Bureau of Land Management
Great Basin Smokejumpers

2026 User Guide

Great Basin Smokejumper Base 1-800-925-8307 or 208-387-5426
24-hour Duty Officer cell phone 208-850-5144
Smokejumper Status Report on the NIFC webpage
http://www.nifc.gov/smokejumper/reports/smjrpt.php

Phone Numbers

Great Basin BLM Smokejumper Base

208-387-5426	800-925-8307	(fax) 208-387-5399

Base Manager/Deputy Base Manager

NAME	CELL
Ben Oakleaf	208-867-6293
Dan Staab	986-200-6507

Operations Manager/Assistant Operations Manager

NAME	CELL
Ty Van Keuren	928-710-0889
Russell Dean	208-871-6985

Duty Officer

NAME	CELL
Duty Officer	208-850-5144 Duty Officer Cell Phone Contact (24 HR)

Liaison Officer Cell Phones

LOCATION	CELL
Colorado / Wyoming	208-761-1439
Idaho	208-761-1440
Nevada	208-761-1441
Utah	208-761-1442
Oregon	208-972-1638

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Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide land managers, coordinators, dispatchers, and other field user's information about the Great Basin Smokejumper (GB SMJ) program.

Mission Statement

The Great Basin Smokejumpers provide honest, hardworking firefighters and leaders for Initial Attack, Fireline Supervision, and Fire Program Management to the BLM and its interagency partners.

Speed and focus are at the forefront of the GB SMJ program, enabling us to honor the principles of aggressive initial attack, by rapidly deploying firefighters and concentrating aircraft and personnel in a calculated fashion.

Program Overview

Approximately eighty BLM smokejumpers are employed at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. The primary mission is to provide high quality initial attack firefighting capabilities and other fire management services to BLM and interagency land managers. GB SMJ use high performance aircraft and parachutes to provide a long range, rapid response initial attack fire suppression resource.

GB SMJ can deploy directly from Boise or any sub-base (outstation). Sub-bases serve as temporary centers for smokejumper operations.

In addition to Initial Attack, GB SMJ can assist land managers with the following: emerging Type 3 fires, extended attack fire suppression, a variety of ICS positions, aerial supervision, and deploy as hand crews.

We strive to provide hard working, highly qualified, experienced, and professional firefighters to our users on every mission. Due to the nature of the smokejumper mission, we routinely staff remote, complex, emerging incidents, often well in advance of the arrival of ground resources. We rely upon and expect our firefighters to safely and professionally accomplish the suppression objectives provided to us. To meet those objectives, we often provide an ICT3 and other leadership qualifications on every load. Our training department works closely with the Great Basin Priority Trainee program to get our smokejumpers the experiences and skills to meet these standards. Our current crew configuration is made up of the following qualifications:

- 13% - ICT3
- 69% - ICT4
- 43% - TFLD
- 31% - DIVS
- 31% - EMT

Mission Outline

Load Configuration

- 1 pilot (*Dash 8 - 2 pilots)
- 1 Spotter (may or may not be ATGS. Can act in an aerial supervision capacity until Air Attack arrives)
- 8-12 Smokejumpers (at least 1 of whom is an ICT3)
- Self-sufficient for 48 hours - (food, water, and firefighter equipment).

Ordering Smokejumpers

- Smokejumpers can be ordered for Initial Attack (IA), short term pre-position, and as a contingent in accordance with area and national mobilization guides.
- Smokejumper boosts can be ordered with discussion with the acting GB Smokejumper Base Manager.
- There is no specific "smokejumper" fire. Smokejumpers can be used on any incident where land managers need suppression assistance.
- Initial Attack orders are placed in IROC as an aircraft order ("A" order) "Load-Smokejumper-Initial Attack" followed by the appropriate aircraft designator.
- For incident commanders and duty officers, a smokejumper order is a simple request to dispatch for a load of smokejumpers
- To ensure rapid fire response, Smokejumper Spotters will receive basic fire information (Location, other resources responding, frequencies) typically from a unit's standardized Aircraft Dispatch Form ("kneeboard") via email, although a phone call will suffice for launch. The spotter will acquire additional pertinent information via radio while enroute to the fire.
- Short-term preposition. To provide coverage for short periods of expected activity, smokejumper personnel and aircraft can preposition closer to the area of expected activity. Funding can be worked out at the time of the request.
- Contingent activations are based on current and predicted fire activity. Contingents can be funded through GACC support codes, State Director Severity, National Preposition funding, National Severity funding, or a combination of codes. A BLM preposition or national severity request is submitted by the State's Fire Operations Group representative.

