



NOAA Aviation Safety Policy

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Outline



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- Purpose
 - Issue
 - Background & Discussion
 - Alternatives
 - Output
 - Recommendation



Purpose



- **Decision Briefing**
 - NOAA's Aviation Safety Policy
- **Desired Decision(s)**
 - NEP/NEC Approval of:
 - Revised Aviation Safety Policy ([Draft NOAA Administrative Order Version 6](#))
 - Interim Guidance ([draft memo](#))



Issue



- **NOAA's Draft Aviation Safety Policy (Version 5) presented to the NEC on June 15th was not approved**
 - It was noted that published NOAA Airworthiness Standard does not yet exist
 - Concern was raised that the NAO would remove safety controls established by NMAO as a result of the safety stand-down with respect to "flights of opportunity"
 - Version 5 of the NAO
 - Lacked the provision for NOAA personnel to travel on government aircraft;
 - Did not prohibit passengers on Privately Owned Aircraft (POA); and
 - Needed some minor editorial corrections
- **NMAO directed to draft an Interim Directive**
 - To serve as a transition between the current safety stand-down and the new policy implementation on October 1, 2006



Final Draft NAO (V6)



- **NOAA's Draft Aviation Safety Policy** (blue section references were published in draft NAO versions 4 & 5) presented to NEP on June 14 and NEC on June 15
 - Section 2.02c Excluded from the policy use of aircraft for movement of cargo but did not specifically state, “where no NOAA personnel fly on the aircraft”
 - *Editorial correction made to draft NAO version 6: Section 2.02c*
 - Section 6.01a2(b) authorized use of aircraft “operated by” other governmental agencies, but should have read “owned and operated by”
 - *Editorial correction made to draft NAO version 6: Section 6.01a2(b)*



Final Draft NAO (V6)



- **Section 6.01a2(c)** Authorized NOAA Personnel to fly on “Flights of Opportunity” without a safety review of those aircraft (Flight of Opportunity means an aircraft owned or operated by a non-NOAA entity upon which space is provided to NOAA personnel to conduct official NOAA business)
 - *Correction made to draft NAO version 6: removed Section 6.01a2(c) that authorized flights of opportunity without a safety review; and Appendix A definition for flights of opportunity*
- **Section 6.04** Did not have a provision authorizing use of government aircraft for travel
 - *Correction made to draft NAO version 6: reorganized Section 6.04 and added Section 6.04a authorizing travel on government aircraft*
- **Section 6.04a2** did not prohibit NOAA personnel from flying as a passenger on a POA operated by another NOAA employee or contractor for purposes of official travel
 - *Correction made to draft NAO version 6: reorganized Section 6.04 and added language to Section 6.04c to prohibit passengers on POA*



NOAA Airworthiness Standard



- **NOAA does not have a published airworthiness standard**
 - NMAO AOC is developing a document that will be used for NOAA and non-NOAA aircraft to standardize procedures for modifying aircraft
 - This document will be completed by October 1, 2006



Flights of Opportunity



- **Draft NAO (Version 4&5) Authorized NOAA Personnel to fly without a safety review of those aircraft**
 - The provision was included to allow “emergency response” activities in NOAA, where time is of the essence, and where it may not be possible to evaluate aircraft vendors in advance, to be conducted without interruption
 - Affected Programs include NOAA Hazmat, Fisheries Enforcement, NWS weather station equipment maintenance crews, and others who fly on aircraft provided by other entities such as the US Coast Guard, FAA, Oil Companies, etc.



Flights of Opportunity



- **Impact to NOAA HAZMAT (NOS OR&R) of removing this provision in the NAO:**
 - OR&R personnel respond on scene within hours of notification, and there is typically an immediate need for overflight observations. OR&R staff uses flights of opportunity on aircraft provided by the Responsible Party through local contractors. If OR&R personnel do not have the ability to fly on “flights of opportunity,” or a waiver cannot be obtained in a timely manner, time critical information about the location of the spill and the extent of environmental impacts will not be collected. Federal, state and local agencies rely on NOAA to provide this information to drive operational decisions.



Alternatives



- **Alternative #1**

- Flights of Opportunity without a safety review authorized (*no change*)
 - Pros – allows emergency responders to conduct business without consulting with NMAO
 - Cons – no safety review of the aircraft operators they fly with

- **Alternative #2**

- Flights of Opportunity not authorized
 - Pros – a safety review is conducted for all aircraft operators
 - Cons – may prohibit emergency responders from accomplishing their mission



Output



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- **NOAA Aviation Safety Policy (NAO V6)**
 - Eliminates provision for “flights of opportunity”
 - Allows travel on government aircraft
 - Does not allow passengers on POA aircraft flown for official NOAA business
 - **Interim Guidance memo**
 - Continues to restrict use of non-NOAA aircraft until the new policy can be implemented (October 1, 2006)



Recommendation



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- **Choose Alternative #2 (Approve Aviation Safety NAO Version 6 as presented)**
 - NMAO will work with the emergency responders to provide timely assistance
 - **Approve Interim Guidance memo**