

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
2013 AVIATION PLAN



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Unit Aviation Officer Date

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District Manager Date

I. Objective

This Plan provides the Albuquerque District (ADO) employees with guidelines for aircraft acquisition and use within this office. This document clarifies, and is not meant to duplicate policies or information readily available in other manuals, handbooks and guides except where it pertains to local procedures. It would be beneficial for those employees considering aircraft acquisition within the Albuquerque District to become familiar with the references listed below under Guidance or contact your District Aviation Manager.

II. Policy

All BLM aviation operations within the Albuquerque District will be conducted efficiently and safely. This will be achieved through utilization of sound aviation management practices. Key components of aviation safety include proactive hazard identification, application of risk management techniques, and an active accident prevention program.

III. Guidance

- A. Departmental Manual 350-354, "Aviation Policy" (1996, with updates)
- B. BLM Manual 9400 Series "Aviation Management" (1999)
- C. BLM National Aviation Plan (updated annually)
- D. BLM New Mexico State Aviation Plan 2010
- E. DOI-AM Operational Procedures Memoranda (OPMs) (updated annually)
- F. Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (2009)
- G. Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide (2003)
- H. Interagency Air Tanker Base Operations Guide (2007)
- I. Interagency Helicopter Rappel Guide (2006)
- J. Interagency Aerial Ignition Guide (2004)
- K. Interagency Single Engine Air Tanker Operations Guide (updated annually)
- L. Southwest Area Interagency Single Engine Air Tanker Operating Plan
- M. Federal Aviation Regulations (14 CFR)
- N. BLM Safety & Health for Field Operations Handbook 1112-2
- O. Aviation Life Support Equipment Handbook (2008)
- P. Interagency Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials Handbook/Guide (2005)
- Q. DOI Field Reference Guide for Aviation Users (2006)
- R. Interagency Aviation Training Guide (2006)
- S. Interagency Aerial Supervision Guide (2009)
- T. Interagency Smoke Jumper Pilots Operations Guide (2008)
- U. 2008 System Safety Aviation Guide
- V. Current BLM Instruction Memoranda and Information Bulletins relating to aviation

IV. RESPONSIBILITY.

District Manager - Is responsible for the overall aviation management program in the Field Office; appoints an Aviation Manager who coordinates the Office's aviation program and provides employees guidance and direction on all aviation matters within the District. The District Manager is **Edwin Singleton**

District Aviation Manager - The Aviation Manager develops, implements, and evaluates the

Aviation Program; develops District aviation guidelines, policy, and procedures for the acquisition and use of all aircraft; coordinates all requests for aircraft acquisition and use for District projects. The designated Aviation Manager for the Albuquerque District is **Todd Richards**.

Field Office Managers and Supervisors - The responsibility for ordering aircraft is delegated from the District Manager to the Aviation Manager and the Albuquerque Dispatch Center (ABD) and Silver City Dispatch Center (SDC). The District Aviation Manager is responsible for ensuring that employees receive training commensurate with assigned aviation activities and are responsible for recognizing and eliminating aviation hazards in their programs.

Designated Flight Dispatchers - Designated flight dispatchers for the Albuquerque District operate from ABD and SDC. These individuals are to be trained in the proper procedures for flight following and procedures used in the Aviation Incident/Accident Response Guide for aircraft emergencies.

Under the direction of the Aviation Manager and Albuquerque and Silver City Dispatch Managers the dispatch centers will be responsible for flight tracking charter/rental aircraft flights. Under Special Use flight requirements scene of action flight following may be used by the project flight manager. This scene of action flight following will be coordinated with designated aviation dispatcher at Albuquerque or Silver City Dispatch. **Dispatch has the final flight tracking responsibility.**

Under the direction of the Aviation Manager, Albuquerque and Silver City Dispatch Centers will be responsible for maintaining the Aviation Incident/Accident Response Guide and hazard maps, which are updated yearly.

