



## National Interagency Fire Center

3838 S. Development Avenue  
Boise, Idaho 83705

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To: Geographic Area Coordination Centers  
From: National Multi Agency Coordination Group  
Subject: Airtanker Management and Dispatch Procedures

Airtankers are a limited commodity and we are concerned with the number of hours being put on these aircraft for repositioning. There seems to be confusion regarding the national direction on the use of airtankers. Returning airtankers to a Geographic Area “assigned” base is defeating the purpose of NOT assigning a base, and resulting in additional unnecessary flight time and cost.

To reiterate the policies and procedures:

- Airtankers are national resources. They are under operational control of the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC).
- They have NO designated home bases. If they are released and told to go home they will need a resource order to Chico, Minden, Missoula, or Redmond.
- If airtankers are requested, and are not located in the Geographic Area, a resource order must be placed with NICC.
- Once the airtankers are located within the Geographic Area, a resource order must be placed with the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC).
- Each evening all airtankers assigned to fires should be released at close of business to the closest airtanker base.
- If the airtanker is needed the next day on the same fire, it should be re-ordered.
- If they are released from a fire location and there is no further need for the airtanker, the GACC should move it to a new location only if there is a prediction for activity or on-going activity at the new location. Moving airtankers to simply reposition the aircraft is a waste of available flight hours.
- Airtankers assigned will become the receiving Area’s resource until reassigned by NICC to a new location.
- No airtankers will be taken out of rotation (with the possible exception of Tanker 66 during restricted urban interface fires) unless there is a demonstrated benefit to the government.

The bottom line is that we only have 12 initial attack airtankers and their use MUST be shared and directed by NICC for national priorities.

/s/ Don Artley

Chair, NMAC