

National Interagency Fire Center



Military Use Handbook



2025



NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER

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DATE: August 15, 2025
TO: Agency Personnel
FROM: NIFC-Multi-Agency Coordinating Group
SUBJECT: 2025 Military Use Handbook

Attached is the 2025 Military Use Handbook, which provides guidance and information for wildland fire agencies who receive military resources to augment their firefighting efforts. The 2025 Military Use handbook replaces all previous year publications of this document.

These standards are written to reflect the interagency needs of the user. The Military Use Handbook states, references, or supplements policy for Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The agencies have directed the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) with review and oversight from the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) to annually revise, publish, and distribute the Military Use Handbook by June 1, and issue errata to the handbook annually.

Suggestions for modification of this document can be submitted at any time of the year to your national office agency leadership.

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CHAPTER 10

OBJECTIVES, POLICY AND SCOPE OF OPERATION

INTRODUCTION

The United States Military has a long history of cooperation and involvement with wildland fire. The US military is normally requested when national civilian resources are committed to fires and there is the need for further resources. The decision to request military support nationally rests with the National Multi-Agency Coordinating (NMAC) Group at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC). Historically, Department of Defense (DoD) assets are utilized during National Preparedness Levels (PL) of 4 and 5.

The US military may provide aerial and/or ground resource assets. These diverse mission assets are prepared to respond quickly and effectively to protect lives, property, critical infrastructure and natural resources, that are all capable of supporting the firefighting efforts. Requests for federal utilization of DoD assets are reviewed and shall comply with the Economy Act of June 30, 1932.

The Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard are the armed forces of the United States. The Army National Guard and the Air National Guard are reserve components of their services and operate in part under state authority.

Active Component (full time and reservists) and National Guard assets are considered surge capacity and will only be requested when all civilian firefighting assets are committed or not reasonably available. All civilian resources must be assigned, either to active fires or to initial attack, prior to mobilizing military assets.

Deployed military units work for the Incident Commander (IC) and are with-in the IC's tactical control. Military units remain under the operational control of the US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM).

The Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS) program created by Congress in the early 1970s, is a joint effort between the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and DoD. The USFS owns the MAFFS equipment and supplies the fire retardant, while the DoD provides the C-130 H and J model aircraft, flight crews, and maintenance and support personnel to fly the missions.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Background

The National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) can request assistance from the U.S. military with wildfire suppression through an agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and the DoD.

History of Military Activations

Since 1975, the USDA and the DOI have had an interagency agreement with the DoD which allows them to provide firefighting support to the wildland fire management agencies when needed.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

Mobilization of military assets is a complex and detailed process. This handbook gives an overview of the request, activation, and mobilization process for US military assets assisting with wildland fire suppression. The primary assets this handbook focuses on are military helicopters (Chapter 60), MAFFS (Chapter 50), and ground resources (Chapter 40). For ground resources, this handbook also gives an overview of the training program and process (Chapter 40) for those assets.

Even though National Guard activations (Chapter 30) are the responsibility of the state, and each state is different. This handbook does give a simple overview of the National Guard process in general. States may also activate the Air National Guard Air Wings having MAFFS equipment and qualified crews for fires under their own state or state to state jurisdiction.

The dispatch (Chapter 20), incident billing (Chapter 70) and public information (Chapter 90) process for military support differ slightly from their established business procedures utilized by the wildland fire community. This handbook identifies those differences and gives an overview of the updated business practices.

WHAT THIS GUIDE DOES NOT COVER

This handbook does not cover the process for ordering and utilizing local military assets (civilian and uniformed) from a DoD facility or installation. Those assets are utilized through local agreements and memorandum of understandings (MOUs).

TYPES OF MILITARY ACTIVATIONS

Title 10 Active-Duty

“Active duty” means full-time duty in the active military service of the U.S. Title 10. It allows the President to “federalize” the National Guard forces by ordering them to active duty in their reserve component status or by calling them into federal service in their militia status in accordance with the following USC sections:

10 USC § 12301 (d) - Voluntary Order to Active Duty: At any time, a member of the National Guard may be ordered to active duty voluntarily with his or her consent and the consent of the Governor.

Understanding the Guard’s Duty Status

10 USC § 12302 – Partial Mobilization: In time of national emergency declared by the President, the Secretary concerned may order any unit and any member to active duty for no more than 24 consecutive months.

10 USC § 12304 – Presidential Selected Reserve Call Up: When the President determines that it is necessary to augment the active force or any operational mission, he may authorize the service secretaries to order any unit and any member to active duty for not more than 365 days.

10 USC § 331 – Federal Aid to State Governors: Whenever an insurrection occurs in any State against its government, the President may, upon the request of its legislature or of its Governor, if the legislature cannot be convened, call into Federal service such of the militia of the other States,

in the number requested by that State, and use such of the armed forces, as he considers necessary to suppress the insurrection. This section is a statutory exception to the Posse Comitatus Act.

10 USC § 332 – Use of Militia and Armed Forces to Enforce Federal Authority: Whenever the President considers that unlawful obstructions, combinations, assemblages, or rebellion against the authority of the U.S., make it impractical to enforce the laws of the U.S. in any State or Territory by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings, he may call into Federal service such of the militia of any State, and use such of the armed forces as he considers necessary to enforce those laws or to suppress the rebellion. This section is a statutory exception to the Posse Comitatus Act.

10 USC § 333 – Interference with State and Federal Law: The President, by using the militia or the armed forces, or both, or by any other means, shall take such measures as he considers necessary to suppress, in a State, any insurrection, domestic violence, unlawful combination, or conspiracy if it:

- a. So hinders the execution of the law of that State, and of the U.S. within the State, that any part or class of its people is deprived of a right, privilege, immunity or protection named in the Constitution and secured by law, and the constituted authorities of that State are unable, fail or refuse to protect that right, privilege, or immunity, or to give that protection; or
- b. Opposes or obstructs the execution of the laws of the U.S. or impedes the course of justice under those laws. In any situation covered by clause (1), the State shall be considered to have denied the equal protection of the laws secured by the Constitution.

10 USC § 12406 – Air and Army National Guard: Air and Army National Guard call into Federal service in case of invasion, rebellion or inability to execute Federal law with active forces.

Activation under Title 10 United States Code (U.S.C) is associated with federal military activation of DoD military and federally activated state National Guard. Federal activation is coordinated between NMAC and the DoD by request from NMAC. Federal activation of state National Guard units is mechanized through the state's Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). Types of units that may be activated are DoD military and National Guard.

Advanced notification and pre-assignment of federally activated units prior to each fire season is generally not possible. However, Regional (Forest Service) and State (BLM) aviation units, in coordination with the GACC and local units, should make every effort to work with active military installations to provide fire aviation training and briefings in advance of fire season. Where pre-season trainings and briefings have not occurred, NMAC, in coordination with the GACCs and the receiving agencies are responsible to ensure military units receive safety, operational, and logistical training.

The Department of Defense Liaison to NMAC informs DoD of potential assistance requests, allowing DoD to identify and notify the assigned military unit. If NMAC anticipates activating federalized military units, pre-emptive coordination with the assigned unit is essential. Coordination will occur with the receiving GACC and incident commanders to ensure a smooth transition into the incident command system. This also helps finalize operational, logistics, staffing, support, training and deployment plans.

GACCs and incident commanders should plan for expanded logistical support. This may include accommodating ground and flight crews, support personnel, aircraft, ground support equipment,

fuel trucks, vehicles, hygiene facilities, etc. Coordination with the military commander is necessary to help identify any additional needs.