Flight Manager - Each flight or aviation project will have a designated Flight Manager, whether the flight is under the operational control of the BLM or another agency.

The Flight Manager is given primary responsibility to see that the flight or project is conducted safely and efficiently. The Flight Manager ensures that regulatory and administrative procedures are followed properly. Flight Managers are required to have specific training depending on the aircraft used and mission. Training requirements are found in *DOI-AM OPM No. 06-04*.

Passengers and Aviation Users - Are required to maintain currency in the training required for the aviation activities they are involved in. Are required to check **DOI - Aviation Management Directorate (AMD)** issued pilot qualifications cards, aircraft data cards, or other administrative approval documents prior to the start of a project. Failure by the pilot or vendor to produce proper documentation will result in immediate cessation of operations until qualifications are determined.

All Employees - are responsible for ensuring aviation activities are conducted safely, according to policy, and within the scope of their employment. **Every employee should take steps to halt any aviation operation that is unsafe.** Every employee observing an unsafe activity is required to report it.

V. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR AIRCRAFT USE.

A. There are two types of flights, Point-to-Point flights and Special Use Activities.

1. Point-to-Point Flights – Flights between airports (excluding operations defined in 351 DM 1 as Special Use) for which the route of flight is determined only by the pilot(s) based on navigational requirements.

2. Special Use Activities – Operations involving the utilization of airplanes and helicopters in support of DOI programs which are not point-to-point flight activities and which require special considerations due to their functional use. This may require deviation from normal operating practices where authorized by AMD. Special pilot qualifications and techniques, special aircraft equipment and personal protective equipment are required to enhance the safe transportation of personnel and property

All Special Use Activities except for fire suppression missions require the District Manager's approval and signature on the Special Use Project Plan.

A Special Use Project Plan must be completed for each mission. See *Appendix A*. Special Use activities have specific Personal Protective Equipment requirements. Refer to *Section VII*, for specifics.

Special Use activities require that the pilot and aircraft be approved by AMD for that specific activity. The Pilot Qualification Card and Aircraft Data Card will indicate this.

BLM Volunteers are not allowed to participate in special use activities, since these missions are considered more hazardous.

Due to the low level component of Special Use activities a detailed briefing between the Aviation Flight Manager and the Pilot will be documented and include an **analysis of known hazards** within the operational area. **During flight operations a high level recon will be conducted prior to any low level special use operations.**

B. Other Aircraft Acquisitions

1. United States Forest Service (USFS) aircraft and pilots can be used provided they meet AMD/Department of Interior (DOI) flight requirements. The USFS pilot and aircraft qualifications are nearly the same as AMD/DOI qualifications.

2. Other federal government agency aircraft outside of the DOI may be used provided AMD/DOI flight requirements are met and appropriate agreements (MOU's) are in place.

3. Military Aircraft can only be used when private vendors are not available or cannot accomplish the mission. Cost can NOT be a consideration for using military aircraft. Employees should contact the Aviation Manager regarding military aircraft use. Employees cannot solicit use of military aircraft. Special AMD permission is required.

4. Private and state aircraft, not under charter or rental agreement by AMD, cannot be used unless pilot and aircraft meet AMD/DOI flight requirements. Special AMD permission is required.

5. Law Enforcement: see *NM State Aviation Plan Section VIII*.

6. Other Agency and Non-carded aircraft and pilots: See *NM State Aviation Plan Section X*.

C. Training Requirements

General Use: Passengers on general use flights are not required to have any aviation training. However, a 10-15 minute passenger briefing is required from the pilot. The Aviation Flight Manager ensures that the pilot covers all the topics covered on the Flight Request Continuation Sheet.

Training for Special Use Activities: Refer to DOI-AMD Operational Procedures Memoranda (OPMs) 4 for required aviation activity training matrix.

http://amd.nbc.gov/library/opm/FY2009/OPM_09-04.pdf

Special Use: Training for all passengers on Special Use Flights (non-fire low level and general helicopter use) are the same as for Aviation Manager designates.