Fire Mission

- Smokejumper missions will follow standard flight following protocols.
- Spotters will ask for authorization to enter the fire traffic area (FTA) from resources on scene if applicable. If no other aerial resources are present, the spotter will make a "call in the blind" on the assigned Air to Air frequency notifying any other resources of their presence.
- SMJ spotter will give a fire size up to the local dispatch and request guidance on fire staffing.
- Average time to deliver 8 SMJs and cargo is 35-40 minutes.
- SMJ spotter will assign the appropriately qualified Incident Commander when smokejumpers are first on scene. The aircraft will remain on scene as prudent until communication with dispatch is established by the Incident Commander on the ground.
- Radio contact with the jumpship may be lost with dispatch during low-level cargo delivery operations.
- SMJs will remain on incident until local management objectives are met, or until replaced by other fire personnel.
- Paracargo can be used to resupply SMJs when needed. Paracargo can also be requested to supply non-smokejumper fires with basic fire supplies (MRE, water, batteries, etc.).

Demobilization

- Smokejumper retrieval normally involves returning the smokejumpers with their gear to the jumpship location. This is coordinated between the responsible dispatch and the smokejumper spotter or liaison officer.
- ***GB SMJ has a dedicated fleet of vehicles to support SMJ operations and employs AD THSPs who can act as drivers. The vehicles and drivers for smokejumper demobilizations are coordinated through and often provided by the smokejumpers. Statistically GB SMJ provides for 50% of its total demobilizations per fire season***. Peaks in fire activity are when the local unit may be leaned upon to provide drivers if there are no smokejumpers available.
- The hosting Duty Officer can coordinate with the Smokejumper Spotter/ Liaison Officer to determine and discuss the logistics of utilizing non-deployed IA Smokejumpers to facilitate demobilizations when applicable.
- All GB SMJs are HELR qualified if a helicopter sling load is utilized to bring in or extract equipment.
- A smokejumper typically carries 100 pounds of jump gear and firefighting equipment. The following are typical smokejumper demobilization transportation requirements:

Vehicle retrieval

2 SMJs	**one standard cab pickup**	**(or) one van**	**(or) one Suburban**
3-4 SMJs	**one six-pack pickup**	**(or) one van**	**(or) one Suburban**
5-8 SMJs	**one pickup and van (or) one large van**	**(or) two six-pack trucks**	**(or) one pickup and one Suburban**
9-12 SMJs	**three vehicles**	**(or) stake-side plus vehicles for passengers**	

Coordination and Dispatch

The use of GB SMJs is identified in district, state and national mobilization guides. Communication among dispatch centers, coordination centers, fire management officers, and smokejumper duty and liaison officers are critical to ensure rapid and aggressive fire response.

Duty Officer and Liaison Officer

The Duty Officer (DO)

The smokejumper duty officer, located in Boise, serves as the focal point for BLM smokejumper operations in the lower 48 states.

- During the fire season, the duty officer is available 24 hours, seven days per week. During business hours they can be reached at 800-925-8307 or 208-387-5426 and after hours at 208-850-5144 (cell).

- The DO manages the IROC account for filling orders in GB SMJ operations when located in Boise. Upon contingent activation, Smokejumpers will operate through the hosting dispatch center as ordered. The GB SMJ dispatch (ID-JFC) does not act as an initial attack dispatch and does not create IA orders.

- The DO will manage smokejumper mobilization to activated outstations to keep contingents at or near full strength. The DO will coordinate with hosting local dispatch to fill SMJs to the requesting Contingent Incident.

