

In-Flight Action Award

David Fennen

Air Spray USA, Inc. employee, David Fennen, is the Pilot in Command of an Air Tractor AT-802AF, Fire Boss, on an exclusive use contract for the Alaska Fire Service.

On July 16, 2019, an in-flight incident occurred while working on the Lake Tsyooktuhvun fire. During the fourth scoop, the aircraft's fill scoops failed to retract causing the tank to fill to max capacity and subsequently overflowing out of the top, which reduced forward visibility out the windshield to zero. Dave immediately activated the emergency dump system and jettisoned the load. As later determined during post-flight maintenance inspections, the scoops could not retract due to a mechanical issue. Therefore, during the scoop abort, the scoops continued to fill and visibility was not regained as would normally occur once they had retracted. Dave then selected max power and successfully accomplished a water takeoff. Once he was off the water surface and airborne again, visibility greatly improved. He then aborted the mission and returned to Fairbanks, without incident, for maintenance.

Dave is a well-respected pilot with years of experience in Alaska. He demonstrated outstanding airmanship and leadership and by doing so prevented damage to the aircraft and injury to personnel.

Thank you Dave for your positive actions during an in-flight incident!

Reference: SAFECOM 19-0351





July 16, 2019

Lake Tsyooktuihvun, AK

David Fennen

IN-FLIGHT ACTION AWARD

In recognition of outstanding airmanship and leadership which prevented injury to personnel and aircraft damage during an in-flight incident.





EVENT

Date: 7/16/2019 **Local Time:** 1300 **Injuries:** No **Damage:** Yes
Location: Fire 572, Lake Tsyooktuhvun, **State:** Alaska
Operational Control: DOI Office of Aviation Services (DOI) > Bureau of Land Management (BLM) > Alaska State Office > Alaska Fire Service

MISSION

Type: Fire, Retardant Drop (SEAT) **Other:**
Procurement: Exclusive use contract **Other:**
Persons Onboard: 1 **Special Use:** Yes **Hazardous Materials:** No
Departure Point: PAFB **Destination:** PAFB

AIRCRAFT

Manufacturer: Air Tractor **Model:** AT-802AF

NARRATIVE

During the fourth scoop the Fire Boss scoops failed to retract causing the tank to fill to max capacity subsequently blowing out the top which reduced forward visibility out the windscreen to zero. The PIC immediately activated the emergency dump system and jettisoned the load. As later determined during post-flight maintenance inspections, the scoops could not retract due to a mechanical issue. Therefore, during the scoop abort, visibility was not regained as would normally occur immediately after jettisoning the load once the scoops retracted. The PIC then selected max power and successfully accomplished a water takeoff. The PIC then aborted the mission and returned to Fairbanks for maintenance. BLM AV Safety,WS,7/23: Scoops remained down after jettison of load and continued to fill causing visibility issues, after the water takeoff visibility improved out the windscreen. Excellent situational awareness by the pilot.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

Inspect scoops to determine cause of scoop retraction failure. BLM AV Safety,WS,7/23: The mechanical issue turned out to be a faulty hydraulic Vickers valve which was replaced by the mechanic. Operations checks were positive and OAS inspector returned the aircraft to contract availability on 7/18.

ATTACHMENTS

