

Bureau of Land Management

Aviation Plan

for

Farmington Field Office

2007

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I. Introduction

A. Purpose

The Farmington Field Office Aviation Plan has been developed to maintain a safe and consistent aviation management program. This plan is meant to be an operational document that has been developed with the needs and workload specific to both field offices. This plan builds on departmental aviation policy (D.M. 350-351) and tiers to the BLM-New Mexico State Aviation Plan.

B. Objectives

The objective of this Aviation Plan is to provide guidelines and polices for the safe, efficient and economical use of aircraft in the performance of the BLM mission. This plan defines the responsibilities and authorities for aviation duties in the field office. This plan defines local procedures and policy as they relate to aviation activities.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Farmington Field Office Manager

The Field Office Manager has the overall responsibility for the aviation program within the field office. This responsibility is generally delegated to an assistant, but that delegation does not absolve them from providing oversight to aviation activities that do occur within the field office.

B. Farmington Fire Management Officer (FMO)/Aviation Manager

The FMO has functional responsibilities in the following areas;

1. Develops local aviation procedures based upon DOI, AM and Federal Aviation Regulations policies and guidelines.
2. Develops the Aviation Plan for the Farmington Field Office. Reviews and updates annually or sooner if needed.
3. Coordinates aviation safety and operational training.
4. Conducts periodic reviews and evaluations of the overall aviation program and for specific projects where aviation resources are used.
5. Enforces aviation regulations and safety policies.
6. Reviews and approves project aviation plans.
7. Responsible for ensuring that all procedures are followed for all flights and projects requiring aviation resources.
8. Coordinates aviation activities between interagency partners, Taos Dispatch Center and Four Corners Interagency Dispatch.

9. Gives briefings to the Field Office Manager on changes in policy, regulations and other aviation subjects as necessary.

10. The Aviation Manager will maintain departmental issued Operational Procedure Memoranda (OPMs), Information Bulletins (IBs), Operational Guides (OGs) and the departmental manuals.

11. Process OAS-23's, Aircraft Use Reports.

12. Reconcile OPAC reports with OAS-23's for final payments to vendors.

C. Initial Attack Dispatcher, Four Corners Interagency Dispatch

The Initial Attack Dispatcher will;

1. Using the call-when-needed (CWN) source list, order and schedule aircraft using the Aircraft Rental Agreement (ARA) or through the Taos Dispatch Center for special use aircraft (exclusive use aircraft) for fire fighting.

2. Maintains an up-to-date aircraft source list of all aircraft on ARA.

3. Ensures that flight following is conducted on all mission specific flights. Ensures that all flights are documented and logs kept as per agency requirements.

4. Ensures that Automated Flight Following (AFF) procedures are followed on flights where AFF is installed and operational in the aircraft

5. Serves as an alternate Aviation Manager in conjunction with the Assistant Fire Management Officer during the absence of the primary Aviation Manager.

6. Ensures that all personnel working in Four Corners Interagency Dispatch are properly trained as aviation qualified dispatchers. Conducts on-the-job training or sends personnel to formalized aviation dispatch training.

D. Project Supervisor/Leader

The project supervisor/leader will be responsible for planning, coordinating and safely implementing the use of aircraft on projects where aircraft use is required. The Project Supervisor has the following responsibility. This includes those employees who serve as contract inspectors on projects that utilize aviation resources.

1. May serve as Aircraft Chief of Party (ACOP) on flights.

2. Fills out the project aviation safety plan and submits to the Aviation Manager within 10 days of the planned flight.

3. Provide necessary information to the Initial Attack Dispatcher so that the proper aircraft can be ordered for the flight. Not necessary on contracts

4. Provides for and ensures that personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn, for all flights requiring it.
5. Coordinates flight following between aircraft and Four Corners Dispatch.
6. Check pilot card and aircraft certificate prior to initial use.
7. Ensures that pilot and passengers receive a proper briefing before the flight.
8. Ensures that all logistical support for the flight is prepared and ready. This includes trained personnel (i.e. helitack qualified), supplies and equipment.
9. On conclusion of the flight, completes the Aircraft Use Report, OAS-23. Ensure that all signatures are obtained and that all forms are completely filled out. Sends one copy of the OAS-23 to Four Corners Interagency Dispatch for reconciliation, and one copy to the National Business Center-Aviation Management (AM) for vendor payment.
10. Responsible to see that flight operations proceed safely and has the authority to cancel any flight based on safety concerns.

III. General Policy

Aviation related needs, request, procedural matters, training, safety and questions for the Field Office should be routed through the Aviation Manager for review and action.

All special use flights will have a flight plan. For projects, a project aviation safety plan must be completed and approved. For point to point charter flights, an FAA flight plan will be filed with the nearest Flight Service Station.