- The DO notifies coordination centers of smokejumper aircraft arrival/departure from Boise and assures the appropriate flight strips are completed.

    - The DO stays current on smokejumper availability, status, location, movement, and projected activity; this information is updated daily on the Smokejumper Status Report on the NIFC Home Page, http://www.nifc.gov/smokejumper/reports/smjrpt.php.

The Liaison Officer (LO)

Host states will have an identified smokejumper liaison officer.
Duties include:

- Meet with unit FMO or representative. Attend pertinent local unit briefings.
- Act as SMJ Spotter during IA missions.
- Serve as contact for smokejumper IA, pre-position, booster, project work, and demobilization requests.
- Brief smokejumpers, spotters, and the pilot on situation reports and daily weather forecast.

Non-standard fire operations/prescribed fire

- GB SMJs can be utilized by local units to fulfill non-standard fire operations including fire monitoring, wilderness or MIST suppression, and prescribed fire.
- GB SMJs have a myriad of ICS qualifications. Contact the GB SMJ LO or DO to request specifically qualified individuals.
- GB SMJs can perform prescribed fire operations during non-fire peak seasons. Many GB SMJs hold prescribed fire qualifications including RXB2, FIRB, etc.

Twin Otter:

The De Havilland DHC-6 Twin Otter has been used in Great Basin Smokejumper operations since 1987 and is the only smokejumper aircraft owned by the Bureau of Land Management. A De Havilland Twin Otter was purchased by the Office of Aircraft Services (OAS) in 1974 for use by the Department of the Interior, and its first recorded season as a smokejumper aircraft for the BLM was in Alaska in 1979. Our current Twin Otter, N49SJ, is the only smokejumper aircraft used in the BLM system that is piloted by BLM pilots. Due to the BLM ownership, it is available to meet the needs of the smokejumper mission as long as required by the conditions of a given fire season.

This aircraft has an average 150 knot cruise speed, holds roughly 3500 lbs. of cargo and 2.5 hours of fuel for initial attack response.

A standard Twin Otter initial attack load includes 8 smokejumpers with the standard equipment and supplies:

- 4 x Firepacks (48 hours of self-sustainment)
- 4 x Cubies
- 2 x Chainsaw kits
- 1 x Mini saw (Stihl 200T)
- 2 x SAT Phones
- 1 x Fusee Bundle
- 1 x EMT Trauma Kit
- 1 x Climber Box
- 1x Fedco (Bladder Bag)
- 1 x 20-man first aid kit
- 4 x Beaters (Flappers)
- 2 x iPads

Dornier 228:

The Dornier DO-228 has been used in Great Basin Smokejumper operations since 1999. We contract two Dornier DO-228s through Bighorn Airways, with the first aircraft typically coming on contract in late April and the second coming on mid to late May. The contracts are structured in a way that allow us to provide timely response from May through the duration of the Great Basin fire season. It is typical for aircraft to be extended to meet the needs of fire conditions and smokejumper use.

This aircraft has an average 200 knot cruise speed, holds the same compliment as the Twin Otter: roughly 3500 lbs of cargo and 2.5 hours of fuel for initial attack response.

A standard Dornier DO-228 initial attack load includes 8 smokejumpers with the standard equipment and supplies:

- 4 x Firepacks (48 hours of self-sustainment)
- 4 x Cubies
- 2 x Chainsaw kits
- 1 x Mini saw (Stihl 200T)
- 2 x SAT Phones
- 1 x Fusee Bundle
- 1 x EMT Trauma Kit
- 1 x Climber Box
- 1x Fedco (Bladder Bag)
- 1 x 20-man first aid kit
- 4 x Beaters (Flappers)
- 2 x iPads

DHC-8:

The De Havilland DHC-8 is the newest addition to the smokejumper fleet and has been used in Great Basin Smokejumper operations since 2021. We share a DHC-8 contracted though Bighorn Airways with the Alaska Smokejumpers. The first part of its contract it stays in Alaska and typically arrives in the Great Basin in July depending on the needs of Alaska.

