AMD-25A
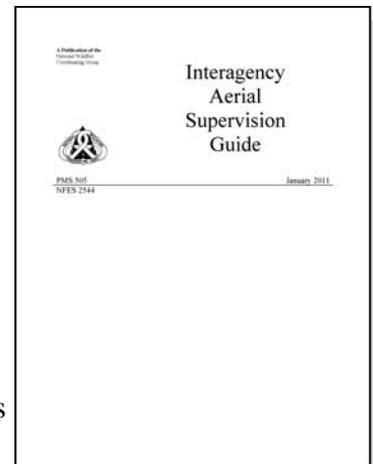(04/10)

Interagency Aviation
Safety Alert

Subject: Aerial Supervision

Area of Concern: Wildland Fire Aviation Operations

Distribution: All Aviation Users

Discussion: Several geographic areas are experiencing significant fire activity requiring multiple types of aircraft within confined Fire Traffic Areas (FTA). As a result, many challenges face proper aerial supervision during initial and extended attack incidents as it remains a key component to safe and effective aerial firefighting operations.

Several SAFECOMs have recently been submitted describing near misses, FTA procedure violations, and radio frequency congestion. The USFS, BLM, BIA, and NPS have all adopted the *Interagency Aerial Supervision Guide* (IASG) as policy (USFS exception: Air Tactical Group Supervisor training, qualifications, certification, and currency shall be governed by FS Handbook 5109.17 and PMS 310-1 vice Chapter 3 of the IASG). This document contains universal procedures which these organizations require on every incident to ensure aviation safety. It is the responsibility of all respective agency aerial supervisors to implement these procedures within the scope and description of their mission.

Key points to consider as an aerial supervisor:

Airspace Management (IASG p. 71-87)
Ensure all flight crews understand and follow FTA procedures (IASG p.45-47).
Give standardized briefings to incoming aircraft (IASG p.76 and 99).
Ensure vertical/horizontal aircraft separation (IASG p.82-85).
- Assign block altitudes.
- Establish hard ceilings for helicopters (MSL not AGL).
- Establish checkpoints/virtual fences.
- Sequence fixed/rotor traffic into target areas.
- Prioritize missions on complex fires and schedule non-critical missions for later in the operational period when air traffic is light.
- Ensure you properly account for speed of aircraft (e.g. very large airtanker versus single engine airtanker versus large airtanker, etc).

Maintain span of control
- Utilize Aerial Supervision Module, Leadplane, and Helicopter Coordinator.
- Establish Initial points/holding areas.
- Daisy chain helicopters as required.
- Stagger helicopter missions (fuel cycles) to ensure on scene coverage during critical ground operations.
- Hold aircraft at base. Remember - you control operational tempo.

Frequency Management (IASG p.41-44)
- Ensure radio frequencies are utilized efficiently as we are currently faced with a large demand for frequencies with limited supply however this should not prevent you from ordering more well in advance on emerging incidents when deemed necessary.
- Utilize separate fixed and rotor wing VHF frequencies on complex incidents.
- Utilize the additional tactical and air to ground frequencies assigned to Incident Management Teams to separate helicopter operations from other radio traffic.
- Order an additional air to air frequency on extended attack fires for transition briefings
- ABC radio transmissions - **A**ccurate, **B**old, and <u>**C**oncise</u>.

The Interagency Aerial Supervision guide can be ordered through the cache system (NFES 2544) and is also available online at http://www.nwcg.gov/pms/pubs/pms505.pdf

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