - Helitorch has the potential of laying a more continuous line of fire. The type of fire pattern laid by the torch and the fuel's residual burning time on the ground can aid in developing a continuous line of fire and achieving better consumption.
  - Helitorch can be easily jettisoned by the pilot in the event of an emergency.
  - Helitorch can be more effective under marginal weather, site, or fuel conditions.
  - Burning is possible in less accessible areas, reducing hazards to ground personnel. Where wildland fire burnout is the best option for safety and control, the helitorch can expedite the operation without compromising personnel safety.
  - More acres can be burned in less time than in hand lighting.

- Emissions may be reduced due to widening of prescription window.
- Can light more than one fuel layer. In ignition of aerial fuels such as standing timber, blow down, and/or poorly compacted fuels.
- When using Barrel Helitorches:
  - The small size of the torch allows it to be transported to remote areas inside any medium and most light helicopters.
  - No need to transport large amounts of mixing equipment and supplies.
  - Requires a smaller ground crew to mix gel, operate, and maintain.
- Disadvantages.
  - The use of gasoline is hazardous since it is highly flammable in its ungelled state.
  - There is substantial resource outlay: three- to five-person crew, with one or two vehicle and/or trailer units for most burning operations.
  - Crew requires extensive training and a commitment to the program for the duration of the burning season.
  - Bulk fuel and chemicals must be hauled to the site; the DOT and OSHA requirements must be known, understood, and complied with.
  - Costs can be significant.
  - Helicopter must return frequently to refill with gel.
  - Operation requires considerable planning and setup time to organize the mixing/loading site and helipad.
  - Rigorous safety procedures must be followed. Hazmat removal and storage may be a problem.
  - It is easier to establish a convection column because of helitorch mass ignition; it is as easy to lose control of the column with a break in ignition.
  - Helitorch does not lend itself to under-burning operation. The burning fuel globules can ignite tree crowns.
  - Commercial driver's license (CDL) with HAZ-MAT endorsement maybe required for transportation of mixing equipment.
  - Requires special pilot and ground crew techniques in order to operate effectively

## V. Equipment Specifications and Design.

Reference Appendices D and E.

## VI. Personnel Responsibilities.

See the Organization Charts in Appendix B for required positions to be filled for both prescribed and wildland fire aerial ignition.

### A. Helitorch Manager.

1. Supervises and monitors the overall helitorch operations on the helibase.
2. Supervises all helitorch/helibase operation and assigns qualified personnel to positions and identifies trainees.
3. Ensures Aerial Ignition PASP and checklists are completed, approved, posted, and followed.
4. Maintains Helitorch Maintenance log and ensures proper cleanup of equipment prior to storage (reference maintenance in Appendix B).
5. Provides technical assistance to RXB 1/2 or FIRB on helibase location and operation.
6. Ensures all required equipment is on-site and operational.
7. Ensures communication link between helitorch base/helibase, dispatch, RXB 1/2 or FIRB/Operations Section Chief, and designated personnel is operational.
8. Conducts briefing and provides technical advice and information to involved parties.
9. Conducts and documents a risk assessment. Identifies hazards and safety requirements at operations briefing.
10. Ensures safety precautions have been completed prior to mixing.
11. Ensures that fire shelter is on board aircraft and accessible to the pilot, and that pilot is familiar with use.

### B. Helicopter Manager.

Duties and responsibilities are outlined in the IHOG. On operations utilizing only one helitorch helicopter, the Helicopter Manager may have collateral duties as the HTMG.

### C. Mixmaster.

1. Reports to the HTMG.
2. Attends Helibase briefings.
3. Supervises mixing/filling operation, manages time frames to maintain availability of gel, assuring bonding procedures are followed.
4. Determines quantities of fuel, gelling agent, etc., needed and manages time frames between mixing systems.
5. Oversees hookup of helitorch to helicopter and preflight tests of helitorch with pilot.
6. Supervises the helitorch fire protection organization.

7. Places equipment and ensures it is operational; conducts drills prior to operations to ensure mixing and filling operations are coordinated between all personnel.
  8. Performs maintenance and cleaning of all helitorch equipment.
- D. Parking Tender.
1. Reports to the HTMG.
  2. Attends briefings.
  3. Directs all movements of personnel and equipment around the helicopter.
  4. Checks hookup of helitorch to helicopter; accomplish checkout procedures.
  5. Must have a radio equipped with headset and hardhat or ALSE approved flight helmet with a remote transmit switch during takeoffs and landings during helitorch operations at the landing pad.
  6. Has fire protection/crash rescue responsibility for the primary helitorch helipad (staff fire extinguisher during all fueling, reloading/filling operations, and during takeoffs and landings, per IHOG).
  7. Ensures electrical switches are “on” prior to takeoff and “off” after landing and inspects discharge valve, propane pressure, cam lock, drum hardware, and suspension cables prior to takeoff.
  8. Ensures all personnel/equipment are clear of safety circle during takeoff/landing.
  9. Maintains communications with helicopter while within the area of helitorch base, turns communication over to RXB 1/2 or FIRB /Operations Section Chief when helicopter departs helitorch base area.
- CAUTION: If the cables become tangled over the helicopter’s skids, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES will any individual walk underneath the hovering helicopter to untangle the lines. The parking tender must direct the pilot to place the helitorch on the ground and release it before re-hooking.***
- E. Helitorch Mixing Personnel (optional).
1. Report to HTMM.
  2. Perform any other miscellaneous tasks during helitorch operation.
- F. Helitorch Base Radio Operator (optional).
1. Reports to HTMG.
  2. Attends Helibase briefings.
  3. Receives orders from RXB 1/2 or FIRB and relays to HTMG.
  4. Maintains communication with appropriate aircraft.