The Dash 8 features some significant improvements in the categories of speed, payload, and range. It has an average 290 knot cruise speed, can hold roughly 7500 lbs. of cargo and up to 4 hours of fuel for initial attack response.

A standard DHC-8 initial attack load includes 12 smokejumpers with the standard equipment and supplies to support the larger load and some additions:

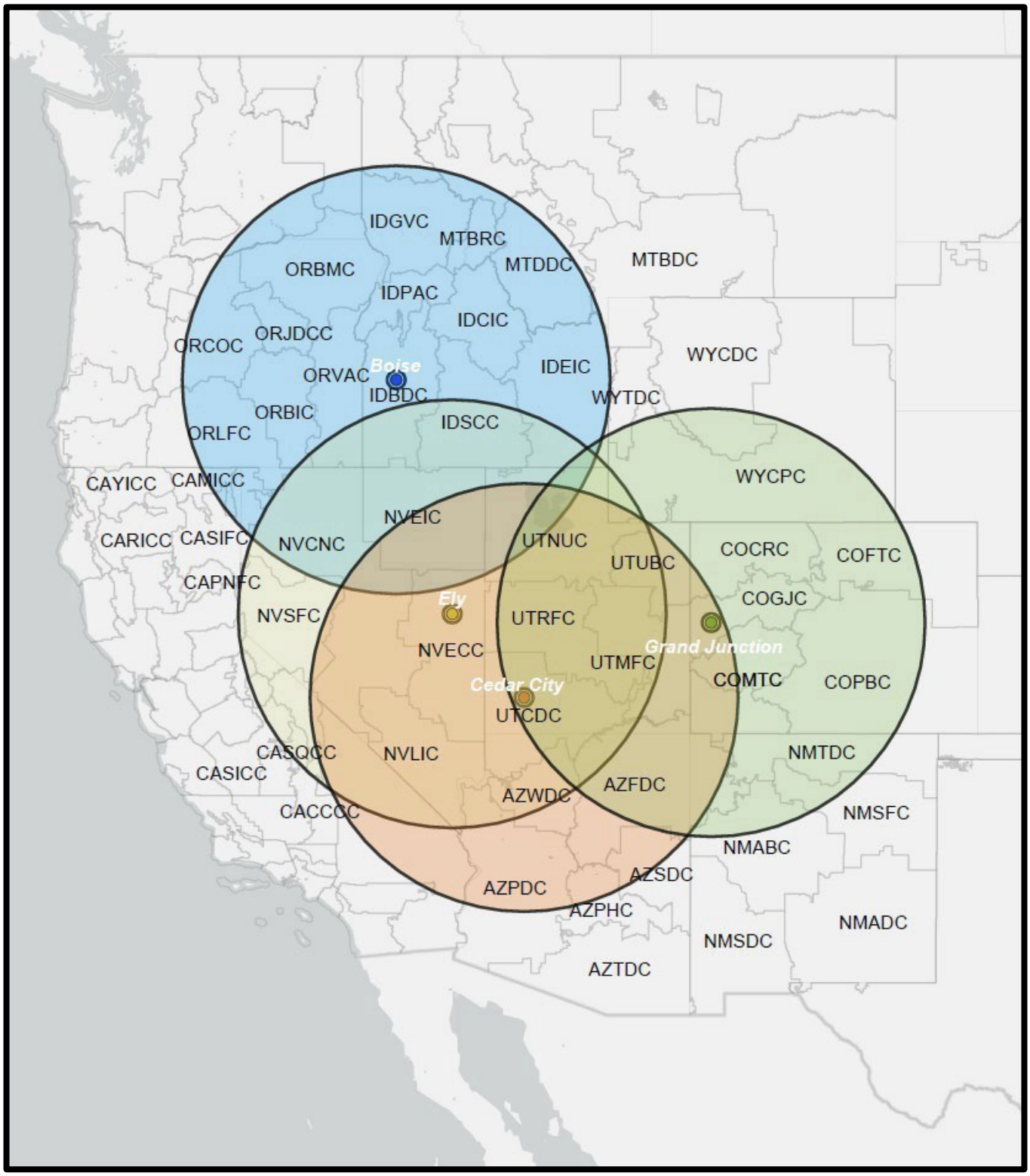
- 6 x Firepacks (48 hours of self-sustainment)
- 9 x Cubies
- 3 x Chainsaw kits
- 1 x Mini saw (Stihl 200T)
- 2 x SAT Phones
- 2 x Fusee Bundle
- 1 x EMT Trauma Kit
- 2 x Climber Box
- 3x Fedco (Bladder Bag)
- 2 x 20-man first aid kit
- 4 x Beaters (Flappers)
- 2 x iPads
- 2 x MRE Case
- 1 x Saw Gas Pack

