



United States Department of the Interior
300 E. Mallard Dr., Suite 200
Boise, Idaho 83706

DOI OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM (OPM) - 26

Subject: Interim Department of the Interior (DOI) Policy for Continued Aviation Operations During the Transition to the U.S. Wildland Fire Service

Effective Date: April 8, 2026

Last Updated: Initial Distribution

Expiration: December 31, 2026

1. Summary of Changes.

No Changes.

2. Purpose.

This interim aviation policy establishes governance, operational standards, and safety protocols for all aviation activities consolidated under Secretary's Order (SO) 3448. This policy provides direction during the transition to a single, integrated aviation organization within the U.S. Wildland Fire Service (USWFS), ensuring continuity of mission-critical aviation support for wildfire suppression, resource protection, and emergency response. It aims to streamline processes, reduce redundancies, and align aviation operations with modernization objectives outlined in SO 3448, while maintaining compliance with federal regulations and departmental safety standards.

3. Authority.

This interim policy is established by the Deputy Director of Aviation Operations and Management, USWFS (formerly Director, OAS) in accordance with the provisions of Departmental Manual (DM) 112 DM 12, 350 DM 1; and Secretarial Order 3448 dated January 6, 2026. SO 3448 Sec. 7, Delegation; states, "This Order delegates all authority necessary to the Director, USWFS, to fulfill the Department's wildland fire mission, including any existing or future wildland fire related statutory authorities applicable to any DOI Bureau or Office." To the extent that this delegation may conflict with other delegations to Bureau and Office leadership with respect to wildland fire personnel or asset management, this delegation supersedes such contrary delegation.

4. Policy.

All DOI Aviation Operations will continue under the established DMs and Operational Procedures Memorandum (OPMs).

- A. Aviation Governance. Aviation governance will remain organized under the existing framework of the Executive Aviation Board, Executive Aviation Committee and Executive Aviation Subcommittee.

- B. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Aviation operations, including operations under local Agency and regional plans will be consolidated under the National Aviation Manual and Management Plan dated December 2017/February 2026, and Indian Affairs Manual 57 (IAM57) as well as all referenced standards, guides, handbooks, etc.
- C. Bureau of Land Management. Aviation operations will remain under the National Aviation Management Plan released via Instruction Memorandum FA-IM-2025-009 dated 3/24/2025 as well as all referenced standards, guides, handbooks, and applicable aviation policy. This interim policy suspends BLM requirement for annual revision of State and local aviation management plans.
- D. Office of Aviation Services. Aviation operations and oversight will remain under established DMs, OPMs, and Instructions as well as all referenced standards, guides handbooks, and applicable aviation policy.
- E. National Park Service. Policy and procedural guidance for aviation operations during the transition to the USWFS will continue under the direction of the DIRECTOR'S ORDER #60: AVIATION MANAGEMENT, Reference Manual (RM)-60 Aviation Management (September 2024), as well as all referenced standards, guides, handbooks, and applicable aviation policy.
- F. U.S Fish and Wildlife Service (wildland fire). Aviation operations will remain under the National Aviation Management Plan dated January 2025 as well as all referenced standards, guides, handbooks, and applicable aviation policy.
- G. DOI Bureau/Office aviation programs not unified under the USWFS. Aviation operations will remain under their existing national aviation leadership and doctrine; bureaus or offices without national aviation leadership shall adhere to established aviation policy and oversight framework.

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