All special use activities must be flight followed either by Four Corners Interagency Dispatch or through other approved means (i.e. AFF).

All personnel must be properly trained and qualified for the position that they are to serve in. The minimum qualification for any passenger on a special use flight is currency in the AM sponsored B-3, *Basic Helicopter/Airplane Safety*, coarse. Re-currency training in aviation safety is required every 3 years. This training is now available on-line on the AM web site. Helicopter qualifications are found in the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG). See OPM No. 01-04 for more information on specific information for the aviation users training program.

All flights with passengers will complete a passenger manifest. This copy of this manifest will be kept on the ground during all flights.

Only AM or Forest Service carded aircraft and pilots will be used for any flight. No exceptions will be allowed. All vendor aircraft and pilots will be certified by the FAA under 14 CFR, Part 121, 125, 127, 133, 135 or 137 as appropriate.

Smoking is not permitted on any aircraft.

Employees are not permitted to fly on restricted use aircraft (i.e. cargo only) unless authorized by their employing agency.

All emergencies, aviation incidents, near misses or accidents will be immediately reported to the Aviation Manager and documented on OAS-34, *SafeCom*.

All passengers on a flight will cooperate with the pilot at all times and not interfere with his duties especially during take-offs and landings. All passengers should always be on the look out for flight hazards and make them known to the pilot.

IV. Procurement of Vendor Aircraft.

A. Contracts

All aircraft use which is identified in the Annual Work Plan (AWP) which will accomplish a project within a specific time frame (i.e. Aerial spraying) and which cost in excess of \$25,000 will require a formal contract through the National Business Center-Aviation Management, Procurement Office. A procurement action will need to be started as soon as possible in order that AM can secure qualified vendors for the project.

All project work that includes the significant and reoccurring use of aircraft will be identified in the Annual Work Plan. At least 120 days of lead time is required by AM contracting before the start of the project.

All contract work will adhere to the same standards and guidelines as outlined in the AM manuals and regulations.

B. Aircraft Rental Agreement

AM maintains a list of carded aircraft and pilots that can be rented for short periods of time for special use activities and point to point travel. The AM source list is found on the AM home page www.oas.gov. Four Corners Interagency Dispatch has this list available.

The Aviation Manager and/or Initial Attack Dispatcher can assist in ordering any aircraft located on this list. If an employees wishes, they can fill out an Aircraft Flight Request/Schedule (9400-1) form and send it to Four Corners Interagency Dispatch for processing. A 5 to 7 day lead time is preferred in order to order and schedule the aircraft and pilot.

V. Pilots and Aircraft Requirements

A. Pilots

Only AM and/or Forest Service approved and carded pilots will be used on BLM flights. Pilots must be qualified and carded to fly the specific mission or project requested. The back side of the pilots card is the location where an employee can check to see if the pilot is approved for the specific type of mission that has been request. The pilot card will specify which aircraft and what type of mission the pilot is approved for.

Military pilots cannot be used without prior approval from the AM (refer to IB 94-1). In certain circumstances Air National Guard pilots may be use for certain special use activities. Prior approval from AM is always required. Contact the Aviation Manager for more information.

No Department of Interior (DOI) employees with a private pilots license will be authorized to fly any government mission as a pilot. This regulation doesn't include DOI employees hired specifically as pilots.

Some Bureaus within the department have the authority to use volunteer pilots and aircraft (i.e. Civil Air Patrol). See OPM No. 01-34 for more information on this regulation.

B. Aircraft

Only AM and/or Forest Service approved and carded aircraft will be used on BLM projects and missions.

All aircraft will have an AM or Forest Service certificate with the aircraft before it can be used on a BLM flight. This certificate must be checked prior to any use. All aircraft must be certified by the FAA, Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 135 or 137.

Military aircraft cannot be used without prior approval from the AM. Contact the Aviation Manager for more information on using military aircraft.

All aircraft must have the following equipment, as a minimum, on the aircraft;

- Fire extinguisher
- VHF-AM radio (victor)
- Seat belts: including shoulder harness type for front seat passengers
- Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT)
- First Aid Kit and survival gear

The location of this required equipment should be given to all passengers during the pilots safety briefing.

VI. Operating Standards

A. Point to point flights-non special use (direct from airport to airport)

All point to point flights will not be required to have in-flight, flight following. The correct procedure is for the pilot to file a FAA flight plan with the nearest Flight Service Station (FSS). Any deviation from the flight plan must be immediately reported to that FSS. On long distance flights requiring multiple stops within the Southwest Area, the pilot/chief of party will call the Taos Dispatch Center Aviation Dispatcher at each stop to inform them of the flights status. In flights crossing geographical area boundaries, the pilot/chief of party will call the 24 hour phone (see Nat'l Mob Guide) at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC).