The standard maximum load of 8 smokejumpers will be utilized on a single incident unless otherwise determined by the Smokejumper Spotter

GB SMJ Initial Attack Aircraft:

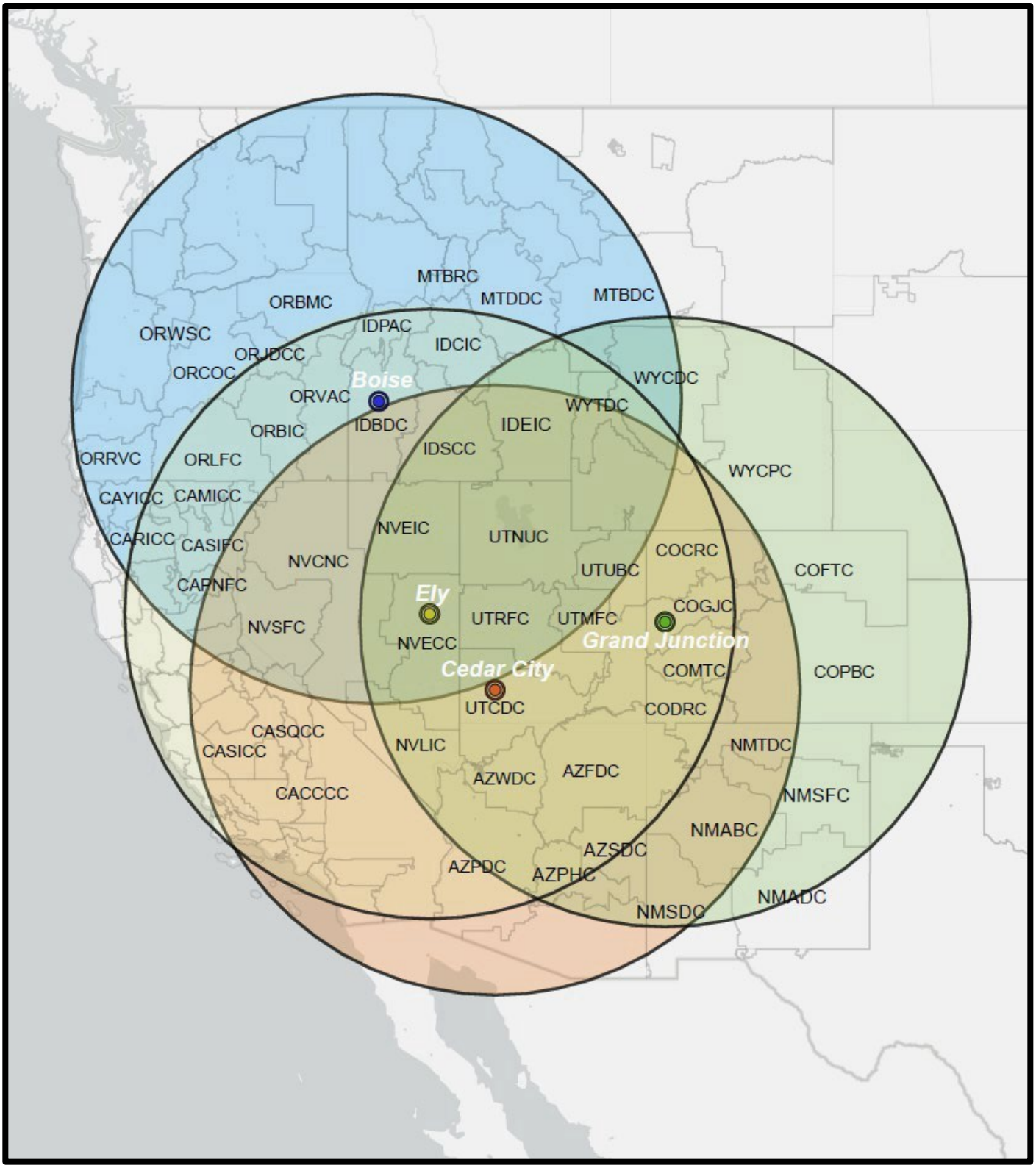
- The deployment and placement of BOI SMJ aircraft will be determined by Base Management and BLM National Fire Operations, in accordance with aircraft specifications, initial attack fire activity and the needs of BLM and interagency land managers.
- GB SMJs utilize a variety of aircraft in different combinations to meet the needs of users. The four above mentioned aircraft can be supplemented by CWN aircraft when required.
- The following maps provide a visual representation of the IA (2-hour response) capabilities of each aircraft in ideal flight conditions. The IA Response Rings are overlaid over Boise, ID and three of our legacy sub-bases: Cedar City UT, Ely NV, and Grand Junction CO
- GB SMJs are routinely ordered for response to incidents outside the IA range of its aircraft. This type of incident response requires additional fuel stop(s) extending response time.

