



# BLM AVIATION

# TACTICAL TIMES

## A SINGLE ENGINE AIRTANKER NEWSLETTER



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1      MAY 25, 2012

### NOTES FROM THE PROGRAM MANGER

The 2012 Fire Season is upon us and I wanted to share some thoughts on what **Professionalism** means to me relative to the SEAT program. **Service-** the reason this program exists is to support the fire fighters in their efforts protecting our communities and natural resources. This can be accomplished by placing **Safety** foremost in our decision making processes. Another element of Professionalism in the SEAT program is **Efficiency**. This is accomplished by focusing our operations on ways to employ an effective fire fighting tool as successfully and adeptly as possible.

How do we achieve this? I believe the foundation of professionalism starts with each of us; it starts with the individual SEAT manager, Pilot, Loader and Owner. If each of us finds ways to improve on our performance, each and every day, then as a program we can achieve, maintain and expand our individual professionalism to the SEAT program nationwide.

In the end, how people view the SEAT program depends on each of us and how we apply ourselves in the **Service** of fire fighters by **Safely** and **Efficiently** supporting their efforts this fire season.



I want to thank each of you in advance for your efforts this fire season to make it another safe and productive year.

Thank You

*Fly Safe - Operate Safe.*

*Glen Claypool*

BLM National SEAT Program Manager

### 2011 STATISTICS

- 6,737 Total flight hours throughout the US
- 4,180 hours of the total were flown in Texas
- 4,667 days of Availability
- 154,946 miles logged on service trucks
- SEAT pilots were extended 7,413 hrs
- Service truck drivers were extended 7,442 hrs.
- 705,414 gallons of retardant was pumped into other companies airplanes

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### CONTRACT CONSIDERATIONS— TIPS ON PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Contractor Performance evaluations are a critical element of this programs goal of continuous improvement. This is done by communicating with SEAT contractors on how they have performed. Performance issues must be addressed as they occur. Effective communication means that there should be no surprises

when the evaluation is complete. Some tips to consider. **1.** Ask for input from the field. Check with the ATGS, ground personnel and dispatchers. **2.** Try to provide examples of why you rated the vendor the way you did. (both high and low ratings) **3.** Evaluations must be completed at the end of your assignment

and sent directly to the Contracting Officer.

Evaluations can be sent to:  
 DOI NBC Acquisition  
 Attn: Tina Young  
 300 E. MALLARD DRIVE,  
 SUITE 200  
 BOISE, IDAHO 83706-3991  
 (208)-433-5021

Or Email to:  
 Tina\_L\_Young@nbc.gov

A Publication of the  
National Wildfire  
Coordinating Group

## Interagency SEAT Operations Guide

PMS 506 May 2011  
NFES 18844

## POLICY- WIND LIMITATIONS

During the course of every fire season SEAT Operations encounter challenging flight conditions because of poor weather.

One area in particular is Wind.

The 2011 ISOG (Ch 5 IIA) States: SEAT operations shall cease when the SEAT pilot, Aerial Supervisor, or Lead plane has been notified that there are sustained

winds greater than 30 knots at the fire operations area, or that the wind gust spread exceeds 15 knots in the fire operations area. This does not prevent a decision to cease operations when any unsafe or inefficient conditions are present. This limitation in no way supersedes any aircraft or pilot operational restrictions.

Communication in these circumstances are critical.

SEAT managers need to ensure that current weather information is distributed to flight crews. Additionally SEAT managers need to ensure that updates on changing weather conditions are shared between pilots, air base managers, dispatchers and fire managers so that appropriate risk decisions can be made at the appropriate level when conditions change.

### 2011 SAFECOM's

#### 49 Total

- 28 Maintenance
- 3 Management
- 1 Airspace
- 1 [Incident with Potential](#)
- 16 Hazards

## SEAT MANAGER REMINDERS

Last year the National SECO began requesting that SEAT managers submit their flight hours each day. For 2012 this requirement will continue, however we will now require that SEAT managers submit the Daily Operations worksheet ([SEAT-002](#)) each day. The ISOG requires that the daily operations worksheet be completed at the completion of each shift. This form cap-

tures information that will allow the National SECO to keep accurate use statistics and provide current information when NMAC needs to make asset allocation and reallocation decisions. Additionally we are asking that SEAT managers indicate if the fires where under the USFS operational control. This is important information that will assist the USFS require-

ment to compile data on which USFS fires had retardant dropped on them.