5. Provides communication between HTMG, parking tender, Helicopter Pilot, RXB 1/2 or FIRB and dispatch and/or operations.
6. Maintains a flight following log.

G. Pilot.

***Note: Pilot is responsible for all helicopter operations and flight safety.***

1. Must be carded for helitorch operations.
2. Attends helibase briefing.
3. Understands helitorch commands. Communicates and coordinates with RXB 1/2 or FIRB and parking tender.
4. Has been briefed on helitorch operation and installation procedures.
5. Maintains appropriate airspeed and elevation above the ground while staying within the burn area.
6. Maintains reserve power/airspeed in the event of an emergency.
7. Discuss how winds and topography may affect flight patterns with RXB1/ 2 or FIRB.
8. 8. Must be familiar with fire shelter usage.
9. 9. Avoids slip-turns which could result in erratic helitorch movements that may throw burning fuel across fire lines or cause inconsistent drop patterns.
10. Knows that helitorch must be turned off an adequate distance inside the boundary of the burn to avoid dropping ignited gel outside the desired burn area.
11. Knows that residual gel may continue to drip and ignite after the pilot has stopped ignition. The pilot must ensure that the flame on the gel nozzle is extinguished before leaving the burn area. Persistent flame can be extinguished by increasing airspeed.
12. Whenever possible, keeps the pilot's side of the helicopter toward the previously ignited area. This way the pilot can monitor heat buildup from the ignited burn area and avoid possible heat damage to the helicopter from extreme temperatures.
13. Sufficient altitude must be maintained.
14. Maintain a safe departure path from the burn at all times in case of erratic fire behavior.
15. Slowly descends until the helitorch contacts the ground. Helitorch should be in front of the aircraft upon landing.
16. Follow emergency procedures in helicopter flight manual. Jettison helitorch by electrical or manual release if necessary. Avoids flying over personnel, vehicles, or congested areas.
17. Remove pilot's door prior to burning operations unless the aircraft is equipped with a bubble door.



18. Removes external cargo racks if necessary, to provide a better view of the helitorch.
  19. Checks the electrical and manual cargo hook releases prior to operation.
  20. Ensures the helitorch tip clears the ground before forward flight.
  21. Ensures that sufficient reserve power is available to hover and maneuver the helitorch.
  22. Does not check for helitorch ignition unless over the burn area or other designated test area.
  23. Takes off into the wind, allowing sufficient clearance over obstacles.
  24. Maintains airspeed within limits for adequate controllability of the helicopter and the helitorch combination.
  25. Monitors aircraft limitations when operating in burn areas, as flying through preheated air may result in erratic engine performance.
  26. Completes load calculations and ensures that hover out-of-ground effect (HOGE) is available.
- H. Additional Aerial Ignition Positions (Wildland or Prescribed Fire) may be added depending upon complexity of operation.
1. Fire Protection – Based on the complexity of the operation, additional fire protection capabilities may be necessary.
  2. Additional aviation supervision may be necessary for complex operations.

## VII. Helitorch Mixing/Loading Area.

***CAUTION: All handheld electronic devices such as radios, pagers, cell phones, satellite phones, etc. shall be turned off within 50' of any fuel preparations/vapor removal area. This prohibition will be emphasized as part of each daily briefing and each risk assessment. Warning signs should be posted.***

### A. Safety

The location and layout of the fuel mixing and helitorch loading site is critical to reducing the risk of accidents with flammable materials, helicopter, and mixing/loading personnel. The fuel mixing/loading area is used for the purpose of blending fuel and gelling agent, exchanging drums on helitorches, or refilling drums from the mixing units.

The helitorch base should be separated from the primary helibase and other helicopter operations. No smoking is permitted within the mixing/loading area. Precautions must be taken to eliminate sources of ignition where fuel vapors may be present.