Due to differences in military aviation operations and agency procedures, additional civilian positions are required. These positions are beyond the scope of the Incident Command System (ICS) and help manage military aviation operations. Standard ICS terminology will be used to simplify the organizational concept whenever possible.

State Activate Duty: Air/Army National Guard

The Governor can activate National Guard personnel to “State Active Duty” in response to natural or man-made disasters or Homeland Defense missions. SAD is based on State statute and policy as well as State funds. Soldiers and Airmen remain under the command and control of the Governor. A key aspect of this duty status is that the Posse Comitatus Act does not apply, giving National Guardsmen the ability to act in a law enforcement capacity within their home state or adjacent state if granted by that state’s Governor.

Under State Active Duty (SAD), National Guard units are activated by the state. This is not federal activation. The use of National Guard units for federal firefighting is mechanized through national, regional, state, and local agreements. These agreements must be in place in order to exercise the use of the National Guard for federal services.

A Letter of Agreement (i.e., cooperative agreement) is the primary method by which federal agencies exercise the use of National Guard assets. The cooperative agreement is an agreement between specific National Guard units and the governing federal entity. This is the mechanism by which National Guard Units can serve federal agencies.

The agency requesting the State Active Duty National Guard units is responsible for any additional logistical support and incident staffing.

Title 32 Full-Time National Guard Duty

“Full-time National Guard Duty” means training or other duty, other than inactive duty, performed by a member of the National Guard. Title 32 allows the Governor, with the approval of the President or the Secretary of Defense, to order a member to duty for operational Homeland Defense activities in accordance with the following sections of U.S. Code (USC):

32 USC 502 (f): This statute allows members of the National Guard to be ordered to full-time National Guard duty to perform operational activities. It was used for the Airport Security mission after 9/11 and also for Hurricane Katrina and Rita response efforts.

32 USC § 901: The term “Homeland Defense activity” means an activity undertaken for the military protection of the territory or domestic population of the U.S., or of infrastructure or other asset of the U.S. determined by the Secretary of Defense as being critical to national security and at risk of a threat or aggression against the U.S.

32 USC § 902 - Homeland Defense activities: funds. (a) The Secretary of Defense may provide funds to a Governor to employ National Guard units or members to conduct Homeland Defense activities that the Secretary determines necessary and appropriate for participation by the National Guard or members.

The key to this instance is that federal law provides the Governor with the ability to place a soldier in a full-time duty status under the command and control of the state but is directly funded with

federal dollars. Even though this duty status is authorized by federal statute, this section is a statutory exception to the Posse Comitatus Act; the Governor may use the National Guard in a law enforcement capacity while the chain of command rests in the State.

Additional Laws and Authorities - Stafford Act (42 USC § 5121) - designed to bring an orderly and systemic means of federal natural disaster assistance for state and local governments in carrying out their responsibilities to aid citizens. Congress' intention was to encourage states and localities to develop comprehensive disaster preparedness plans, prepare for better intergovernmental coordination in the face of a disaster, encourage the use of insurance coverage, and provide Federal assistance programs for losses due to a disaster.

USFS/DOI, Federal Activation, Title 10

Activation of federal resources will be coordinated through NMAC/NICC.

DoD assistance should be requested by the Lead Federal Agency (LFA) only when other local, state and federal capabilities have been depleted, or unique capability is required. (economy act)

Requests will be in accordance with the Interagency Agreement for “Provision of Temporary Support During Wildland Firefighting Operations”. Initial requests will be submitted through the Department of Defense (DOD) Executive Secretariat.

USFS/DOI is responsible for training, equipment, supplies, and reimbursement of actual cost of services for federally activated military and state military units.

Cooperative Agreement, State Activation, Title 32

Resources used on federal lands must be federally approved (USFS/DOI) via cooperative agreement.

Annual Operating Plans (AOP) and/or Cost Share Agreements (CSA) must identify who covers the cost on federal land and/or state/county lands.

THE ECONOMY ACT

The Economy act prohibits the use of military assets when publicly available commercial resources can be procured. For the most up to date information on the Economy Act visit:

<https://www.acquisition.gov/far/17.502-2>

LINES OF AUTHORITY (OFFICIAL CHANNELS)

US Department of Defense (DoD)

The DoD provides the military forces needed to deter war and protect national security. Under the President, the Secretary of Defense directs and exercises authority and control over the separately organized Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force; over the Joint Chiefs of Staff; over the combatant commands; and over defense agencies and field activities.

The National Security Act Amendments of 1949 redesignated the National Military Establishment as the DOD and established it as an executive department (10 U.S.C. 111) headed by the Secretary of Defense. The commanders of the combatant commands are responsible to the President and the Secretary of Defense for accomplishing the military missions assigned to them and exercising

command authority over forces assigned to them. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff functions within the chain of command by transmitting the orders of the President or the Secretary of Defense to the commanders of the combatant commands.

The DoD, through U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) provides the military assets when requested by NMAC and approved by the Secretary of Defense. Assets can include aircraft and ground forces capable of supporting firefighting efforts.

US Northern Command

USNORTHCOM is one of eleven unified combatant commands of the DoD. USNORTHCOM is the primary DoD organization for coordinating defense support of civil authorities to help federal partners respond to natural disasters. USNORTHCOM is located at Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The command is assigned forces whenever necessary to execute missions, as ordered by the President or Secretary of Defense. Civil service employees and uniformed members representing all service branches work at USNORTHCOM.

USNORTHCOM's civil support mission includes domestic disaster relief operations that occur during fires, hurricanes, floods and earthquakes. The command provides assistance to an agency when tasked by DoD. Per the Posse Comitatus Act, military forces can provide civil support but cannot become directly involved in law enforcement.

In providing civil support, USNORTHCOM generally operates through established Joint Task Forces subordinate to the command. An emergency must exceed the capabilities of local, state and federal agencies before USNORTHCOM becomes involved. In most cases, support will be limited, localized and specific. USNORTHCOM exercises operational control of those forces through its U.S. Air Forces Northern and U.S. Army North air and land components. USNORTHCOM also exercises coordinating authority with Title 32 forces under the command and control of the affected state governor.

State Adjutant General

Each state in the United States has a senior military officer, referred to as the State Adjutant General or The Adjutant General (TAG), who is in command of the National Guard residing within their state, and reports to that state's governor. When a wildfire crisis occurs, the Adjutant General is responsible, at the governor's request, for mobilizing and deploying National Guard personnel and aircraft to affected areas in coordination with local and state emergency management officials.

The Adjutant General ensures National Guard personnel are adequately trained in wildland firefighting techniques and coordinate with civilian firefighting agencies to effectively integrate their capabilities.

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

The National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC) is comprised of members who have delegated authority to provide an essential management mechanism for national level strategic coordination to ensure that firefighting resources are efficiently and appropriately managed in a cost-effective manner.

Their mission is to provide national wildland fire operations management, priority setting and resource allocation through multi-agency coordination. The group is represented by leadership from the following agencies:

- United States Forest Service
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- United States Fire Administration
- National Association of State Foresters

As with domestic resource requests, the National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC) sets priorities and allocates resources based on preparedness levels.

Additional information for clarification and understanding of NMAC (Charter, Structure & Duties, Current Operating Plan, and Correspondence) are available at: <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/nmac>

National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC)

The principal mission of the National Interagency Coordination Center is the cost-effective, efficient, and timely coordination of Interagency/Cooperating resources (federal, state, local government, and contract resources) for emergency wildland fire response.