Additional training specific to that activity is required if the aircraft use involves unusual applications such as helicopter sling loading, low level fire reconnaissance, aerial ignition or animal control work.

Additional training information for aircraft utilization can be found in *PMS 310-1 Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualifications System Guide* (fire aviation related training) and at [Interagency Aviation Training](#) which covers all other aviation training.

V. PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING AIRCRAFT.

See *Appendix A* for suggested outline of Project Aviation Safety Plan requirements. All requests for official aircraft use need to be submitted to the Aviation Manager at least two weeks prior to the flight date. This ensures that the proper aircraft can be obtained in a timely manner. A minimum of two weeks is also necessary for securing proper clearance for use of other than DOI charter/rental aircraft. In some cases, AMD will have to inspect the aircraft and pilot qualifications to ensure compliance with AMD regulations.

VI. FLIGHT MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES.

The Flight Manager has primary responsibility for ensuring that the following documentation is completed and that proper procedures are followed:

Check for AMD or USFS issued pilot and aircraft qualification cards prior to the start of the flight(s). If pilot or aircraft do not have the current qualification/data cards, or if the aircraft and/or pilot are different than what was ordered, contact the Aviation Manager immediately. **DO NOT PROCEED WITH THE MISSION UNTIL THE AVIATION MANAGER IS CONTACTED.**

Aircraft Use Report Form AMD-23 - The Flight Manager ensures that this form is completed correctly before being processed by the District Aviation Manager for payment. A copy of the instructions for filling out this form is on the inside cover of the Aircraft Use Report book. In some circumstances the pilot will carry the proper payment forms (AMD-23) which will require

the initials of the Flight manager to verify proper entry of times and codes.

The Form AMD-23 must be processed within **3 working days** in order to avoid late payment charges.

VII. AVIATION LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT (ALSE)

Both BLM and non-BLM employees will wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as required, See 351 DM 1 Aviation Life Support Equipment Handbook.

VIII. DISTRICT INCIDENT AND ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

The District has an established Aircraft Crash, Search, and Rescue Guide in place located at ABC and SCD which defines procedures for handling aircraft incidents or accidents. Definitions and procedures for flight tracking, overdue and missing aircraft are identified in the **Pre-Accident Plan** also located at the Dispatch Centers.

IX. Flight Hazards, Military Training Routes, Restricted Airspace

Albuquerque District has a complex variety of flight hazards, military airspace and restricted airspace requiring complex flight planning and coordination. The District Aviation Manager **must be** consulted in flight planning and scheduling aircraft within the District.

A. Flight hazards

Elevations within the Albuquerque Zone and Gila-Las Cruces Zone range from approximately 4,000 to 11,000 feet. Daytime summer temperatures range from approximately 70 to 110 degrees. Therefore, density altitude is one of the greatest hazards within the Zones.

Other known hazards include:

- High voltage power lines
- Communication and MET towers throughout the District
- Commercial and private aircraft jetport (Albuquerque International Sunport)
- High velocity and erratic winds with frequent downbursts
- Multiple military training routes and large military operating areas within the Zones.

B. Procedures

The ADO has several low altitude Military Training Routes (MTRs). Much of this traffic is from low-level military jet operations and occurs from treetop heights to 1,000 feet AGL. Military aircraft **do not** have radio contact and **are not** under radar surveillance. **IT IS A SEE AND BE SEEN SITUATION.** The following procedures will be followed to help reduce the potential conflicts between military aircraft and BLM flights.