***In addition to the required 40-B:C extinguisher (NFES 0307) per pad, fire suppression requirements for helitorch operations provide a minimum of four extinguishers each rated at 40-B:C (NFES 0307 meets/exceeds this requirement) or two 3-gallon compressed air foam system extinguishers capable of using Class B foam or a staffed 30 gallon Class B foam capable system or a staffed engine with Class B foam on-site.***

## Emergency Procedures per OSHA 1910.38

*“Emergency escape route, meeting point, emergency shutdown of operations, procedures to account for all employees, rescue and medical duties, means of reporting fires, and emergencies should be covered. The alarm system to be utilized for employee notification should be outlined.”*

### *Elements of an Emergency Contingency Plan:*

1. Establish and follow approved Crash Rescue Plan located in the PASP.
2. Establish and maintain a communication link to Dispatch/Incident Command Post (ICP).
3. Establish emergency contact procedure via radio notification.
4. Establish escape routes and an emergency meeting point where personnel could congregate to identify everyone for accountability.
5. Identify and brief helitorch operations, suppression, fire protection, and first aid personnel.

### B. Location.

The helitorch mixing/loading area should meet the following criteria:

1. The helitorch site should be large enough to accommodate and provide a safe working distance between all the required pieces of equipment.
2. The site should have an established takeoff and landing corridor that has no equipment placed within that zone.
3. A safety circle shall be maintained around the landing pad.
4. There should be an alternate loading area in case the mixing/loading site becomes unusable.
5. The site should be located in close proximity to the burn site to minimize turnaround times.
6. Choose a site that will not be impacted by the smoke column or embers from the burn. Consider the prevailing and forecasted wind direction. Keep location upwind of the burn.
7. Helicopter flight paths must not pass over any personnel, structures, and areas of human occupancy. When over-flights of traveled roads occur, traffic control must be mitigated.
8. The helitorch operation site should be reserved for authorized personnel only.
9. Establish alternate landing areas.
10. During wildland incidents, helitorch base operations should be separated from the primary helibase.
11. Choose a site that has no, or a minimal, need for dust abatement.

12. Mixing equipment must be located OUTSIDE the helicopter safety circle.

## VIII. Fuel Preparation.

### A. Safety.

1. The HTMG must be aware of the procedures for safe storage, handling, and mixing of fuel according to agency or bureau policies.
2. The mixing area should be large enough to accommodate and provide a safe working distance between all required equipment.
3. Nonferrous mixing equipment must be used and all bonding procedures must be followed.
4. Ensure precautions are exercised to eliminate direct exposure of skin to gelling agent or fuel.
5. When dispensing or handling powdered gelling agent if dust masks are provided for voluntary use (as defined by OSHA in 29 CFR 1910.134) ensure the following:
  - a. An N-95 dust mask is supplied.
  - b. Prevent contamination of N-95 dust masks by storing in a chemical and dust free sealed container to ensure their use does not present a health hazard.
  - c. Wearing the N-95 dust mask does not interfere with employees' ability to work safely.
  - d. Instruct employees that the N-95 masks are for one-time use and a new one should be used each day.
  - e. Supply to and ensure each employee reads a copy of Appendix D of 29 CFR 1910.134 which instructs employees on N-95 dust mask limitations such as warning them that wearing a dust mask does not protect them from organic vapors. (See OSHA Appendix D.)\*
6. If gelled fuel is spilled, burning of the gelled fuel on site is the preferred method of clean up if possible.
7. Consult with local safety officer prior to performing cleaning or maintenance on the interior of batch or modular mixers or the cleaning up of spills to determine the appropriate respiratory protection and other personal protective equipment (PPE).
8. Personal protective equipment: Personnel must be equipped with eye protection, hardhat, fire resistant clothing labeled as non-static\* or 100 percent cotton (clothing must be labeled with Nomex IIIA or 2% Carbon Core or 3% Conductive Fiber), and Nitrile Chemical Resistant gloves. \*Testing performed at the University of Alberta has shown clothing consisting of Nomex IIIA or 2% Carbon Core or 3% Conductive Fiber to have better anti-static properties than cotton.
9. "NO SMOKING" and "NO CELL PHONES OR RADIO" signs conspicuously posted around mixing area, to include all vapor removal outlets.

**\* Appendix D of OSHA regulation Sec. 1910.134 (Mandatory) Information for Employees using respirators.**

***When Not Required Under the Standard***

***Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged, even when exposures are below the limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the wearer. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If an employer provides respirators for voluntary use, or if individuals own their respirator, the individual needs to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.***

***Personnel should do the following:***

***Read and follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, clean, care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.***

***Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect a person.***

***Do not wear a respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which the respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.***

***Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.***

***[63 FR 1152, Jan. 8, 1998; 63 FR 20098, April 23, 1998]***

**B. Hazards.**

1. Gasoline vapors are a depressant to the nervous system and a known carcinogen; prolonged and direct exposure to these vapors must be avoided.
2. Personnel should keep their hands out of gasoline and fuel mixtures. Special care must be taken to keep fuel from the mouth, eyes, open cuts, and abrasions.
3. Dust created in fuel mixing should be avoided. Mixing can only take place when all personnel involved in the operation are adequately trained and equipped.