The NICC coordinates resource mobilization nationally based on NMAC direction and identified national and geographic area needs and resource availability including the mobilization of the United States Military.

US Forest Service, Washington Office of Fire and Aviation Management

The USFS Fire and Aviation Management at NIFC has the responsibilities of performing preseason meetings and the review of agreements and MOUs with the DoD.

Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Groups (GMAC)

Work in coordination with NMAC to identify potential resource shortages and candidate incidents that would be suited to military assets and support.

State Government

State Governments are responsible for Title 32 National Guard activations.

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE (RFA)

The RFA Process

A Request for Assistance (RFA) is the formal process used to order wildland fire management resources between NMAC and the DoD. An RFA is an official form that is signed by the NMAC Coordinator on behalf of NMAC. Included in the RFA are details such as date and time needed, reporting locations, resource types and numbers. The two most common RFAs are for Ground Resources (half battalion) and MAFFS.

NMAC and various representatives from the DoD have peer to peer conversations throughout the year. Prior to an RFA being submitted, these discussions include incident status, predicted activity, resource drawdown and other factors encumbering incident response.

NMAC will place all RFAs for DoD assets to the US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) in Colorado Springs, CO.

Activated DoD units can be reassigned within or to another geographic area(s) if situations warrant, unless preempted by a priority defense mission.

Appendix A shows an example of an RFA for a ground support request and an example of a MAFFS RFA.

NMAC CORRESPONDENCE MEMOS

Historically, when military ground resources assets are mobilized, NMAC will collaborate with their respective Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and within their individual agencies to seek out single resource overhead personnel to assist military mobilizations by providing fireline leadership positions (Crewboss (CRWB), Strike Team Leader Crews (STCR), Taskforce Leader (TFLD)) and dispatch support positions (Expanded Dispatch Supervisory Dispatcher (EDSP) and Expanded Dispatch Support Dispatcher (EDSD)).

NMAC will create a correspondence memo addressed to the Geographic Area Coordinating Group Chairs that identifies what each Geographic Area is responsible for providing. The Geographic Area hosting the military ground resources is excluded from being required to provide single resource support.

MAFFS activations have not historically required NMAC's involvement in seeking out single resource position support.

Appendix B shows an example of an NMAC Correspondence memo for military support.

ASSISTING WITH MILITARY ACTIVATIONS

Agency personnel are strongly encouraged to participate in military activations. Military activation assignments can be some of the most rewarding wildland fire assignments in an individual's career.

Agency personnel who have previously served in the military or have strong connections to the military are always highly sought after and openly welcomed to be a part of military mobilizations (both ground resource, MAFFS and other aviation assignments).

Supervisors are encouraged to allow employees who express interest in taking military activation assignments to find opportunities to allow them to participate. Chapters 50 (MAFFS) and Chapter 40 (Ground Resources) give overviews of the various positions available for assignment with military mobilizations.

LENGTH OF ASSIGNMENT

Agency personnel assigned to a military unit/incident(s) for ground resource mobilizations should plan on at least a 30-day assignment. For MAFFS assignments, a more traditional 14-day assignment model is expected.

BILLING PROCEDURES

The USFS is the lead federal agency which reimburses the DoD. All costs incurred by military agencies are sent to USNORTHCOM for review and are then forwarded to the USFS.

Any agency field office receiving invoices from the military or supporting installations must send these invoices through appropriate channels to the USFS.

MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

The following positions are not part of the ordering system; they are pre-established as part of one's position responsibilities and duties.

NMAC Members

NMAC is the national level authority for directing and controlling firefighting resource allocations between Geographic Areas to ensure priority objectives are met, with full authority to take appropriate actions to implement their decisions. The same authority applies when evaluating the need to utilize US Military assets.

Responsibilities

- Develop decisions regarding all Requests for Assistance.
- Coordinate with Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and Geographic Coordination Centers for the possible use and mobilization of US Military assets.
- Collaborate with Geographic Area Coordinating Groups and within their agencies to seek out individuals to assist with military mobilizations.

NMAC Chair (Or Vice Chair)

Representative for the US Government for wildland fire activities that are part of any military mobilization. They are responsible for several aspects of responding to a Request for Assistance, The Vice Chair of NMAC serves in the absence of the Chair.

Responsibilities

- Represents all US Wildland Fire Leadership for mobilization and ordering.
- Addresses (if needed) delegations of resources from military units upon arrival.
- Organizes and leads After Action Reviews (AARs) for US Military resource deployments.

NMAC Coordinator (NICC Center Manager or Deputy)

Maintains close contact with the US Military DoD liaison assigned to NMAC, as well as with other senior US Military and DoD officials. The primary point of contact when a request for assistance will be generated.

Responsibilities

- Serves as the facilitator for all NMAC decision making.
- Assists in the drafting of RFAs for NMAC approvals.
- Supervises support positions that are activated by NMAC and at the NICC for any military deployment or activation.
- Ensure all civilian resources are assigned or committed.

- Inform the DoD liaison to NMAC of all potential and actual requests for military assistance as early as possible.
- Provide guidance/clarification on resources being mobilized.
- Monitor deployment of military resources and assist when needed.

DoD Liaison to NMAC

As needed, the DoD will send a liaison officer to be assigned to NMAC and located at NIFC, who coordinates closely with NMAC and the NICC. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region X Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) appoints the liaison that is assigned.

Responsibilities.

- The DoD liaison to the NMAC is the on-scene, single POC for the DoD.
- The DoD liaison closely confers with NMAC to ensure prompt, effective, and appropriate use of federal military assistance to fire suppression efforts.
- The DoD Liaison to NMAC will coordinate with the appropriate DCO's and their staff to assist NMAC in coordinating military support activities.
- The DoD Liaison to NMAC and DCO will review requests for military assistance prior to transmittal and advise NMAC on any significant concerns.

USFS Fire and Aviation Management, Assistant Director Operations

The Forest Service (FS) Assistant Director Operations (ADO), located at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) is the National MAFFS Liaison Officer (NMLO). The NMLO or their Acting is responsible for approving requests for MAFFS in coordination with the FS Assistant Director Aviation.

Responsibilities:

- Establish contacts at the military installation for use by NICC during deployment and commitment of troops.
- Provides general briefing on the national coordination system and the role of the system in supporting the military.
- Provides specific briefing concerning necessary equipment needed to support the troops and support to be provided by NIFC.

USFS MAFFS Program Manager

The MAFFS Program Manager is responsible for annually reviewing and updating the MAFFS operational plans and guides with the Air Expeditionary Commander (AEG) and the agency MAFFS Steering Committee.

The MAFFS Program Manager is also responsible for the MAFFS equipment maintenance contract, coordination and communication with the MAFFS Air Wings and the Air Expeditionary Group Commander (AEG) and coordinating annual MAFFS training.

See Chapter 50 for more specific duties and responsibilities of the MAFFS Program Manager.

USFS Fire and Aviation Management, Workforce Development, Training, and Education

USFS Workforce Development, Training, and Education (WDTE) is responsible for training active-duty military personnel for wildland firefighting, training civilian overhead personnel

assigned to work with military units, and facilitating assignment of fireline leadership to their military counterparts.

The military firefighting training process is different from the NWCG courses provided to civilian wildland firefighters.

The military provides extensive training in organization, discipline, physical fitness, and other skills which facilitate quick utilization in a wildland fire capacity.