Twin Otter 2-hr IA Response



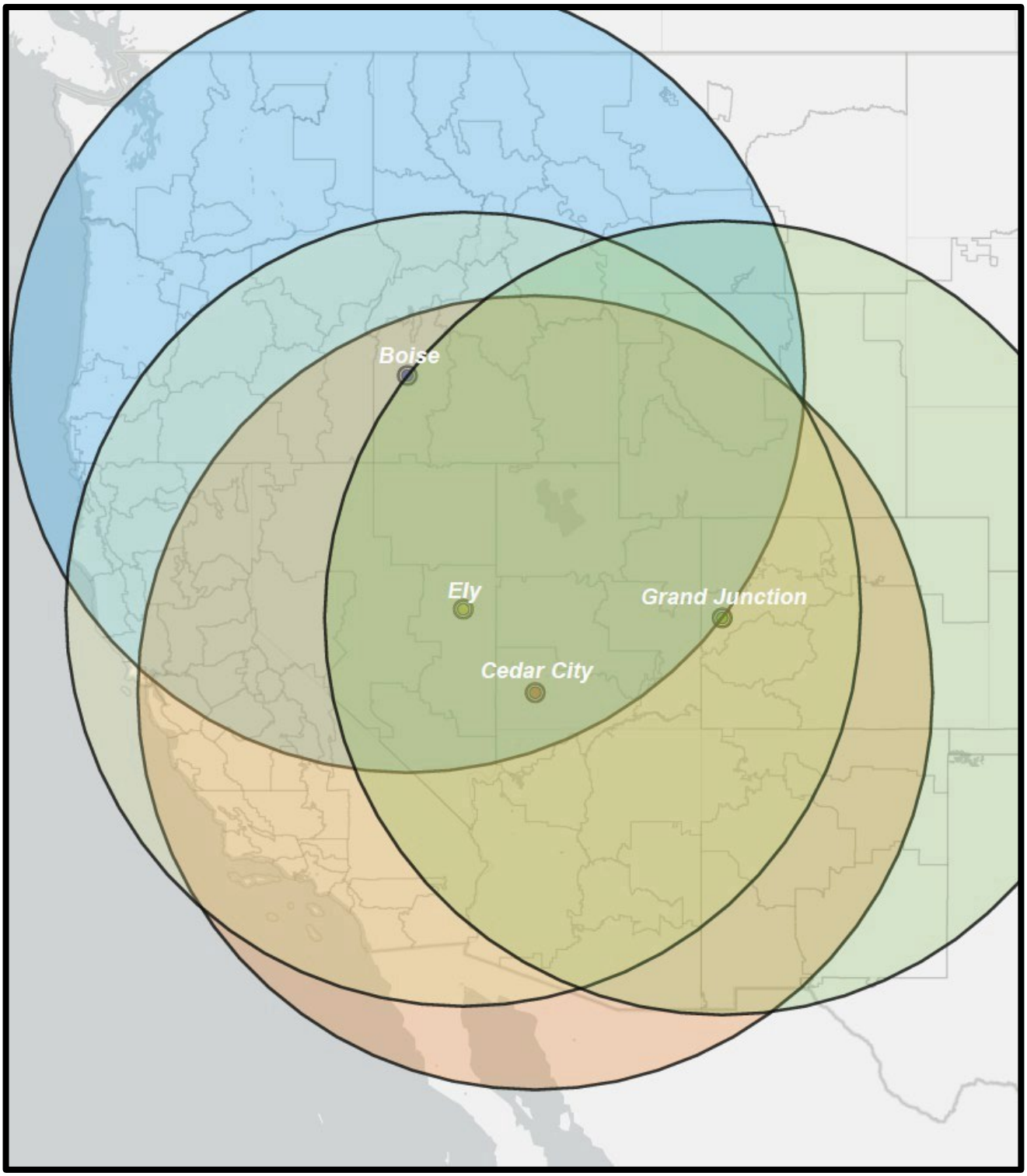
The Twin Otter has an approximate 280-mile initial attack range