***CAUTION: Hazards to the mixing personnel include vapors and flammability of gasoline, skin contact with fuel, and dust from the gelling agent. (Review MSDS in Appendix C.)***

**C. Handling Gelling Agent and Fuel.**

1. Bulk transportation of fuel is recommended whenever possible using a fuel truck with its own pumping system.
2. When bulk fuel transportation is unavailable, a portable refueling system may be used that complies with requirements of Appendices D, E and F.
3. The powdered gelling agent must be kept dry.
4. All gelling agents shall be disposed of in accordance with applicable state and federal regulations.

5. DOT requirements are outlined in Appendix E.

***CAUTION: Only gelling agents with a current Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) are approved for use. Current approved brand names for thickeners are: FIRETROL Firegel (also known as Sure Fire), FIRETROL Petro Gel, Flash 21 and Halliburton MO85 and MO86.***

### **Portable Eyewash Station Required On-Site**

***OSHA 1910.151 and 1926.5 Requires that that when the eyes may be exposed to injurious corrosive materials, suitable facilities for the quick drenching or flushing of the eyes shall be provided for immediate emergency use. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) outlines what a 15 MINUTE CONTINUOUS FLOW is.***

#### **D. Mixing Procedures.**

1. Correct mixing is essential and clean fuel results in the best gelling and ignition. The optimum fuel temperature for gelling is 21 degrees Celsius or 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Colder fuel takes longer to gel and requires more gelling agent for a proper mix.
2. Cleanliness of fuel, gelling agent, and equipment must be ensured. It is desirable to set up the mixing area well ahead of the desired ignition time to ensure all components of the setup are operational.
3. HTMG checks to ensure all personnel are properly equipped and that all safety gear is in place.
4. HTMM ensures all mixing systems, helitorches, and bulk fuel sources are properly bonded. Reference bonding procedures in Appendix F.
5. All drums and associated equipment must be clean.
6. Mix crew attaches the bonding cable and fuel nozzle to the mixing unit and adds fuel.
7. After fueling, the HTMM adds the measured amount of gelling agent to the mixing unit while the fuel is being agitated. Gelling agent must be added slowly or improper gelling may occur.
8. Mixing of fuel and gelling agent continues until required amounts have been added (reference manufacture's mixing guidelines). Agitation continues until complete mixing has occurred and the mixture shows signs of gelling (waxy surface and thickening).
9. The HTMM determines if the gel is of the desired consistency.
10. Powdered gelling agent added to partially gelled fuel will not totally dissolve and may cause lumping.
11. The mixed gel should sit for 10 to 15 minutes or until gelling is complete. Gel color may vary with different grades and brands of fuel. Gelling quality may be affected by additives such as ethanol and detergents.
12. The use of liquid gelling agents will have different procedures, follow manufacturer's instructions.

**CAUTION:** No plastics of any kind shall be used in the powdered gel mixing operations. All dispensing equipment must be made of metal capable of being bonded, no plastic components.

**Do not pour powder gelling agent directly from the bag into the drum/tank. (NFPA 77, 8-11).**

**CAUTION:** Fuel should not be gelled unless its use is likely. Fuel which has been gelled for more than 2 hours will begin to lose viscosity and may cause flaring during use.

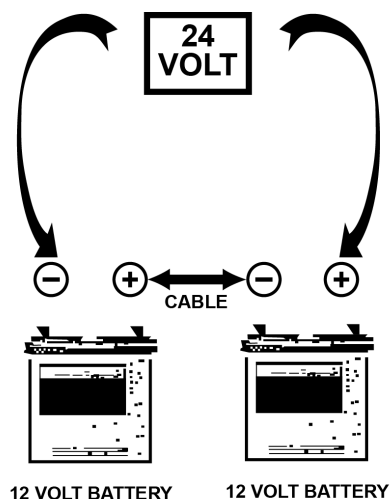
## IX. Bench Testing the Helitorch.

Helitorches will be kept clean and maintained to avoid operational delays. Once the helitorch has been cleaned and reassembled, it can be tested for serviceability on the ground. A 40-B:C fire extinguisher must be readily available for use by a trained person during helitorch testing procedure. The helitorch will not be loaded with jelled fuel for bench testing.

The following outlines the steps to be performed during a bench test:

1. Connect two 12-volt batteries in series to produce 24 volts. See Figure IV-1 or utilize power converter.
2. Ensure that both pumps and ignition switches are in the off position. Attach the power cord to the battery and the 9-pin plug to the helitorch.
3. With the ignition switch on and the pump switch off, check to see that the igniter is producing a spark.
4. With the pump switch on and the igniter switch off, check to see that the motor and pump operate normally and the pulley rotates in the proper direction, clockwise when viewed from the control switch side of the helitorch.
5. Turn both switches off and disconnects the plug from the battery adapter cord.
6. Check all nuts, bolts, and connectors for tightness and serviceability.