ORDERED POSITIONS

The following positions are part of the ordering system, and not part of one's position responsibilities and duties.

NMAC Military Liaison

The NMAC Military Liaison Officer (previously known as Battalion Military Liaison or BNML) is requested by NMAC when mobilizing military ground assets. The NMAC Military Liaison is responsible for building a team that primarily composed of a staff and leader for training, briefing, and mobilization actions.

The NMAC Military Liaison is selected by the NMAC and is the Battalion Commander's liaison to the Incident Commander. This person should be well versed in military firefighter mobilizations. While at the military installation this person is responsible for:

- Presents an overview of suppression duties the military unit will be performing once assigned to an incident.
- Coordinating with the Training Coordinator and the Unit Commander at the military installation.
- Participating in military briefings to orient command and staff to the fire assignment.
- Travel with the advanced party to interface with incident management team, and secure adequate field training location.
- Assisting the military with deployment planning.
- Obtaining copies of training site(s) and schedules for classroom and on-the-job training to be accomplished.
- Interfacing with military command staff and Training Cadre at the training site.
- Briefing Strike Team Leader Military (STLMs) and Military Crew Advisors (MCADs) regarding military crew assignments and training schedules.
- Distributing copies of the MCAD Checklist to STLMs and MCADs.
- Deployed with the military unit after the training has been completed.

MAFFS Liaison Officer

The MAFFS Liaison Officer (MAFF) reports to the National MAFFS Program Manager and is a Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement position. This position is the liaison for the using agency or agencies and the military organization supplying retardant delivery service. The MAFF must be familiar with the governing policies and procedures, as well as military operational assistance programs.

Duties

- Keeps current with operational procedures, equipment, reporting requirements, and technical changes.
- Makes initial contact, establishing communication channels with NICC, Region, AES/CC, MAFFS Airtanker Base Manager, Unit Aviation Officer, Forest FMO, Airport Manager, FAA, PIO and Military Base Commander.
- Orders support personnel consistent with MAFFS Operational Plan guidelines.
- Meets required daily reporting requirements to NICC and other interested parties as outlined in the MAFFS Operational Plan.
- Ensures compliance with agency and contract requirements. Monitors pilot flight/duty hour limitations and implement work/rest guidelines. Ensures testing checks of MAFFS equipment are performed and documented
- Facilitates debriefings/after action reviews (AARs), appraisal of capabilities, lessons learned and formal report and final cost.

Please see Chapter 50 for further information on the roles and responsibilities for the MAFF.

Military Coordinator on Duty (COD)

The Military COD is the primary point of contact at the NICC for all national US Military mobilizations. Depending on the size of an RFA or a MAFFS mobilization, they may establish a Military Expanded Dispatch Organization to facilitate the ordering process.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Assemble staff to fulfill duties of Military Expanded, as required.
- Coordinate with the Military Liaison Officer and MAFFS Liaison Officer and is their direct contact for all ordering needs and requests.

Please see Chapter 20 for further information on the roles and responsibilities of the NICC Military COD.

CHAPTER 20

DISPATCH AND COORDINATION

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the ordering and mobilization process for active military ground resources.

Proactive planning and decision making are essential to ensure the military is efficiently deployed. Historically, DoD assets are utilized during National Preparedness Levels (PL) of 4 and 5. The National Fire Preparedness Plan (Chapter 10 of the *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*) identifies descriptors of these Preparedness Levels.

All interagency coordination and dispatch business practices will be followed when mobilizing and supporting military resources.

Active Component and National Guard assets are considered surge capacity and will only be activated when all civilian firefighting assets are committed or unavailable. All civilian resources must be assigned, either to active fires or to initial attack, prior to mobilizing military assets.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

NMAC

NMAC is the national level authority for directing and controlling firefighting resource allocations between Geographic Areas to ensure priority objectives are met, with full authority to take appropriate actions to implement their decisions. The same authority applies when evaluating active military requests for assistance.

Responsibilities:

- Monitor availability of civilian resources (suppression) and determining/verifying when no civilian resources are available, and the military may be activated.
- NMAC Geographic Area Liaisons will work with their Geographic Area MAC groups to determine the need and identify incidents that may be suitable for military activation.
- NMAC members will work with the Geographic Area Coordinating Groups they represent to determine the potential incidents (within a geographic area) to receive military support.
- The NMAC Chair provides representation at all military briefings and orientations.

NMAC Military Liaison

This position/individual is delegated by NMAC for the duration of the RFA and is responsible for managing the support organization required of military activations to provide the service identified in the RFA.

NICC

The NICC is the sole entity responsible for processing *Title 10* Military Activation requests. The NICC Military Coordinator will activate the Military Expanded Dispatch support function once an approved RFA is sent to the Department of Defense.

The NICC will create and manage a Military Activation Incident. The NICC will process all requests for pre-mobilization and mobilization activities. This includes working with NMAC, GMACs, and training specialists to target needed/required fireline personnel (MCADs, STLMS and TFLD) as well as an appropriate incident management organization commensurate to the complexity of the assignment.

Single Incident: NICC does initial ordering, then reassigns resources to target incident once identified. It is the target incident's responsibility to actively manage the assigned military assets and support resources.

HUB/Theatre Model (Multi-Incident): NICC will manage the incident and support resources to alleviate the workload on the local center and ensure costs are tracked appropriately.

GACC

Each GACC is responsible to the NICC for providing a specified number of overhead personnel to support the military activation. NMAC through coordination with GMACs will identify the number and type of resource each GA is required to fill.

LINES OF AUTHORITY

The *Economy Act* provides for the use of *Title 10* Military Resources when there are no civilian or commercial resources available, and Title 32 has been expended, to meet the need for suppression resources.

NMAC is responsible for confirming no civilian or commercial resources are available and will make the determination for Military Activation as conditions warrant.

MOBILIZATION PROCESS

Activation Type Dependent

The mobilization process varies based on the type of activation. There are two types of activations that NMAC considers:

- Target fire identified and is requesting military assistance
 - NMAC verifies no available civilian resources
 - NMAC proceeds to the RFA process
- No target fire, preparatory mobilization
 - NMAC has verified no civilian resources are available and none will become available in the foreseeable future
- NMAC may determine to activate a training cadre to train and prepare the identified unit for activation at the unit's installation.

Pre-deployment

NMAC will identify an Incident Management Organization (IMO) that will oversee and manage the military activation from deployment to demobilization. The pre-deployment process is roughly one week.

The IMO, along with identified Military Training Cadre, will report to the identified military installation approximately five days prior to incident deployment for training and issuance of required PPE.

Depending on activation type, fireline overhead personnel may be requested to arrive at the military installation with the IMO and training cadre or just prior to deployment.

Post Training Movement

The movement will be designed between day zero and fourteen specifically for the most efficient method where the unit will be assigned. This may include:

- Ground transportation
- Commercial aircraft
- Contract transportation
- Mobilize from a local Mobilization Center

Please See *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* for further details on Post Training Movement.

UTILIZATION ON ASSIGNED INCIDENTS

Incident Management Team Integration

The Military Liaison Officer (MLO) and their Command and General Staff (C&G) will liaison with the IMT in command of the incident the Military Unit is assigned to. While on shift, the Strike Team Leaders (STLMs) and Military Crew Liaison Advisors (MCADs) work directly for and are in command of the Divisions and Branches they are assigned. While off duty the *Title 10* Resources are under the command of their Commanding Officer and the Military Activated IMO.

