

1) Aerial supervision mission reminders:

- a) Check for air space restrictions and request a TFR if this has not been done.
- b) The VHF-FM radio has two volume switches. Turn both of them on. Things just won't work unless you do.
- c) Be "positive" in your communications. Hesitant or tentative messages lead to doubt and eventual mistrust.
- d) Stay calm. "Excited" voices from the sky lead to excited people on the ground and can contribute to panic where there isn't any need.
- e) Don't use "scare" terms such as "blowup" when the fire is making a "run." Relates to #3 above.
- f) Establish and maintain control of the air operations and radio communications. If everyone starts talking, no one hears anything.
- g) Keep an action log. Make notes pertaining to ETA's, "turn-around" times, flying times left, drop placement and effectiveness, airtanker performance, etc.
- h) Note and record: fuel types, natural barriers, ground/flight hazards and access routes even if they don't affect suppression activities now. These items may become important as the day goes on.
- i) Be alert for the development of dangerous situations and intense fire behavior that may threaten ground resources. Advise or alert the Incident Commander or Operations Section Chief as appropriate. If you are unable to contact these individuals and the situation is becoming critical, contact affected line personnel directly.
- j) Spot fires – be alert – don't forget the flanks and heel (toe) of the fire. Wind direction changes and so does the convection column. Look for spot fires downwind and under the "trail" of the convection column. If the column shifts, look where it "was". There can be "sleepers" lying around out there.
- k) Be specific when describing locations on the ground. "Next to the big tree" or "right by those red rocks" doesn't mean much to anyone on the ground or in the air when they're looking at acres and acres of trees and rocks.
- l) Don't use compass references when describing locations on the fire. The 'northeast corner' may be the 'southwest corner' to the guy on the ground. Use fire anatomy terminology such as 'head', 'right flank', 'left shoulder', etc.
- m) Observe retardant and helicopter bucket drops. Check with Operations on

- placement and effectiveness. Make corrections as needed.
- n) Be in position to observe drops. You can't correct the location of the next drop if you didn't see where the previous one hit.
 - o) Watch the helicopter bucket drops closely. It's hard to see water/foam once it's released and even harder to see it once it's on the ground.
 - p) As the day (and the fire) heats up, short term retardant begins to lose its effectiveness much faster than long term retardant.
 - q) Keep feeding information to Operations or the Incident Commander. You are the best pair of 'eyes' they have.
 - r) Establish standard fire traffic area check-in procedures for all incoming aircraft (12 nautical miles out).
 - s) Set up a staggered 'turn-around' for airtankers. Don't 'stack' airtankers for long periods of time. This results in wasted money and flight time you may wish you had later on in the day.
 - t) Maintain separation of aircraft and aviation operations. Large airtankers and helicopters don't share the same air space at the same time without shedding parts.
 - u) Don't waste time between arriving airtankers. Establish priorities, take another 'look' at the last trouble spot and anticipate the next trouble spot. Be ready for the inbound airtanker; don't waste its time. Line up the drop with the leadplane. The longer an airtanker orbits, the longer it takes to return with the next load. Retardant doesn't do anybody any good orbiting in a tank.
 - v) Don't get 'bent-out-of-shape' if Operations or the Incident Commander changes your priorities. It's their fire and you work for them. Make your recommendations and then 'get on with it'.
 - w) Airtanker pilots will do almost anything to put the retardant where it's needed. Don't let a sense of urgency influence you and/or them into doing something that might get someone killed.
 - x) Don't get 'up-tight' if a pilot refuses a mission. He/she knows what they and the aircraft can do safely.
 - y) Get to know the aircraft and pilots on the incident. Assign the "tough jobs" to those who can accomplish it.
 - z) Visit with lead plane and airtanker pilots. Questions and/or problems are easier to

work out on the ground than in the air.

- aa) If it's clear that one of your airtankers/helicopters is going to run out of flight time before the end of the shift, get another resource ordered. Don't wait until it becomes a 'crisis' to order additional resources.
- bb) When the need for or the effectiveness of air operations is questionable, recommend shutting down operations to the Operations Section Chief or Incident Commander.
- cc) It is your responsibility to monitor the effectiveness of incident air operations. Part of that is the effectiveness of the retardant itself. If the drops are placed correctly and it still isn't doing any good, advise Operations or the Incident Commander. Shift targets or shut down all or part of the air operation.
- dd) When you do shut down air operations, make sure everyone 'gets the word' including Operations, the Incident Commander, dispatch and assigned aviation resources. Airtankers have been known to make 'one more trip'.
- ee) On large incidents or during extended attack, you and/or the relief should attempt to attend the evening planning meeting to provide input on today's operations and to better understand tomorrow's incidents needs and objectives.
- ff) Provide for adequate rest for yourself and your pilot. During periods of prolonged activity, cumulative fatigue will catch up with you.
- gg) Advise Operations or the Incident Commander of your remaining flight time. He/she needs to know how long they can count on you.
- hh) Don't go home until released by Operations or the Incident Commander. You work for them and it's reasonable to expect they want their money's worth.
- ii) News media aircraft (particularly helicopters) may appear out of nowhere. They can, and should be accommodated, but you are responsible to manage incident airspace. Control them and let them in when it is safe. If there are airtanker operations in progress, contact the media on the assigned air-to-air frequency and instruct them to orbit at an assigned altitude and/or location. Permit media aircraft to move in closer 'to the action' when it is safe to do so.
- jj) Follow up and recommend lifting the temporary flight restriction (TFR) when the scope of air operations makes it prudent to do so.
- kk) Air operations are expensive. Manage aviation resources effectively and efficiently. Shut down air operations when they are ineffective.
- ll) Watch out for hazards in flight patterns and drop runs. Watch out for tall trees

(snags), towers and turbulence in saddles, canyons and the lee-side of ridges. Coordinate the use of reconnaissance aircraft from the local jurisdiction and/or recon flights with agency managers.

mm) Don't throw up on the upholstery in the aircraft. Pilots don't have that much of a sense of humor.

mn) You are not a lookout! Do not assume responsibilities beyond the scope of your job description.

2) **Span of control:** Ensuring mission safety requires aerial supervision personnel to selectively apply a combination of methods which maintain span of control of aircraft **over** an incident. The methods include but are not limited to:

- a) Compliance with aerial supervision policy.
- b) Use of the Fire Traffic Area (FTA) with established ingress and egress routes.
- c) Assigning holding areas with common communications and a single point of contact.
- d) Assigning helicopters to a common tactical assignment with a single point of contact.
- e) Using virtual fences based on geographic features.
- f) Sequencing and rotating of aircraft from airtanker and helicopter bases to a safe level for the operation being conducted

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