**Figure IV-1**



**BATTERIES IN SERIES TO PRODUCE 24 VOLTS**

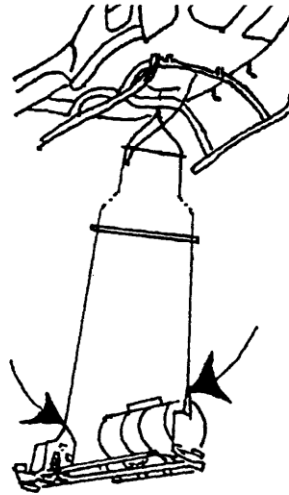
**Figure IV-2**

Power converter mounted in Helitack chase truck powered by a generator mounted on the truck which can be used to bench test PSD or Helitorch.

Converter Information: Model number SLS-24-120T. 24V @ 120A#. Manufacturer: EGS Electrical Group, Sola/Hevi-Duty, 9377 West Higgins Road, Rosemont, IL 60018. [EGS Electrical Corp](#)

## **X. Helitorch Installation to Aircraft**

- A. Have the pilot door removed.
- B. Ensure that the suspension cables are correctly installed to the helitorch. Inspect cables and connectors for security. Figure 4 shows a drawing with cables correctly attached to the Helitorch.

**Figure IV-3****LOCATION OF ATTACHMENT POINTS OF SINGLE-POINT CABLE ASSEMBLY**

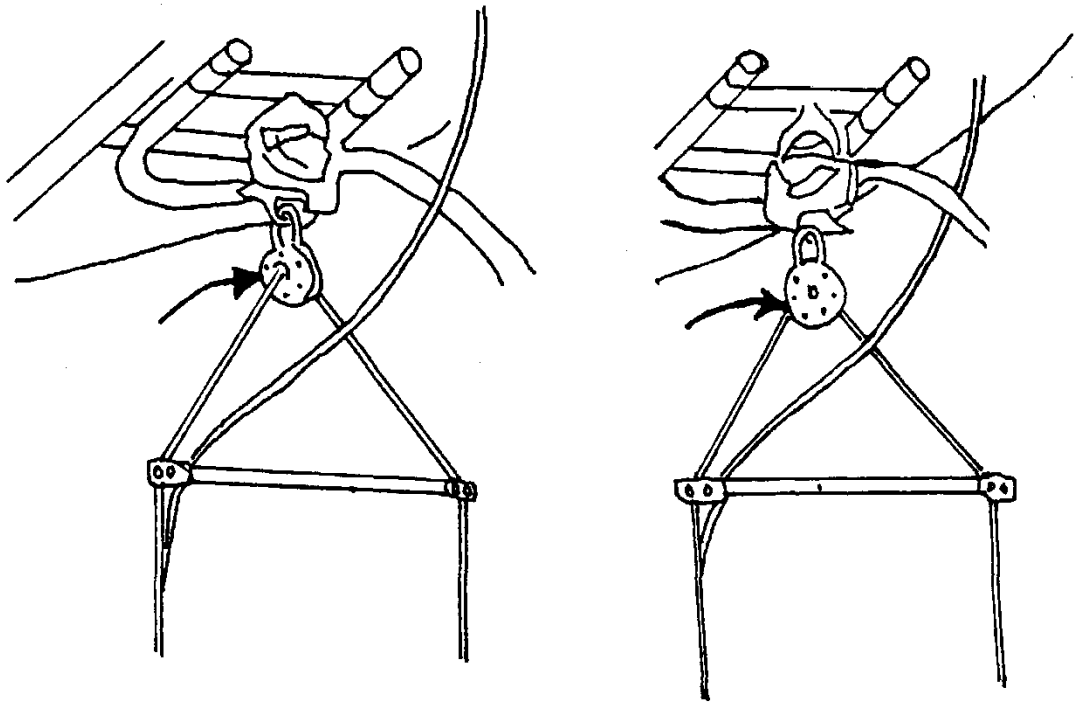
- C. Place the helitorch on the ground in front of the helicopter with the nozzle end to the pilot's side of the aircraft and make sure the switches are off. Ensure lines are not over or under landing gear.
- D. Ensure that the pear-link adapter is correctly configured for the cargo hook on the helicopter. Make sure that the cables are between the skids and will not become entangled during takeoff. Attach the pear-link to the cargo hook. At this time conduct a safety check of the cargo hook, both manual and electrical releases. After insuring that both switches are in the off position, secure the electrical cannon plug to the plug on the helicopter. Figure IV-4 is a drawing that shows laterally oriented cargo hook and longitudinally oriented cargo hook. Note the cable attachments on the pear link.

**CAUTION:** Due to the length of the cables care must be taken when landing Medium helicopters.

**Note:** For use with Medium helicopters ensure hook is secured so the helitorch is not able to rotate.



Figure IV-4



LATERALLY ORIENTED CARGO HOOK

LONGITUDINALLY ORIENTED CARGO HOOK

( NOTE THE CABLE ATTACHMENT LOCATIONS ON THE PEARLINK )

**CAUTION:** Before testing helitorch with the helicopter, disconnect pear-link from the aircraft cargo hook. Failure to follow this procedure can result in damage to the helicopter wiring if polarity is incorrect.