Base Camp Considerations

Title 10 Activations require special considerations when co-located at an Incident Base Camp. Generally, Title 10 Activations require their own separate facilities and Base Camp resources for the following items:

- Shower facilities
- Caterer
- Telecommunications
- Supply
- Sleeping Area
- Camp Crew
- Laundry
- Medical Support

Host Incident Responsibilities

The IMO Logistics Section will work with the Host Incident logistics and ordering unit to procure consumables such (i.e., water, sports drink, ice, batteries, supplies etc.).

INCIDENT SUPPORT ORGANIZATION (ISO)**Overview**

As outlined in Chapter 10, specialized support positions are part of the command structure established for receiving military ground resources. These positions are ordered through the IROC system and are requested by the Military Liaison Officer and/or receiving incident management team. All specialized positions play a critical role within the ICS system.

The military unit's representatives play a critical role in foster positive working relationships and communication with their hosts, provide support and safety to their respective resources (on deployment) and effectively handle any unexpected situations that may develop. Detailed responsibilities are further outlined in Chapter 10. Most importantly, these individuals play a critical role in the smooth transition of their resources into active wildland fire operations.

DEMOBILIZATION

Demobilization planning will begin as soon as the military ground resources are actively engaged on an incident(s). If a full 30 plus day assignment will not be met, or the military assets will be released early, a minimum of 72 hours is needed to allow for demobilization planning.

Dispatch and coordination considerations for a military demobilization may include:

- Release of Caterer and shower units
- Transportation methods
 - NICC Large Transport Jet
 - Busses
- Return of National Cache System Supplies

CHAPTER 30

AIR NATIONAL GUARD AND NATIONAL GUARD

OVERVIEW

Many events trigger responses across multiple jurisdictions and government levels. The National Guard excels in Homeland Defense due to its geographically dispersed forces, local community links, and ties to state and local governments. These relationships enable rapid, integrated emergency responses. With its unique dual constitutional authority, the National Guard bridges any ambiguity between State and Federal government boundaries.

The National Guard is the only U.S. military force operating across both State and Federal responses, leveraging State Active Duty (SAD), Full-Time National Guard Duty (Title 32), and Active Duty (Title 10). While SAD, Title 32, and Title 10 are different statuses and roles, they provide mutually supporting capabilities.

In the 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress allowed specially designated National Guard officers, known as Dual Status Commanders, to command forces in both Title 10 and Title 32 statuses, partially eliminating mutual exclusivity in the Chain of Command.

THE ADJUTANT GENERALS (TAGS)

The Adjutant General ensures National Guard personnel are adequately trained in wildland firefighting techniques and coordinate with civilian firefighting agencies to effectively integrate their capabilities.

Refer to Chapter 10 for further details on the state Adjutant General.

MODULAR AIRBORNE FIREFIGHTING SYSTEMS (MAFFS)

The Governors of California, Nevada, and Wyoming may activate their respective Air National Guard Units having MAFFS equipment and qualified crews for State-controlled fires. Approval for use of MAFFS equipment must be obtained from the USFS Assistant Director Operations, NIFC, prior to this activation. When MAFFS are activated by a governor, the USFS Regional Office for that State will assign an accounting code for the incident.

MAFFS Ordering Criteria

MAFFS domestic requests will be placed through established ordering channels to the NICC. NICC will place a RFA to the Region X Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO).

The requesting Geographic Area may need to order the following support for MAFFS Activation:

- One each MAFFS Liaison Officer (MLO aka MAFF) and one each MAFF trainee.
- One each Airbase Radio Kit (NFES 4660).
- One each MAFFS Communications Specialist (THSP).
- One each Assistant MAFFS Liaison Officer (AMLO).
- One each MAFFS Airtanker Base Manager (MABM) and one each MABM trainee.
- Logistics, Finance, and Information personnel.

MAFFS Operations must also include a MAFFS qualified Leadplane.

For MAFFs activations, the Receiving Unit must be prepared to provide administrative support (procurement, motel rooms, phones, office space, clerical and timekeeping support, transportation) to accommodate as many as forty (40) to forty-five (45) agency and DoD personnel per two (2) aircraft.

For additional information, see *Appendix D: MAFFS Operating Plan*:

<https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/reference-documents>

ROTARY WING

Governors can activate Air National Guard rotary wing aircraft for use in their respective state.

See Chapter 60 for more details.

GROUND RESOURCES

National Guard ground resource activations may be limited to a few crews up to a full battalion.

Depending on the state, fireline leadership may or may not be provided internally by the requesting state. Any positions unable to fill locally by the host state, will be requested and prioritized through the ordering system.

NICC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Facilitate the ordering of support positions required when states activate their national guard.
- Ensure National Guard support orders are prioritized through the system.

CHAPTER 40

GROUND RESOURCES

OVERVIEW

Mobilization of military ground assets is a complex process that cannot be accomplished within the existing organizational structure. A Military Liaison Officer (MLO), typically the IMO IC who remains with the battalion for the duration of the military deployment, is assigned to the military unit. The MLO travels to the military installation, begins the coordination process, oversees the training, accompanies the unit to the incident, and provides liaison between the Military Commander and the hosting incident's Incident Commander(s). The MLO/IMO IC also determines which of their IMO support staff will be needed at the military base as part of the advanced party ahead of mobilization to the incident to facilitate relationship building and ensure the deployment is best set up for successful integration.

After the Request for Assistance (RFA) has been submitted to the Department of Defense (DoD), approximately eight days are required before trained military firefighters are available for their first operational day of the assignment (boots on the ground).

The length of mobilization for any military ground unit shall not exceed 30 days. The first day of assignment begins the day they arrive on the incident. Agency personnel assigned to a military unit/incident(s) should plan on at least a 30-day assignment. All assigned agency personnel will follow the work/rest policy of their respective agency.

Military Base Advanced Party / Preparatory Group

The purpose of the Advance Party is to provide a briefing to the command and support staff of the involved military unit, begin building relationships for the deployment, and prepare the military unit for successful deployment.

Advanced party duties and timelines are described in *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook*. The Advance Party is composed of wildland fire subject matter experts and leaders. Membership of the Advance Party is determined by the MLO/IMO IC and approved by NMAC and is ordered by the NICC.

Refer to *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* ("playbook") for Advanced Team cadre considerations.

Initial Meeting and Briefing

The initial meeting at the military base serves multiple purposes. It introduces military staff to their wildland fire counterparts. It ensures both groups align on activation, logistics, training, and mobilization plans. This gathering sets the tone for success and clarifies expectations for both partners.

From the military perspective, this may involve personnel from the battalion through the division level, but at a minimum should include the Battalion Commanders and the logistics staff.

From the wildland fire perspective this may involve: IMO Incident Commander, Logistics, Operations, Safety, Plans, Finance, PIO, NMAC Representative(s) and training representative(s).

Upon completion of the general briefing, separate specific briefings with question/answer sessions should be conducted involving the individuals of the NIFC Advance Party and their counterparts from the military. Additionally, a representative from the supporting DCO/DCE also arrives at the supporting installation to brief the chain-of-command on the firefighting mission. Please see *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* for potential briefing topics.

INCIDENT SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

As noted in Chapter 10 and outlined in Chapter 20, functional support positions in an informal command structure called an Incident Management Organization (IMO) can be used to mobilize and assimilate ground military troops into wildland fire incidents. The IMO collectively serve as functional liaisons between the military and the hosting IMT(s) that utilize them as fireline resources.

