

United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

Aviation Technical Alert

Number 2005-01

Date: August 26, 2005

Subject: Avionics Programming and Training

Issue: Some aircraft are operating on Federal wildland fires with the Guard frequency improperly programmed. This is a concern, because these radios may fail to receive emergency transmissions, or be able to communicate with a ground station.

Solution: The Guard frequency should be programmed in VHF-FM Aeronautical Radios as follows: Transmit and receive - 168.6250 with Tone 110.9 in transmit only, no tone in receive, and in the Narrowband (12.5 kHz) Mode. Aeronautical radios that are not narrowband compliant cannot be used. Aeronautical radio programming information can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/niicd/documents>.

Guard frequency is authorized for the following uses: (FSH 6609.14, 40.31)

1. Emergency air-to-air initial contact.
2. Emergency ground-to-air communications.
3. Initial call, recall and redirection (when no other communications are available).

Recommendation: The National Interagency Incident Communications Division Avionic Technicians recommend, and the National Aviation Management concurs, that hands-on avionic radio training is needed. We recommend that the training be conducted, but not limited to the following venues:

- Regional Helicopter Manager Workshops
- Air Attack National Workshop
- Leadplane Pilots Meeting
- Helicopter Operations Specialist Meeting
- SEAT Meeting/Training
- Inspector Pilot Workshop
- Dispatchers Workshops
- Other meetings/training with vendor pilots

We suggest that all regions review 2005-2006 training plans and include the subject training through the course of their winter and spring schedules.

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