**CAUTION:** The helitorch suspension system shall be hooked directly to the helicopter cargo hook. Tag/Lead or Longlines are prohibited.

## XI. Testing Helitorch with Helicopter

After the helitorch has been bench tested, it shall be tested with the helicopter while both are on the ground. At this point it is essential that you have conducted a pre-operational briefing with the pilot and crew. This briefing must include communications, any identified hazards, and associated mitigations, aircraft performance, and emergency procedures. Ensure the desired nozzle tip is installed on the helitorch, that there are no cables over the skids, and have a fire extinguisher staffed with a trained person.

### A. Ignition Test.

1. Ensure the pump switch is off and turn the ignitor switch on.

2. Have pilot activate the helitorch control switch to test for proper ignition.
  3. Have pilot release helitorch control switch and turn ignitor switch off.
- B. Pump Test.
1. Check dry-break connection and open hose valve.
  2. Insure ignition switch is off and turn pump switch on.
  3. Have pilot activate the helitorch control switch after having placed fuel catch vessel under fuel nozzle. Gelled fuel should flow through the nozzle tip. At this time all lines should be bled to insure fuel flow. If you hear the motor turning and no fuel flows, check for clogging, vapor lock, or polarity reversal. If the polarity is reversed, simply reverse the input wires or use a “backward-wired pigtail.” When polarity is correct, reconnect pear-ring to the aircraft cargo hook.
  4. Check that the positive shutoff valve does not allow fuel to leak from the nozzle and that it operates freely.
  5. Make sure both switches are off.
  6. The torch is ready for operation.

## **XII. Prior to Each Takeoff (Final Check)**

1. Ensure that the pear-link adapter is correctly configured for the cargo hook on the helicopter and attached to the cargo hook. Check helitorch structural integrity.
2. Igniter is clean.
3. Helitorch and suspension system is positioned in front of the helicopter with the nozzle end toward the pilot’s side of the aircraft.
4. The HTMM or HTPT will activate the ignition and pump switches, inform the pilot that the switches are on, and exit the area towards the HTPT.
5. HTPT directs takeoff.

***CAUTION: At no time should there be anyone underneath or in close proximity of the helicopter with the helitorch attached while in flight.***

## **XIII. Filling Helitorch from Mixing Unit**

- A. Ensure all mixing systems, helitorches, and bulk fuel sources are properly bonded. Reference bonding procedures in Appendix F.
- B. The helicopter returns with an empty drum. The HTPT directs the helicopter to its landing position.
- C. Once the helicopter is on the ground, the pilot signals to the HTMM or designee to approach.

- D. The HTMM or designee turns the switches off. HTMM now connects the vapor recovery and filler hoses on the helitorch drums. The HTMM signals the fuel mixing unit operator to pump gel. After fueling is complete, change propane bottle if applicable.
- E. When the drum is full, the HTMM signals the mixing unit operator to shut off the pump. Then the Mixing Unit Operator closes the valve, removes fuel and vapor hoses, turns the switches on, and exits.
- F. The HTPT performs final checks that switches are on, cables are correct, dry-break handle is in the open position, visual check of propane gauge, and nozzle tip is clean.

## XIV. Cleaning and Maintenance of Helitorch and Related Equipment

The helitorch, drums, and mixing unit must have proper maintenance to be dependable. Thoroughly flush all equipment with diesel fuel and run through all nozzles, hoses, etc. Keep all equipment indoors or cover well. Routine inspection of equipment should occur even during times of non-use to prevent corrosive damage.

### A. Helitorch Maintenance

It is important to properly service and store the helitorch to maintain dependability. Obtain major component service/maintenance publications from manufacturers and distributors.

1. Flush the helitorch plumbing with diesel fuel or Jet A after each use.
2. Clean ignitor system.
3. Clean and inspect discharge nozzle assembly.
4. Inspect hoses and electrical wiring.
5. Complete required maintenance checklist and Helitorch Use Record as indicated in Appendix B.

### B. General Mixing System Maintenance

***Note: Mixing systems that meet MC 306 or DOT 406 design specifications must comply with DOT regulations. This includes an annual (VK) external visual inspection (V) and leakage test (K). An (IP) internal inspection (I) and pressure test (P) must be performed every 5 years. The tests must be performed by a DOT licensed inspector.***

1. Inspect and maintain the mixing system trailer brakes, wheel bearings, electrical system, engine oil, air filter, spark arrester, etc., and the general integrity of the unit on an annual basis. Record and log all work performed.
2. Reference maintenance publications for the major components of the mixing system (e.g., engine, pump, valves, etc.) to maintain the equipment and to help remedy any problems (troubleshoot). Report any problems to your agency representative of the IAIU.
3. Clean and purge the mixing system tank, plumbing, suction line, and discharge lines of gel/fuel when the unit is not operated for a prolonged period of time.