Individuals possessing skills and abilities (rather than strictly NWCG qualifications) may serve as functional representatives on the IMO. IMO members are ordered through the IROC system and are requested by the Military Liaison Officer (IMO IC) and/or receiving incident management team. Each IMO member plays a critical role in fostering positive working relationships and communication between the military responders and those hosting them, provide support and safety to their respective resources (on deployment), and effectively handle any unexpected situations that may develop.

These individuals serve as interpreters between military, wildfire terminology and culture throughout the duration of the deployment (i.e. exceeding the tenure of IMTs for whom the military may be working). Most importantly, these individuals play a critical role in the smooth transition of their resources into safe, active wildland fire operations.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

There are several potential mobilization configurations that can be expected:

- IMO accompanies military unit and serve as liaisons with hosting IMT on a single incident.
- IMO accompanies military unit and serve as liaisons at a theatre location, able to assist multiple incidents/IMTs.
- MLO mobilizes with military unit to a single incident. (exception v rule)
- “Pre-season” training prior to potential mobilization
- Initiating “Just in Time” training without a host incident

See *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* for specifics on each potential configuration.

The IMO associated with military mobilizations will be issued a NMAC Tasking or Letter of Expectation from NMAC that clearly articulates their responsibility. Neither the IMO nor the military will have command authority over the incident. Instead, the role of the IMO is coordination and administrative oversight of the military who serve as operational resources for the existing IMT(s) with delegated responsibility for the incident.

It is recommended that the IMO staff members meet with the hosting IMT(s) C&G to discuss and align around roles and responsibilities to best serve the incident and the military resources assisting. See *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* for suggestions by C&G function.

FIRELINE OPERATIONAL OVERHEAD

In addition to the IMO, a combination of leadership and operational positions with diverse experience and qualifications is needed to best facilitate the seamless assimilation of military personnel into wildland firefighting, typical positions include CRWB, TFLD, STCR, DIVS, etc. Additionally, qualified and experienced Fallers add capacity and enhance the safety margin when embedded with military crews.

In recent years agency crews that actively recruit individuals with prior military service (e.g., Veterans Crews) have been mobilized as operational support “peers” and have been extremely successful when working alongside those currently serving.

NWCG qualified operational leaders work hand-in-hand with their military counterparts to provide leadership, lingo/jargon translation, and safety oversight, as well as assist with integration into the assigned resources at various fire line locations. Refer to *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* for more information.

Recommended positions and number needed for activation:

Full Battalion:

- 20 MCADs/CRWB
- 10 STCR/TFLD/STML

Half Battalion:

- 10 MCADs/CRWB
- 5 STCR/TFLD/STML

NOTE: The MCAD qualification is granted in IQCS to anyone serving successfully in those positions to facilitate staffing and recruitment subsequent years. See the Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement for details on awarding MCAD to responding personnel.

MILITARY OPERATIONS

Every commanding officer has the authority to give lawful orders to those under their command. The orders are passed from the Battalion Commander to the Company Commander.

Military Culture of Conduct, Customs, and Courtesies

The military has a rich long-established history of culture governed by the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), Code of Conduct, Customs, Courtesies, and individual service/unit traditions which will be maintained during NMAC deployment. Most military units have an officer knowledgeable in protocol matters the unit’s Adjutant. The topic should be addressed in the initial face to face meeting with the unit commander and NIFC personnel to provide context and understanding.

Senior military leadership may do site visits at the incident. NIFC personnel need to be aware of these visits and be prepared to coordinate for potential impacts to operations based on military customs and courtesies. This is equivalent to a standard VIP visit and coordination with the VIP's staff representatives.

MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND FIRELINE DUTIES

Military units have a range of backgrounds, experiences and skill sets. Military and agency overhead should continually assess the unit's readiness to take on appropriate tasks with due consideration for safety and experience levels. While basic fireline duties (i.e. gridding, mop up, holding, chipping/brushing, etc.) may be typical early in the assignment, military units have the potential to do a wide range of fire line tasks.

As skills and fire environment knowledge grow, additional tasks may include handline construction, hose lay installation, firing operations, air to ground integration (i.e. bucket work), burnout support, hot line/IA work, or other operational activities. Overhead should work in conjunction with assigned veteran crews to maximize training opportunities for soldiers.

Military units may have qualified sawyers, radio operators, drivers, equipment operators, or EMTs whose skills can be utilized to maximize unit effectiveness.

It is also worth noting during the initial training and throughout the fireline deployment that not all fire assignments involve active flame suppression work. Other support functions that can be filled through a request for assistance include Radio Operators, Camp Crew and Supply Unit/Logistics.

FUNCTIONAL SUPPORT

Further details of all functional support can be found in *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook*.

Logistics

During the preliminary meeting between the advanced party and the military unit the logistical infrastructure, equipment issue and ongoing support will be discussed referencing the *Military Ground Resources Playbook* and the availability of resources in the system at the time of deployment.

(Note: a special emphasis and discussion will occur regarding the infrastructure and utilization of the TOC) physical support of TOC

The IMO will provide infrastructure for the military unit including administrative office space, dining facility, shower facility, laundry facility, portable toilets, hot hand wash stations, generators, light towers, and sleeping area for all personnel. The infrastructure could be part of a larger incident base and/or a standalone configuration to support just the military. The logistics section chief will coordinate with the battalion S-4 regarding infrastructure. (See *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* LOGS section for additional information and procedures)

Subsistence and hydration will be supplied in accordance with the NWCG national food contract which provides standard meals or vegetarian options.

Each military member will be issued full personal protective clothing including NFPA 1977 fire line approved boots, Nomex shirts, Nomex trousers, helmet, fire line pack, fire shelter, protective eyewear, headlamp, and additional fire line supplies. Each military member will be provided with a tent, and an additional sleeping bag. (Military members will also bring their own military issued sleep systems). See the *Military Ground Resources Playbook* for the complete list and procedures for equipment issue.

Additional, non-traditional requests will be addressed on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the military unit, the logistics section chief, and the incident business advisor.

Communications

The National Interagency Incident Communications Division (NIICD) will provide training and issue of two-way radio communications devices for the military unit. Two-way radio communication will be distributed to operational units in the field and programmed with the correct frequencies for the incident(s) being supported by the military. The communication system will be supported by the incident communication unit and/or with a communications technician assigned to the military.

To the best of our ability there will be cellular communication sites enhanced by cell towers on wheels for official and personal telecommunication. There are rare occasions when there is no ability to extend cell signal to the area the military will be staying at, in those cases we will attempt to utilize satellite systems; however, this will limit personal telecommunication based on system capacity.

All DoD issued communications will be utilized with the military only and will not be used in place of NWCG communications. (See *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* for training and issuing procedures)

Any additional communications concerns and/or systems utilization issues will be discussed during the preliminary meeting between the NWCG advanced party and the military unit.

Transportation

Commercial, civilian ground or air transportation will be provided to/from garrison to the incident location. This will be coordinated with the NICC, logistics chief, designated military unit contact, and garrison unit contact. (See Transportation/movement Plan)

Transportation for the military unit may include heavy duty rental vehicles, buses, or agency vehicles.

The driving of these vehicles will be addressed through DoD policy in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture vehicle rentals parameters. (See NERV website for specific current information).

Additional transportation options and/or support will be discussed during the preliminary meeting between the advanced party and the military unit for special circumstances and/ or special need utilization for DoD equipment and systems.

Driver requirements for GOV acquired rental equipment: (matched DoD contract)

“Contact the Enterprise location where the reservation will be picked up to verify. There may be additional restrictions in some states per the state laws or license requirements.