Upon terminating the flight the pilot will notify the FSS and terminate the flight plan. The pilot/chief of party for the flight will call Taos Dispatch Center Aviation Dispatcher to verify that the aircraft has made its destination. Flights that require an over night stop, the pilot/chief of party will notify the Taos Dispatch Center Aviation Dispatcher that the flight has been terminated for the night.

All point to point aircraft flight requested will be done using the Aircraft Flight Request/Schedule

form (9400-1). This form is often called a “flight strip”.

B. Special Use Activities

All fire related flights will require a fire resource order be done as the requesting form for the flight. Any other activities which are considered special use (game counts, movement of material, etc.) will require a written aviation plan. This aviation plan will need prior approval of the Unit Aviation Manager.

Special use activities are the utilization of airplanes and helicopters in support of programs which are not point-to-point flight activities and which require special considerations due to their functional use. Aircraft and pilots shall be approved for each special use activity prior to use.

Employees engaged in special use activities must meet the training requirements outlined in the Aviation User Training Program (OPM No. 01-04).

Personal protective equipment may be required for special use activities. Policy and detailed information are outlined in the Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE) Handbook.

All special use activities in the Farmington area will be flight followed by Four Corners Interagency Dispatch or by other means as approved by the Aviation Manager.

All flights shall adhere to Visual Flight Rules (VFR) limitations.

C. Flight Following

Flight following on special use activities flights shall be required at a minimum of radio check-ins every 15 minutes. This check in is normally done with the Four Corners Interagency Dispatch. However, there may be cases in which this check-in may be done with a helibase or other approved method in the field. Prior approval of the Aviation Manager is required for this alternative.

Information required at the check-in is;

Current location, lat/long (Degrees, Minutes, Seconds) and a geographic location is desirable.

Aircraft heading (use magnetic compass on the aircraft)

Destination or what the aircraft is doing (i.e. Circling, etc.)

There may be areas in northwest New Mexico where there are dead spots of radio coverage. Prior to entering these areas, the pilot (or observer) will notify Four Corners Interagency Dispatch that the aircraft will be entering into a radio dead spot. The pilot will give the current location, heading and altitude. The pilot should provide the dispatcher of his intentions while in the dead spot (i.e. will be circling, turning, etc.). The pilot should also give an approximately time that the aircraft will be out of radio contact. Once back in contact, the pilot will immediately notify the dispatcher that they are back into radio contact.

Aircraft working on fires may be exempt from flight following. Contact is usually maintained with an air attack supervisor who tracks the aircraft as they come and go. Periodically the air

attack supervisor will notify the dispatcher of the status of various fire fighting aircraft on the incident.

All computers in the Four Corners Interagency Dispatch will have access to the Automated Flight Following System. Each dispatcher will be able to access and use this system to flight follow aircraft. The use of the AFF system will not supersede normal check-in procedures.

D. Helicopter Load Calculation

Load calculation will be done on all helicopter flights.

Load calculations will be done at every fuel stop, when passengers are dropped off or loaded on the helicopter, or when density altitude exceeds that which was last computed.

See the Interagency Helicopter Operating Guide for more information on doing load calculations.

VII Overdue Aircraft

Any aircraft which has not been accounted for within 30 minutes of the last scheduled check-in will be considered overdue. The following procedures will be initiated by the Aviation Dispatcher in the Four Corners Interagency Dispatch.

A. Phase I:

1. Follow procedures in the Interagency Aviation Mishap Response Plan.
2. Conduct a telephone search of all known airports, potential destinations, and the vendors home office.
3. Notify the Aviation Manager (1 505/ 751-4717 office or 1 505/ 770-1616 cell)
4. Continue to try and make radio and cell phone contact with overdue aircraft.
5. Contact Farmington FAA Control Tower to see if they can contact the aircraft.

B. Phase II

Phase II will start when the aircraft has been overdue for 1 hour after the last scheduled check-in. The following will be done at this point;

1. Notify the New Mexico State Police of the overdue aircraft.
2. Notify the FAA, Flight Service Station of the overdue aircraft.
3. Continue to try to contact the aircraft via radio or cell phone.
4. Contact the Field Office Manager.

C. Phase III

Phase III will start when the aircraft is 1 hour and 30 minutes overdue from the last scheduled check-in. The following will be done along with what has already been started.

1. Notify AM Aviation Safety Manager (1 888 /464-7427)
2. Notify the State Aviation Officer (1 505/ 438-7431)
3. Start filling out Aircraft Accident Report
4. Assign someone to work with the State Police as a liaison officer for subsequent activities.

For further information see the [Interagency Aviation Mishap Response Plan](#).

