

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence 2020-20

May 21, 2020

To: Geographic Area Coordination Group Chairs
From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)
Subject: Surge Capacity Type 1 and Type 2 Helicopter Mobilization Direction

The Forest Service is augmenting the National Exclusive Use Helicopter fleet with an additional 36 surge capacity helicopters, as part of an enhanced national response due to COVID-19. Forest Service contract Type 1 and Type 2 helicopters are a strategic national aviation resource.

The surge helicopters will be available for a 90 day contract availability period beginning either June 1, 2020 or June 15, 2020. Any extensions beyond 90 days will be evaluated at that time with respect the national situation. These surge Type 1 and Type 2 helicopters and crews are National Resources allocated and prepositioned in accordance with the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) strategic considerations for geographic capability and prioritization criteria. Helicopter distribution is often very dynamic; balancing priorities between preparedness, initial attack, extended attack and large fire support, geographically and nationally. Significant fire potential is also an important factor considered when allocating and reallocating these resources. Helicopter distribution must also mitigate and lessen potential COVID-19 exposure and infection.

NMAC tasked three (3) National Area Command Teams to develop COVID-19 Wildland Fire Response Plan (WFRP) for their assigned Geographic Area. A standardized national template provides structure for Geographic Area Plans with general strategies and recommended best practices across multiple disciplines to include aviation.

The WFRP COVID-19 Rotor-Wing Operations section states:

- For prevention, consider multiple locations for aircraft placement in an effort to spread out resources and minimize large group gatherings of incident and aircrew personnel.

Each of the Geographic Areas have identified initial host bases for each of the surge capacity Type 1 and Type 2 helicopters to begin their 90 Day Mandatory Availability Period (MAP) and are providing appropriate staffing for these aircraft. As the national fire situation progresses, the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) in conjunction with the Forest Service National Aircraft Coordinator and Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACC), will determine the appropriate assignment/realignment for each respective surge helicopter. **Reassignment of these resources will be determined by the following factors:**

- Predictive Services outlook by Geographic Area
- National & Geographic Area Preparedness Levels
- National & Geographic Area Priorities



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Coordination/Ordering Parameters

- All surge helicopters will initially be ordered on a Geographic Area preposition order in coordination with NICC and the National Aircraft Coordinator. The Geographic Area is responsible for any standby time or flight time associated with an incident.
- National reassignment and mobilization of surge helicopters will be coordinated between NICC, the National Aircraft Coordinator, and the sending/receiving GACC.
- Forest Service Exclusive Use, surge capacity, and activated CWN helicopters will respond to an initial attack dispatch within 15 minutes, dispatches that require extended flight planning are allowed up to 60 minutes to respond.
- Once assigned to a Geographic Area, they determine whether the resource is best utilized for initial attack, extended attack or large fire support.

/s/ Joshua Simmons
Chair, NMAC