- Pump as much of the remaining gel out of the plumbing and tank. Use a nonferrous metal or wood paddle to scrape gel toward outlet valve if needed.
- Put several gallons of diesel into the tank and recirculate. Flush all hoses with diesel.
- Purge the entire system of diesel.

***Note: Fuel remaining in the system can absorb moisture and could jeopardize the life span of the tank by pitting and rusting the internal walls. Also, moisture can degrade gel consistency rendering it unsafe.***

4. Care must always be taken not to introduce foreign matter (i.e., rocks, grit, debris, etc.) from getting into the system and perhaps damaging the pump or valves.
5. Prevent rust from forming on the tank. Paint the unit when necessary.
6. Keep the mixing system clean and store in a dry place.

C. Drum and Associated Hardware Maintenance

1. Keep the drum purged of gel/fuel when not in use.
2. Prevent rust from forming on the drum. Paint if necessary.
3. Keep the drums clean and store in a dry environment.
4. Keep the dry breaks clean of dirt, debris, and gel residue.
5. Keep Clay & Bailey relief valve, site glasses, and vapor removal/recovery cam-lock free of gel residue.
6. Clean and lubricate all components with a minimal amount of diesel prior to storage.

D. Vapor Hose Maintenance

1. Store hoses in dry location away from sunlight.
2. Ensure that debris does not enter the hose by keeping the cam-lock caps on during storage.
3. Perform continuity test prior to use.
4. Replace brittle/dry cracked hoses.

## **XV. MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets)**

See Appendix C.

## **XVI. Helitorch and Mix Transfer System Required Modifications and Approved Equipment Inspection Checklists**

See Appendices D and E.

## XVII. Barrel Helitorch Assembly and Setup

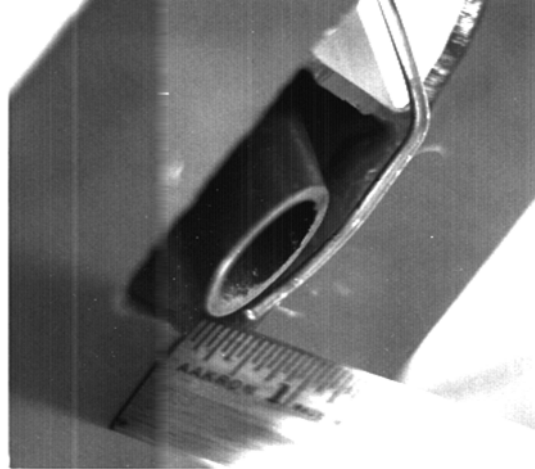
Figure IV-5



- A. Helitorch Assembly
1. Unwind the cables for the spreader bar assembly.
  2. Straighten and check the suspension lines for damage and entanglements.
  3. Check all connections to ensure that they are secure and properly safety wired.
  4. Remove the two bolts from the sleeve portion of the bent leg frame.
  5. Install the straight frame into the sleeve portion of the bent leg and secure it with the bolts, nuts, and safety pins.
- B. Gelled Fuel Helitorch Setup Procedure
1. The pump-fin assembly is quick-pinned into place in the slot on the down facing side of the straight leg frame, below the ignition box.
  2. One end of the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch hose fitting is connected to the outlet of the fuel pump. The other end is connected to the fuel nozzle inlet on the bent leg frame.
  3. The  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch fitting will attach to the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch coupler installed on the fuel drum.
  4. The cannon plug on the pump assembly presses onto the receptacle on the ignition box.
- CAUTION: Mixing helitorch components between kits may cause compatibility problems due to differences in hose and/or nozzle length. If  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch hose lengths are too long, the drum clamp may disconnect in flight.**
- C. Adjusting the Igniter Tip
1. Igniter wire and nozzle terminus should be free of carbon deposits. Remove carbon deposits with sandpaper or a wire brush.

2. When properly adjusted, the igniter wire bends at the nozzle tip and parallels the nozzle terminus so that a gap of approximately 1/4- to 3/8-inch exists between the two. This will allow multiple points for arcing to occur and prevent ignition failure.

**Figure IV-6**



D. Fuel Drum Valve Assembly.

The Barrel Helitorch uses unmodified standard 55-gallon fuel drums. The ground crew must check the drums for fuel leaks and bent rims. Drums with bent rims on the vent bung side of the drum, or large dents in the side of the drum near drum rims, cannot be used since this is the area where the drum attaches to the helitorch. Any drum with damaged threads should not be used because it may leak or damage the threads of the helitorch vent or helitorch coupler.