Minimum age requirement per the BPA is restricted to government employees who are properly licensed individuals. Age restrictions apply to certain classes as provided below:

- 21 for large SUVs, Luxury, Premium Cars, Stake Bed and Box/Cutaway Trucks
- 18 for all vehicles unless noted otherwise.
- Minimum driver age for Large Vans is 25
- See NERV-EM BPA for 12 to 15 Passenger Van Requirements.

REQUIRED SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

See *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* for more details.

MEDICAL

Preliminary meetings will occur during the advanced party visit with the military unit. To identify and clarify the nature of the NWCG Incident Within an Incident (IWI), a medical plan and the eight-line medical incident report (ICS-206WF) will be used and proactively explained to ensure understanding as it relates to evacuation/transportation, clarification of roles and responsibilities including administrative during the deployment of the military. Further details can be found in *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook*.

DoD:

A military battalion surgeon is the chief medical officer of a battalion, responsible for the health and medical readiness of its personnel. While the title "surgeon" is a historical term, most battalion surgeons are primary care physicians specializing in areas like family medicine or emergency medicine. They act as clinicians, leaders of the medical platoon, and medical advisors to the battalion commander. Military units generally are staffed with a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner. In addition, there are medical assistants, line medics and/or hospital corpsmen that make up the remainder of the platoon. The facility housing the medical personnel is customarily referred to as a Battalion Aid Station (BAS). Given the level of licensure and credentialing they provide prescription medications, perform invasive lifesaving procedures, acute pre-hospital care, and palliative care in the field as a part of their regular duties. The DoD has a robust supply and support system for deployed units that will be utilized to replace items of initial issue from DoD.

The medical care and wellness of military units is one of the top priorities of the chain of command. Generally, the battalion commander will act exclusively on the advice of the battalion surgeon regarding medical support for the military members. All the command staff members are very familiar with the DoD model of medical care, follow-up, and documentation. This system is very similar to each agency's workers' compensation documentation utilized by the civilian population; however, it is distinctly different and parallel and must be fulfilled for reporting and documentation to the DoD.

Military medical personnel can be utilized within the Incident Within Incident IWI (<https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/risk-management-committee>) at their level of certification for military personnel in coordination and as a part of the IWI medical plan. The utilization of military medical personnel for NWCG personnel will be dependent on licensure/certification in alignment with the primary agency having jurisdiction for medical response at the incident.

The coordination of the two medical systems into one harmonious response is critical to the success of the military deployment. There will have to be continuous clear text communication during the deployment to ensure the best outcomes in all potential situations. The medical plan will be maintained in real time and updated based on the location of the incident requesting the military deployment.

Reporting

Notifications will proceed via agency channels as well as military chains of command. It is essential to pre-identify process and contacts as part of the initial activation inbrief. This is also an appropriate time to communicate typical medical unit supplies, likely mechanisms of injury/illness and other specifics related to the incident location/response.

In addition to NWCG medical support, each military unit will have medical assets and supplies that mobilize as part of the RFA to treat military personnel.

Refer to Chapter 70 for guidance on medical supply procurement.

CHAPTER 50

MODULAR AIRBORNE FIREFIGHTING SYSTEM

OVERVIEW

The Modular Airborne Firefighting System (MAFFS) is a critical national resource designed to provide surge aerial firefighting capabilities when contract airtanker resources are exhausted or unavailable. Developed in the 1970s, MAFFS is a self-contained 3,000-gallon aerial firefighting unit that can be loaded into a military C-130 H and J model aircraft without requiring structural modification to the plane. Once MAFFS configured, the aircraft is considered a Type 1 Large Airtanker (LAT).

The program was initiated under a joint agreement between the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Department of Defense (DoD), following severe fire seasons and the recognition of the need for additional aerial suppression capacity. Since its inception, MAFFS units have played a vital role in numerous wildfire incidents across the United States.

MAFFS are typically activated during high-activity fire seasons when national airtanker availability is low. MAFFS/Military Aviation Operations do not fall under the same Part of the Federal Aviation Regulations/Aeronautical Information Manual (FAR/AIM) as Civilian Wildland Fire Operations unless specifically addressed in this guide. When two policies are in conflict the more restrictive policy must be followed.

LINES OF AUTHORITY

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (NMAC)

- Oversees the national mobilization of resources for wildfire suppression, including MAFFS-equipped aircraft.
- Monitors the Unable to Fill (UTF) rate for airtankers nationally. When UTFs escalate, NMAC will consider activating MAFFS for a specific incident, Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC), or the national response.
- Authorizes the activation and deployment of MAFFS units in coordination with the USFS and Department of Defense (DoD). The USFS formally requests military support through the DoD once NMAC deems it necessary.
- Helps determine where MAFFS aircraft will be based to provide the most effective coverage and response time.
- May adjust MAFFS deployments based on shifting priorities or needs across the country.

National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC)

- Acts as the coordinating body for MAFFS activations.
- Process Resource Orders for MAFFS training exercises.
- Ensures coordination with the DoD and participating agencies.

Geographic Area Coordination Centers (GACCs)

- Process Resource Orders for MAFFS activations.
- Coordinate the mobilization and demobilization of MAFFS within their region.

- Liaise with Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and Air Attack.

United States Forest Service (USFS)

- Maintains and owns the MAFFS units.
- Provides leadplanes, aviation resources, and operational oversight.
- Funds operations under the Interagency Agreement with the DoD.

USFS MAFFS Program Manager (MPM)

- Oversee the effective and efficient operation of the MAFFS program.
- Coordinate and collaborate with the NICC and the GACCs for exercises and activations.
- Ensure that all aspects of aerial firefighting are properly coordinated and executed.
- Manage the deployment and readiness of C-130 aircraft equipped with MAFFS units.
- Supervise the coordination between the FS, Air Expeditionary Commander, the U.S. Air Force, National Guard Bureau and units, and other federal, state, and local firefighting agencies to ensure a unified response to wildfire incidents.
- Oversee training programs for both flight crews and ground personnel.
- Ensure compliance with safety protocols and managing resources to maintain operational readiness throughout the fire season.
- Coordinate logistical planning, including equipment maintenance, scheduling aircraft for deployment, and administering the MAFFS maintenance contract.
- Coordinate maintenance to ensure at least one MAFFS unit is available year-round for each airlift wing.
- Track the performance of the MAFFS units, analyzing after-action reports, and implementing improvements to enhance the program's effectiveness in future fire suppression effort.

MAFFS Steering Committee (MSC)

The MAFFS Steering Committee (MSC) is chaired by the MPM and consists of interagency subject matter experts from each of the MAFFS support disciplines. Each member has the responsibility to provide oversight, staffing support, guidance, and problem-solving skills for their area of expertise and/or qualification.

The MSC operates under the authority delegated by the Assistant Director Aviation (ADA) and follows the written Standard Operating Procedures located in Appendix D.

The MSC is responsible to:

- Provide national leadership in all aspects of MAFFS operations. This leadership includes the development and dissemination of operational standards.
- Provide technical assistance regarding MAFFS operations.
- Promote interagency cooperation and standardization in MAFFS operations.
- Identify operational challenges, develop solutions, and recommend corrective actions to the Washington Office Fixed-Wing Operations Branch Chief.

- Develop and support standardized training for MAFFS operations, and provide leadership in training course development, implementation, evaluation, and revision for all participating agencies.
- Serve as the central source of information, guidance, and support for MAFFS-related decisions and operations.
- Provide technical assistance for contracting support as requested.
- Coordinate with Department of Defense (DoD) partners.