VIII Aircraft Mishap Notification and Reporting

All aircraft mishaps, mechanical problems, incidents, near misses and accidents will be reported to the proper personnel as soon after they occur as possible. These should be reported to the Four Corners Interagency Dispatch who will in turn notify the Aviation Manager and start the necessary follow-up. The Aviation Manager will notify the proper authorities and will assist in the filing reports and the *SafeCom*. If an investigation is needed the Aviation Manager will work the State Aviation Manager in requesting that.

See [Interagency Aircraft Mishap Response Plan](#) for details, names and phone numbers. A copy of this plan is available in the Four Corners Dispatch Office.

IX Aircraft Use Reports- OAS-23's

The OAS-23 document is a three part form used for recording aircraft use and as a record for payment to the aircraft vendor. All flights activities are paid for out of the Finance Center in Denver, Colorado. Accurate and prompt completion of this form is important if the vendor is to be paid in a timely manner.

The form is used for both fixed wing and rotor wing aircraft use.

Training in filling out the OAS-23 is available through AM. All personnel who are required to record aircraft time are required to complete this 2 hour course on filling out the OAS-23. This training course is now available through AM Aviation Training over the Internet.

Remember that the white copy must be sent to AM, the yellow copy to Four Corners Dispatch and the vendor retains the blue copy. The Initial Attack Dispatcher will retain the yellow copy to reconcile the payment with the OPAC billing statement.

The use of Forest Service form 122 is not permitted on any Department of Interior ordered flight. On any aircraft that is ordered under the ARA, the OAS-23 is the flight payment document that must be used. Using any other payment form will cause a delay in the vendor being paid. As a general rule, always ask the pilot which agency has the contract for the flight, then proceed with

using the appropriate document. If it is an exclusive use contract with the Forest Service, the FS-122 form will be appropriate to use.

X Flight Hazards, Military Training Routes, Restricted Airspace

A. Procedures

New Mexico has some of the most crowded airspace in the United States. Most of this traffic is from military operations from several Air Force Bases in the state. The following procedures will be followed to help reduce the potential conflicts between military aircraft and BLM flights.

1. All aircraft operations must refer to current Aeronautical Sectional Charts for New Mexico prior to operating, to insure that operations will not be in restricted or high hazard areas. It will be the pilots responsibility to check these charts during pre-mission planning. The aircraft chief of party will not allow the mission to proceed if there appears to be a unmitigated airspace conflict on the intended route.

2. The Four Corners Dispatch office will keep an up-to-date flight hazard map showing communications towers, transmission lines and other flight hazards. This map also shows Military Operating Areas (MOAs), Military Training Routes (MTRs), restricted and closed airspace. This office also has the latest copy of the AP-1B, Military Training Routes book and map. All these maps and books need to be consulted during the pre-mission planning stage of your flight. The dispatcher will provide assistance to this phase of mission planning.

3. If your flight plan does take you into a MOA or MTR, contact Four Corners Interagency Dispatch. The dispatcher can contact the military to see if the route or area is "active" and at what elevations and legs of the route need to be avoided. This procedure is called "de-confliction".

Note: It is important to realize that in some instances, a MOA or MTR may be inactive, (according to the military), but in fact, still may have military aircraft training occurring. Be vigilant while flying in these areas.

4. Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) will be requested through the Taos Dispatch Center. It is important to follow established procedures and policy on implementing and terminating any TFR on any incident. These can be found in the Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide

XI Aviation Training

All employees who participate in special use activities are required to take the AM sponsored B-3 course. This course has a currency requirement of 3 years. This currency training is now offered on-line at the AM web site.

Employees who participate regularly in aviation activities will need to take additional training. These training modules are available during AM sponsored Aviation Conference & Education (ACE) sessions or are available on the training link on the Internet, AM home page.

AM aviation training is not the same as NWCG sponsored fire and aviation training (S courses). NWCG courses will not substitute for AM sponsored courses. They are two different

curriculums that deal with course objectives that may be different from each other. Please see the Aviation Manager for further clarification.

All training will be documented in the employees Red Card file and in the Incident Qualifications & Certification System (IQCS). Employees will make copies of all certificates and turn them into the Four Corners Dispatch, who has custody of the Field Office Red Card files.

XII Violation of Policy and/or Regulations

Violation of national, state or local aviation policy and procedures will not be tolerated. Management may take disciplinary action against any employee who willfully disregards or knowingly violates aviation policy.

Any employee ordering an aircraft outside of normal ordering procedures and not within the scope of their authority may be held financially liable for any cost incurred by the government for that aircraft.

An employee who flagrantly ignores safety policy and procedures may be reprimanded and bared from working in future aviation activities by the agency.