The SEAT Daily Operations Worksheet can be either sent in by Fax or electronically to:  
**National SECO Desk**  
**1-208-387-5419 (Office)**  
**1-208-850-2780 (Cell)**  
**1-208-387-5199 (Fax)**  
**Email-**  
[ilmfcopdsp60@blm.gov](mailto:ilmfcopdsp60@blm.gov)

### 2011 SAFECOM's by State

- 10 Texas
- 9 Arizona
- 7 Oregon
- 7 Idaho
- 5 Nevada
- 4 Montana
- 4 Utah
- 2 Colorado
- 1 New Mexico

## SAFETY-SAFECOM's- [www.SAFECOM.GOV](http://www.SAFECOM.GOV)

**What the SAFECOM system IS:** The Aviation Safety Communiqué (SAFECOM) AMD-34/FS-5700-14 should be used to report any condition, observation, act, maintenance problem, or circumstance with personnel or the aircraft that has the potential to cause an aviation-related mishap. SAFECOMS are a tool used to identify,

document, track, and correct safety related issues.

**What the SAFECOM system IS NOT:** It is NOT intended for initiating punitive actions, NOT to be used as a complaint system or for personal attacks, NOT used by contracting officers for contract evaluations/award purposes, NOT a substitute for "on-the-spot" corrections to a

safety concern, Does NOT replace the requirement for initiating an accident or incident report.

Remember, a core element of a safety culture is our ability to communicate with other professionals in our business. The SAFECOM is our way of documenting and communicating safety concerns.



## BLM SEAT PROGRAM

BLM National Aviation Office  
3833 South Development Avenue  
Boise ID, 83705

Phone: 208-387-5160

MORE INFORMATION ON THE SEAT PROGRAM IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEB AT

[WWW.BLM.GOV/NIEC/ST/EN/PROG/FIRE/AVIATION/AIOPS/SEAT.HTML](http://WWW.BLM.GOV/NIEC/ST/EN/PROG/FIRE/AVIATION/AIOPS/SEAT.HTML)

**PROFESSIONALS SERVING FIRE FIGHTERS SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY**

### How to Properly Refuse Risk (Aviation)

Every individual (government and contracted employees) have the **right and obligation** to report safety problems affecting his or her safety and has the right to contribute ideas to correct the hazard. In return, supervisors are expected to give these concerns and ideas serious consideration. **When an individual feels an assignment is unsafe, he or she also has the obligation to identify, to the degree possible, safe alternatives for completing that assignment.** Turning down an assignment is one possible outcome of managing risk.

A “turn down” is a situation where an individual has determined that he or she cannot undertake an assignment as given and is unable to negotiate an alternative solution. The turn down of an assignment must be based on an assessment of risks and the ability of the individual or organization to control or mitigate those risks. Individuals may turn down an assignment because of safety reasons when:

1. There is a violation of regulated safe aviation practices.
2. Environmental conditions make the work unsafe.
3. They lack the necessary qualifications or experience.

Individuals will directly inform their supervisor that they are turning down the assignment as given. The most appropriate means of documented turn down criteria is using the **Aviation Watch Out Situations** (page 17 IRPG).

Proper handling of turn downs provides accountability for decisions and initiates communication of safety concerns within the incident organization.

Entire document on refusing risk can be found at <http://www.wildfirelessons.net/documents/>

## RETARDANT LINES OF THOUGHT-REFRACTOMETER READING

SEAT managers are required to sample retardant at base openings, closings, with each new shipment and as part of periodical assurance checks.

The following test procedures are included as a pre-season review

1. Retardant concentrates must be diluted before obtaining a reading. Use the mix ratio approved for the specific product
2. Place a small drop of test product onto the prism glass of the refractometer using the plastic applicator. Use caution when using an applicator other than the one pro-

vide with the refractometer as the prism can be easily scratched. This will affect the accuracy and ease of use of the instrument.

3. Close the cover on the prism.
4. Hold the refractometer with the covered prism pointing to a strong light source.
5. Look through the eyepiece and read the number at the interface of the light and dark sections of the scale.
6. If the color through the eyepiece is so diffuse that there is no line (not enough sample) or the entire view is dark (too much sample), remove the sample from the

prism and try again.

7. Remove the sample from the prism by rinsing with clean water and carefully drying the prism with a clean lab wipe.
8. Occasionally it is not possible to read the sample. This is usually because it is too concentrated.
9. Record the refractometer reading.
10. Compare the obtained reading to the approved range or correlation scale for the specific product to determine quality or approximate



[Assessment of Seven Different Refractometer's for evaluating Wildland Fire Chemicals](#)