



National Interagency Fire Center

3838 S. Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

June 18, 2007

To: Geographic Area Coordination Group Chairs
From: National Multi Agency Coordination Group
Subject: Use of Large Airtankers and Related Issues

This memo will serve as direction regarding the use of Large Airtankers (LATs), and other retardant/suppressant aircraft, on federally managed wildland fires for the 2007 field season.

The following LATs and other aircraft are available and authorized for use on wildland fire operations managed by federal agencies:

- Those federally contracted LATs that have been awarded contracts under the Forest Service Airtanker Contract. These aircraft constitute federally approved airtankers.
- CL-215/215T/415s. For non-federally contracted water scoopers, agreements for use and payment must be in place prior to use on federally managed fires.
- MAFFS as mobilized by the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) or by a state.
- Single Engine Airtankers mobilized under the Interagency SEAT Contract or through agreements with cooperators.
- Helicopters contracted through USDA/USDI contracting processes and cooperator helicopters covered by appropriate use and payment agreements.

Related Issues:

Federal Lands under State Protection: States may use airtankers not identified above on federal lands, when and where the State has formal protection responsibility as long as the state maintains operational control of those aircraft.

Federal Firefighters on State Fires: Non-federally approved airtankers remain under State operational control regardless of the agency affiliation of the firefighters on the incident.

Federal Airtanker Base: Non-federally approved airtankers are approved to use, and load retardant at federal airtanker bases.

Contracting Oversight: No federal personnel may be assigned as a State Contract Officer's Authorized Representative (COAR) on a non-federally approved airtanker contract. No federal employee may be assigned to a position that exercises operational control of a non-federally approved airtanker.

Federal Aerial Supervision: Federal personnel may provide aerial supervision, including "lead profiles", to non-federally approved aircraft under existing standard procedures and agreements, only when operational control is maintained by the state or local agency. In the case of Very Large Airtankers (DC-10, 747ST), the leadplane or ASM providing aerial supervision must have received prior written approval for such operations from their respective agency.

In an emergency circumstance, where lives and property are immediately threatened, in the current burning period, by wildland fire on federal lands under federal protection, a local federal line officer may, with state concurrence, take operational control over state contracted airtankers if sufficient federal aircraft are not available to protect the public. The local federal line officer must obtain prior approval from their Fire Director, or Fire Director Designee. Any such use will be documented by the approving federal line officer, and the documentation will be forwarded to the agency national aviation headquarters within two weeks.

The following individuals are designated as approving officials for their respective Geographic Area:

<u>Primary Contact</u>		<u>Alternate</u>	
NR	Eddie Morris 406-329-4918	Allen Edmonds	406-896-2912
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The intent of this direction is to keep non-federally approved air tankers under the operational control of the sponsor agency. If needed, further clarification on these issues can be obtained from agency regional/national aviation and fire operations offices.

/s/ Tom Boatner
Chair, NMAC