1. All aircraft operations must refer to current Aeronautical Sectional Charts for New Mexico prior to operating to insure that potential known hazards are identified. It will be the pilots' responsibility to check these charts during pre-mission planning. The aircraft flight manager will not allow the mission to proceed if there appears to be an unmitigated airspace conflict on the intended route. Always keep in mind that military aircraft can occur in any area within the ABD.
2. The ABD and SCD will keep an up-to-date known aerial hazards map showing communications towers, transmission lines and other flight hazards. This map also shows

Military Operating Areas (MOAs). Military Training Routes and restricted airspace. Albuquerque District utilizes Sectional Aeronautical Charts provided and updated by New Mexico State BLM Office twice a year.

3. Any flights east of the Rio Grande River in Socorro County and south needs airspace deconfliction for Whites Sands Missile Range and pilot contact with Cherokee Control upon entry and exit of the missile range. VHF frequency 126.95 or UHF frequency 294.2. Phone # 575-678-8000. See *SW Mobilization Guide 24.17.2*.
4. Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs) will be requested through ADC or SDC when it is appropriate. It is important to follow established procedures and policy on implementing and terminating any TFR for any incident. These can be found in the *Interagency Airspace Coordination Guide*.
5. Any sightings of low-flying jets must be reported to ADC or SDC They will promptly notify all other agency aircraft operating in the area. Reports should include approximate altitude above the terrain, location, direction of travel and type of aircraft.

APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS OF A PROJECT AVIATION SAFETY PLAN

Each Special Use Mission will have a Project Aviation Safety Plan completed. One-time, noncomplex Special Use Missions may utilize the “Hazard Analysis and Dispatch/Aviation Manager Checklist” Form for this purpose. A written Project Aviation Safety Plan will consist of the following:

1. Flight Manager. Identify a qualified Flight Manager to oversee the project.
2. Project Name and Objectives. Brief description of the project and its objectives.
3. Justification. Indicate why the project will require the use of aircraft in Special Use Flight conditions/environments and list any practical alternatives for completion of the project.
4. Project Dates. Dates project will begin and end. These may be approximate.
5. Location. Enter descriptive location and include a map clearly showing area where flights will be made; known aerial hazards must be clearly indicated (see 11. below).
6. Projected cost of Aviation Resources. Enter cost coding, projected flight hours and cost, projected miscellaneous expenses (overnight charges, service truck mileage, etc.), and total estimated cost of project.

7. Aircraft. Identify company that owns the aircraft to be used, registration number, aircraft type, and missions for which aircraft is approved.

8. Pilot. If known, identify pilot(s), and the missions they are qualified for.

9. Participants. List individuals involved in flights, their qualifications (Flight Manager, passenger, etc.), and include individuals' project responsibilities. Also, include names of any non-BLM passengers.

10. Flight Following and Emergency Search and Rescue. Dispatcher or Unit Aviation Manager identifies check-in procedures, including time/locations, dispatch office involved, individuals responsible for flight following, frequencies to be used, and any special circumstances (Memorandum of Agreements, Military Travel Routes, etc.). When local (on-site) flight following is approved, ground personnel must have contact with dispatch to allow timely reporting of any accidents, incidents, hazards, or problems encountered.

11. Aerial Hazard Analysis. The Flight Manager and the Unit Aviation Manager or Dispatcher will jointly develop a Known Aerial Hazard map. Flights made in confined areas, such as in canyons, require a prior ground and/or aerial survey of hazards. A copy of the Known Aerial Hazard Map will be provided to the pilot prior to any project flights. Other coordination which may be required includes establishing TFRs on wildfires and deconfliction of Special Use Airspace with military authorities.

12. Aviation Life Support Equipment/Personal Protective Equipment. Identify the equipment necessary for the particular operation.

13. Load Calculations and Weight-and-Balance. The pilot is responsible for the accurate completion of load calculations (helicopters) and weight-and-balance (all aircraft). Unit Aviation Managers shall ensure that aircrafts chosen are capable of performing the mission(s) safely. For helicopter flights, a load calculation showing expected conditions of altitude, temperature, and weight shall be included in the Plan. The Flight Manager will ensure that passenger manifests and load calculations are completed.