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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AVIATION MANAGEMENT



AVIATION ACCIDENT PREVENTION BULLETIN

No. APB 10-01

Date: June 11, 2010

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Subject: Safety and Aircraft Contracting Compliance

Area of Concern: GOM Oil Spill Operation

Distribution: All Aviation Users

Discussion: The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is impacting DOI and its bureaus in many ways. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mineral Management Service, National Park Service, and US Geological Survey are actively engaged in aviation operations on a daily basis. In the past week there have been two separate instances of aircraft being procured for Deepwater Horizon support outside of Departmental policy, raising the risk to the Department and potentially compromising the safety of DOI personnel.



In one case, contracted aircraft were performing special use missions without their pilots having been properly carded by AMD. In another incident, aircraft procured through outside departmental policy were involved in two near mid-air collisions within the congested Gulf of Mexico airspace environment. In both cases, the contracts lacked any aviation safety specifications AMD builds into its contracts to ensure the success of bureau missions and the safety of DOI personnel.

Despite the emergency created by this disaster, it's imperative we all recognize and follow established operational and administrative procedures. The following items should be considered when using aviation services in support of emergent natural resource missions necessitated by this disaster:

- ✓ **Before engaging contract resources to support the oil spill, ensure the contract is properly configured and the pilots are appropriately approved for the respective missions. Not all DOI contracts will contain the proper scope, technical requirements, or safety measures to meet the unique and potential mission requirements. Refer to 351 DM 2 (Aircraft Equipment and Maintenance) and 352 DM 4 (Cooperator Aircraft).**
- ✓ **Some agencies may be planning, requested, or directly tasked to perform operations outside of their normal operating environment. Know your capabilities, set limits and ensure communication channels are established for line personnel to report when they deem appropriate.**
- ✓ **Many local, state, and federal operations will be conducting aerial operations in close proximity to one another. Increased awareness of other aircraft and common radio frequencies will be required to avoid a mid air collision.**

- ✓ **Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) may also be in place in various areas. Ensure your operators are aware of where they are and the procedures for operating in and around these areas.**
- ✓ **Some crews may be unfamiliar with the gulf coast environments and degraded aircraft performance resulting from high humidity and high temperatures. Performance charts and related data should be readily available and used routinely.**
- ✓ **The distance from shore and type of aircraft operations should be considered as per the regulations to ensure safety in case of engine failure or other emergency.**

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Any questions concerning technical specifications, approval cards, or operational/safety issues specifically related to the Gulf of Mexico operations please contact the AMD Eastern Regional Office at (770) 458-7474.

Contractual questions regarding financial or Scope of Contract concerns, please contact the appropriate Aviation Management Contracting Officer.



/s/ Keith C. Raley

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