

INTERAGENCY HELICOPTER OPERATIONS GUIDE
Chapter 1 - Introduction

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.

- I. **Objectives.** The objectives of the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) are to:
- Promote safe, cost-efficient and effective aviation services in support of agency and interagency goals and objectives.
 - Define and standardize national, interagency helicopter management and operational procedures for helicopter users from participating agencies.
 - Through standardization, facilitate the ability of personnel from different agencies to work cooperatively on incidents or projects.
 - Provide a common, interagency approach in the Government's relationship with helicopter vendors.
 - Provide a framework within which Areas, Regions, States, and local units can provide supplemental, site-specific guidance.
- II. **Scope.** The procedures contained in this guide apply to helicopter operations conducted by providers and users of helicopters from participating agencies. The guide addresses both incident and project helicopter operations.



IMPORTANT NOTE The contractual relationship between the vendor and government is key to successful helicopter operations. There may be discrepancies between direction found in this guide and applicable helicopter contract language. When discrepancies arise, the current helicopter procurement document language should be followed. However, if discrepancies cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the vendor and government representative, the Contracting Officer should be consulted.

Some participating agencies may continue to use the IHOG as a guide or as a source of information. However, to achieve the objectives stated above, it is suggested that a participating agency or bureau incorporate this guide as policy by reference in the agency's directives system.

While it is recognized that field offices from most participating agencies have the authority to issue more restrictive guidance and directives than that contained in the IHOG, they are encouraged not to do so in the interests of the guide's objective of promoting interagency standardization of helicopter operations.

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IMPORTANT NOTE If an agency chooses to incorporate the IHOG as policy within the agency's directives system, it is essential that the user understands the use of language in the IHOG regarding mandatory or optional compliance.

The use of the verbs "must" and "shall" conveys mandatory compliance; use of "ought" and "should" conveys required compliance, except for justifiable reasons; and use of "may" and "can" conveys optional compliance.

- III. **Authority.** The aviation directives of participating agencies contain the authority to require implementation of this guide.
- IV. **Participating Agencies.** The guide is published under the auspices of the United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service (USDA-FS), certain Bureaus and Offices within the United States Department of the Interior (DOI), and various state and local agencies.
- The contents are recommended to participating agency heads by the Interagency Helicopter Operations Steering Committee, consisting of one representative each from:
- USDA-Forest Service (USDA-FS)
 - DOI - Office of Aircraft Services (OAS)
 - DOI - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
 - DOI - Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS)
 - DOI - Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
 - DOI - National Park Service (NPS)
 - Participating State and Local agencies
- V. **Organization.** The chapters of the guide are organized to assist the user in obtaining an understanding of standards and requirements for helicopter operations. The appendices provide the user with standard operational and administrative forms, checklists, and other job aids.
- VI. **Publication.** The United States Department of Agriculture-Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, United States Department of the Interior, jointly sponsor the publication of the guide through the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) at Boise, Idaho.
- VII. **Review and Revision.** Users are encouraged to recommend changes to this document through their respective aviation program manager.

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The IHOG Working Group will conduct a general review at least every three years. At that time, appropriate changes will be made, recommended to participating agency heads, with revisions distributed through NIFC.

It is recognized that interim revisions (that is, those which would occur within the three-year revision cycle) may be necessary. Proposed revisions will be considered and, if appropriate, recommended to participating agencies by the Interagency Helicopter Operations Steering Committee. Interim revisions will then be issued under individual agency directive. Every effort will be made by the Steering Committee to ensure that these revisions are issued in a timely and coordinated manner by participating agencies.

To avoid confusion, every effort should be made to limit interim revisions to changes that are of major importance or impact.

- VIII. **Ordering and Distribution.** The guide and triennial revisions are available for ordering through NIFC in Boise, Idaho. Refer to Appendix K for ordering information. The target group for distribution includes users and managers of helicopters, helibase management and air operations personnel, and other personnel involved in helicopter operations (Aviation Managers at all levels, Dispatchers, project managers, etc.).