**Figure IV-7**

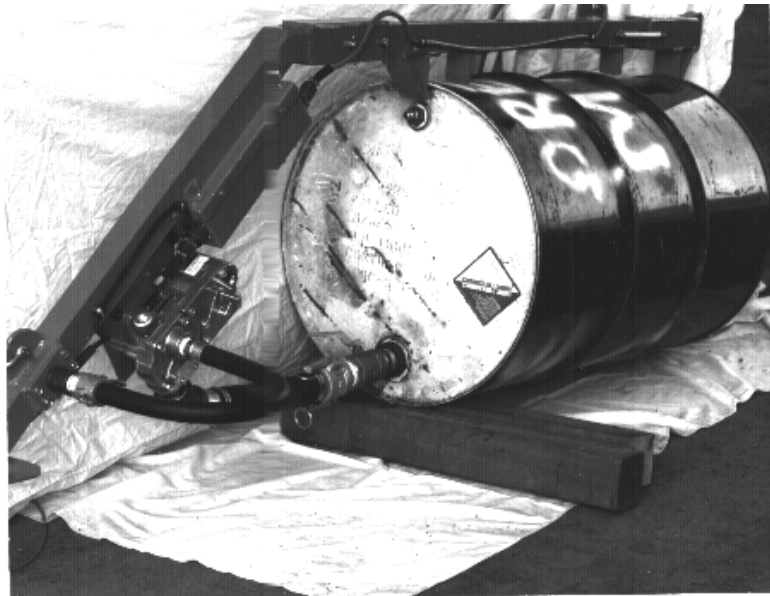


**CAUTION:** Ensure drum rim height is compatible with torch frame to maintain positive lock with torch.

1. Install small brass bleed-vent in the drum bung.

2. Check the bleed-vent for proper operation before installing by gently blowing on the brass end of the vent. If air does not go through the vent, or the vent is too loose, adjust the vent by tightening or loosening the vent's inset screw, which is located inside the vent.
  3. The bleed-vent also serves as a check valve. If it is adjusted too loosely, fuel will leak from the vent during flight. Use a bung plug gasket on the air vent and finger tighten to the drum.
  4. The 1½-inch coupler is used for gelled fuels.
  5. Fuel must be gelled before inserting drum coupler.
  6. Put Teflon tape on the coupling valve to seal threads. Do not use the bung gasket with the coupler.
  7. Close the coupler valve before inserting into the drum.
  8. Use a pipe wrench attached to large bung adapter to tighten the coupler to the drum. **DO NOT USE THE COUPLER HANDLE.**
  9. The coupler closure handle should face up toward the center of the drum after the coupler is tightened.
  10. Keep drums upright until ready for use.
- E. Attachment of Fuel Drum to Helitorch.

**Figure IV-8**



Ensure the fuel drum coupler valve is closed, place the drum on its side so that the small bung valve is in the upper most position and the fuel coupler is in the lowest position.

## F. Initial Helitorch Hookup

1. Place the helitorch on the ground in front of the helicopter.
2. Orient nozzle terminus toward the pilot's side.
3. Helitorch should be placed close enough so that it can be hooked to the aircraft by a person crawling underneath the aircraft, and far enough away to minimize cable slack.
4. Attach the pear ring to the aircraft cargo hook.
5. Attach the helitorch electrical connection to the helicopter's external electrical plug.
6. Check the aircraft manual and electrical hook release to ensure that the helitorch can be jettisoned during an emergency.
7. Open fuel valve on drum half open.
8. Turn on both ignition and fuel switches on the helitorch as well as the manual valves for the Mapp/propane gas.
9. During lift-off, ensure that suspension lines do not become entangled with the helitorch and are not draped over the helicopter skid.

## G. Drum exchanges for Barrel helitorches.

1. A full fuel drum with coupler and bleed air vent attached is elevated to facilitate drum exchanges.
2. The parking tender directs the helicopter to lower the helitorch onto the downwind side next to the full drum ensuring that the helitorch tip does not touch the ground.
3. As the helicopter is landing, the parking tender will direct the Pilot back so the cables on the torch remain slack free. The Primary HTMM Crewmember turns off the ignition and pump switches, closes the inline Mapp/propane gas valve, and turns off the fuel valve on the 1½-inch drum coupler. Both HTMM & HTPT crewmembers then disconnect the helitorch from the empty drum. The Primary HTMM Crewmember disconnects the fuel coupling.
4. Both helitorch crewmembers move the helitorch to the full drum. The Primary HTMM Crewmember connects the fuel coupling. Both crewmembers attach the helitorch to the drum. The Primary HTMM Crewmember turns on the fuel valve, half open for gelled fuel, turns on the pump and the two ignition switches, and opens inline Mapp/propane gas valve.
5. The Primary HTMM Crewmember remains at the exchange area to ensure that the cables do not get caught on the helitorch, and the helitorch tip does not contact the ground as the helicopter lifts the helitorch.
6. The parking tender signals the Pilot to lift. The Primary HTMM Crewmember double checks to make sure that the pump and ignition switches are turned on. When the helitorch begins to lift, the Primary HTMM Crewmember exits toward the parking tender.



7. The parking tender signals the Pilot when the helitorch crew is clear.
8. The parking tender signals the Pilot to exit into the wind, and observes the helitorch until it is clear of the area.
9. The Pilot avoids flying over personnel and equipment.
10. The ground crew monitors the helitorch until it is out of the helitorch base area.