Dornier 228 2-hr IA Response



The Dornier 228 has an approximate 390-mile initial attack range

DHC-8 2hr IA Response



The DHC-8 has an approximate 500-mile Initial Attack range

Smokejumper aircraft capabilities:

Aircraft	SMJs	Speed	Runway Requirements*	Range(miles)
DHC-6 Twin Otter	8	150-knots	2,000-ft	425-680
C-23A Sherpa*	8	170-knots	4,500-ft*	500-800*
C-212 Casa	8	180-knots	3,000-ft	500-800
Dornier 228	8	200-knots	4000-ft	500
DHC-8	12	290-knots	3280-ft	1125

**Runway requirements depend upon density altitude considerations. High heat and high elevations increase runway length requirements.*

Note to GACC's: When questions arise regarding smokejumper aircraft (including para-cargo platforms), please consult with the local smokejumper LO or the DO in Boise on aircraft capabilities. Although none in our standard fleet, some smokejumper aircraft (primarily the C-23A Sherpa and C-212 Casa) have limited performance characteristics in the high elevation and hot temperature regions of the Great Basin. To compensate for this, it may be necessary to "download" smokejumpers, equipment, and fuel.

Administration

A normal duty day during the fire season is 0900 - 1800.

Individual smokejumper rotations from sub-bases to Boise occur as necessary for days off. These logistics are handled internally. Pilots are rotated according to the Departmental Manual. GB SMJ time and attendance is handled by BLM-NIFC. Smokejumpers are covered by a season-long fire travel authorization. All GB SMJ are prepared to cover their individual travel expenses.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Program

GB SMJs can provide emergency medical services for injured firefighters. GB SMJ strives for at least 1/3 of smokejumpers to be EMT certified, with the others First Aid/CPR certified and varying depths of experience. Each smokejumper aircraft carries a complete medical trauma kit deliverable by para-cargo to an accident scene. Although smokejumper specific, a trauma kit can be delivered to any known accident site, however, not intended for prepositioning.

Proficiency Jumps

Parachute jump currency ensures that smokejumpers maintain proficiency in parachuting skills and procedures. A parachute jump (either fire or training) every 10-14 days is standard to maintain currency. Ability to meet this standard is predicated upon aircraft availability and fire activity. The spotter will clear proficiency jumps through the appropriate dispatch channels. Proficiency jumps during the fire season are generally first thing in the morning during business hours. A standing invitation is open to interested personnel to attend proficiency jumps with the smokejumper ground crew, to better understand the timing and details of our operation.

After Action Review

Mission debriefings are critical to improving mission effectiveness and safety. Smokejumpers perform debriefings after every mission. Participation by host unit fire personnel is encouraged, and any feedback or discussions pertaining to the fire operations is welcome.