



# Forest Service Aviation SAFETY ALERT



**No. FSSA 15-01**

**Date: August 12, 2015**

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**Subject: Procedures for Reporting GPS Outages or Interference**

**Area of Concern: Aviation Safety**

**Distribution: All Aviation Operations and Dispatch Offices**

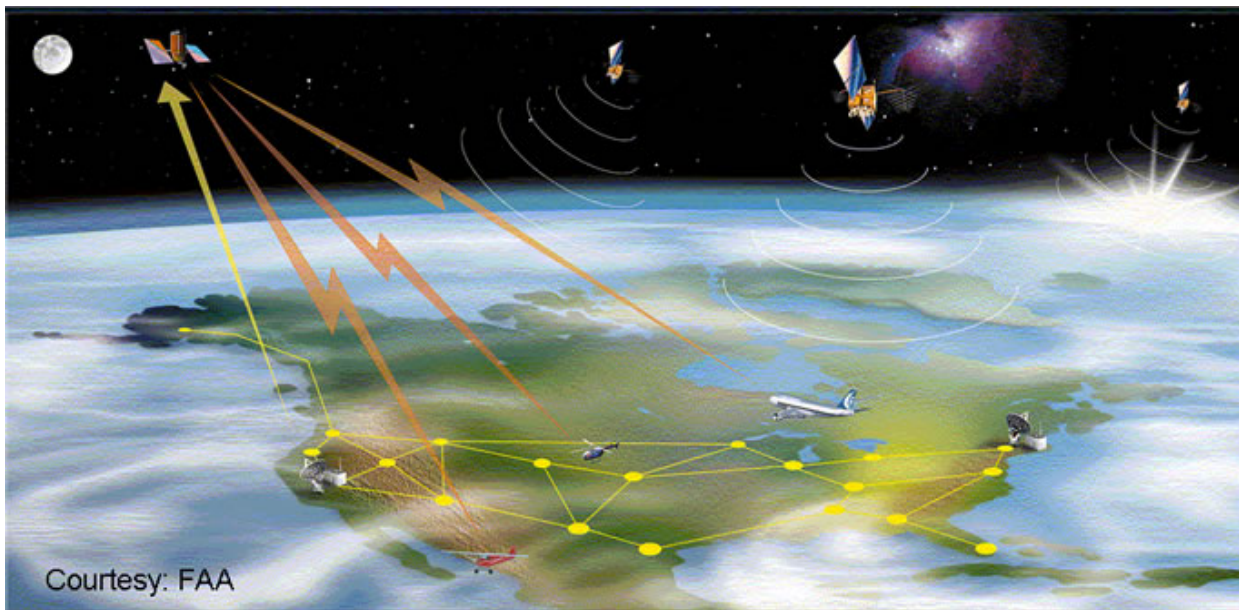
**Discussion:** Military GPS Interference Testing May Interrupt Fire Aviation Operations in Western U.S.

On August 6, the FAA issued a Flight Advisory which outlines the effects, dates, times and geographical range of GPS interference testing being performed by the Department of Defense (DoD) in Southern California. This testing has a significant potential to make GPS navigation technology unreliable for up to six hours during several multiple-day periods this month. The testing periods are August 11-13, 18-20, and 26-27. Aircraft may only notice an issue when banking with their GPS antenna pointing at the jamming device in the Pacific Ocean.

**Recommendations:** The following procedures have been developed to assist aerial firefighting aircraft when they experience GPS anomalies that may pose a risk to flight safety and compromise their ability to carry out critical mission activity. This strategy outlines a set of notification steps which should result in a cessation of DoD testing within a short time of the reported loss of GPS signals.

- When experiencing a GPS loss, FAA recommends that the aircraft should try leveling their wings so the GPS antenna points skywards. This should establish contact with the overhead satellites and reestablish valid satellite connections.
- Aircraft experiencing a loss of GPS signal issues and feel that it is a significant risk to flight safety, should contact their local ATC or ARTCC if able. Report **AIRCRAFT CALL SIGN, POSITION, TIME AND ALTITUDE WHEN GPS SIGNAL IS LOST AND STATE THAT THERE IS A SAFETY ISSUE.**
- If not able to reach ATC or ARTCC, contact aerial supervision such as Air Attack. Aerial supervision will then contact their local ATC or ARTCC to report the aircraft call sign, position, time, altitude and safety issue involving the GPS loss of signal.
- If Aerial Supervision is not available on the incident, contact local dispatch center and report that you are experiencing GPS outage and/or interference.
- Local Dispatch will report to their local GACC and relay aircraft call sign, position, time and altitude when GPS signal is lost.
- The GACC will relay information to the appropriate ARTCC and include aircraft call sign, position, time and altitude and use the phrase "This is a significant and critical safety issue" when GPS signal was lost.

- The ARTCC upon receipt of the report from a GACC that aerial firefighting operations have encountered a GPS anomaly, which poses an unacceptable flight safety and/or critical mission risk, will contact the testing agency to execute the Stop Buzzer procedures.
- Any instance of GPS outage or interference that impacts safe flight operations should be cause to terminate the flight. The distraction of trying to report the GPS outage or interference may be cause to terminate flight.
- If GPS fails the aircraft AFF will not function properly and aircraft will have to flight follow by radio until valid GPS re acquires.
- Remember that GPS can fail for several reasons, be prepared and don't depend on it solely.
- All instances impacting flight safety due to GPS outage or interference shall be reported on a SAFECOM. Tracking GPS issues is critical to flight safety.



NOTE - Contacting ATC refers to any responsible FAA ATC facility, including a tower, TRACON, or ARTCC, which could be responsible for the airspace in which the subject aircraft is operating. Questions may be forwarded to Julie Stewart at 503-780-0097 or at [j5stewar@blm.gov](mailto:j5stewar@blm.gov)

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