MAFFS SUPPORT PERSONNEL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following is a brief overview of the MAFFS support personnel, for a more comprehensive list please refer to *Appendix C* of the *USFS MAFFS Operating Plan*. The requirements for each position are located in the Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement.

The *USFS MAFFS Operating Plan* in *Appendix D* identifies which of the following positions are needed during exercises and activations.

MAFFS Airtanker Base Manager (MABM)

- The MABM and the MAFFS Liaison Officer (MAFF) collaborate closely before, during, and after exercises and activations to ensure safe, efficient, and effective MAFFS operations. Both the MABM and the MAFF report directly to the MAFFS Program Manager (MPM).
- A MABM is required at all exercises and full activations. A MABM trainee should be ordered for the duration of each exercise or activation.

MAFFS Airtanker Base Specialist (MABS)

- The MABS reports to the MABM. The MABS primary responsibility is to ensure safe and efficient integration of MAFFS ramp and loading operations. The MABS is the entry level qualification that have been engaged in either a MAFFS exercise or activation. Due to their basic understanding of MAFFS operations, along with their ramp qualification, the MABS can integrate effectively with existing airtanker base personnel or provide oversight for ramp and loading operations for the MAFFS program.
- If a MABM is not onsite, a MABS or MABS trainee is required to be onsite during any and all MAFFS operations. A MABS trainee should be ordered for the duration of each exercise or activation

MAFFS Liaison Officer (MAFF)

- The role of a MAFF is to serve as the agency primary point of contact and coordinator between the FS, the DoD, and other firefighting agencies before, during, and after exercises and activations. The MAFF collaborates closely with the MABM and MC and reports directly to the MPM.
- A MAFF is required for all exercises and full activations. A MAFF trainee should be ordered for the duration of each exercise or activation. Depending on the needs of the activation and the MAFFS Program Manager, the MAFF and trainee, may not be needed at the activation location.

MAFFS Assistant Liaison Officer (MALO)

- The role of a MALO is to assist the MAFF as the agency primary point of contact and coordinator between the FS, the DoD, and other firefighting agencies before, during, and after exercises and activations. The MALO reports directly to the MAFF.
- When the MAFF and MPM deem necessary, a MALO can be ordered for the duration of each exercise or activation.
- The duties of the MALO are the same duties as the MAFF and are delegated by the MAFF as needed.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (DOD) / US AIR FORCE (USAF)

- Provides aircraft (C-130s), flight crews and aircraft maintenance.
- Coordinates with USFS for unit installation, training, and activation.
- Participating Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Units include:
 - 146th Airlift Wing (CA ANG) Channel Islands, CA
 - 153rd Airlift Wing (WY ANG) Cheyenne, WY
 - 302nd Airlift Wing (AFRC - CO) Colorado Springs, CO
 - 152nd Airlift Wing (NV ANG) Reno, NV
- WY, CO, and NV all operate C-130 H model aircraft, while CA operates C-130 J model aircraft.
- Personnel from either airlift wing can operate any other airlift wing's aircraft (same model aircraft) and MAFFS Unit.
- Flight crews (same model aircraft) can be made up from multiple airlift wings.
- Air National Guard, MAFFS aircraft from CA, WY, and NV can be activated by their respective State Governor.
 - The MAFFS units are USFS owned, therefore the USFS Assistant Director Aviation (ADA) must give authorization to the state to utilize the unit and contracted maintenance personnel.
 - The ADA can transition the state activation to a USFS activation when the national need reaches pre-identified trigger points.

Air Expeditionary Group/Commander (AEG)

- Provide the necessary air support, coordination, and operational management required for aerial firefighting efforts.
- Coordinate the mobilization, deployment, and operational readiness of military aircraft.
- Ensure that all personnel involved in the aerial firefighting operations, including pilots, aircrew, and aircraft maintenance teams, are properly trained and prepared to conduct safe and effective fire suppression missions.
- Collaborate with the MAFFS Program Manager, the U.S. Air Force, and the National Guard Bureau and units to coordinate the logistics of firefighting operations.
- Ensure the aircraft are ready to respond to fire emergencies.
- Oversee the maintenance and servicing of the MAFFS-equipped aircraft to ensure that they are operational throughout the fire season.

- Monitor the status and activity of the MAFFS aircraft.
- Identify any operational challenges or improvements that can enhance future firefighting efforts.
- Liaise between military and civilian firefighting assets, ensuring smooth integration of the MAFFS program into larger wildfire response operations.

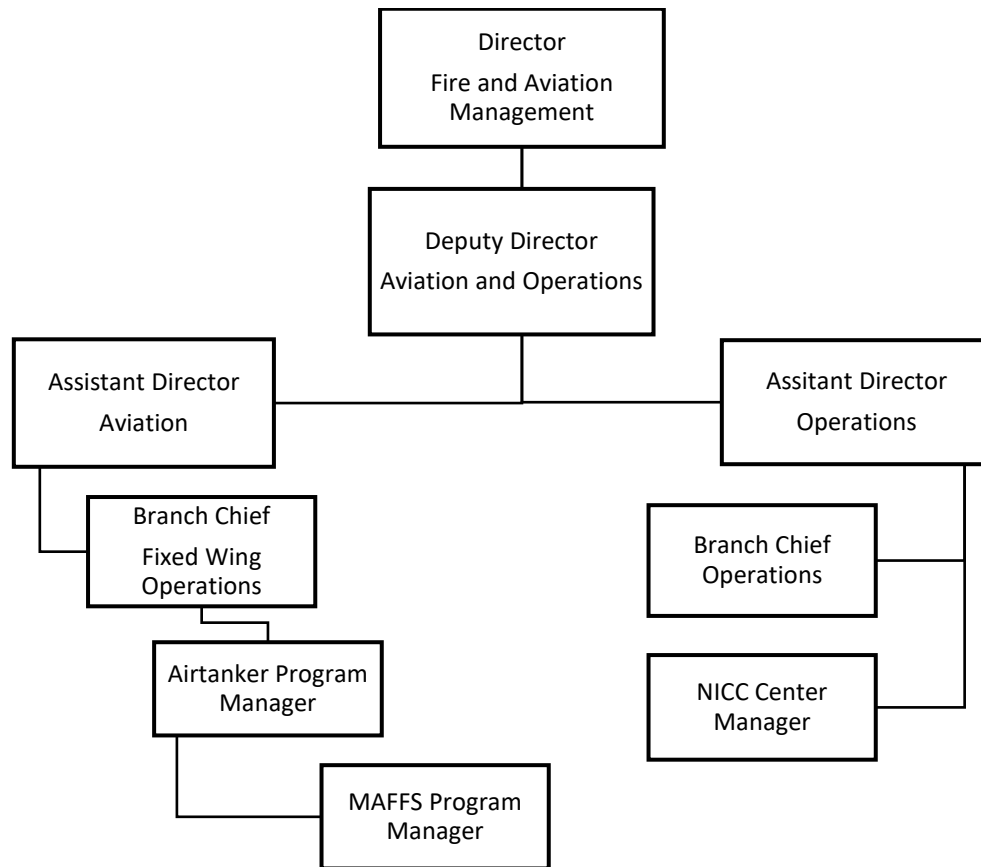
Mission Commander (MC)

The MC has MAFFS experience and will operate in accordance with DoD regulations as well as the USFS MAFFS Operating Plan.

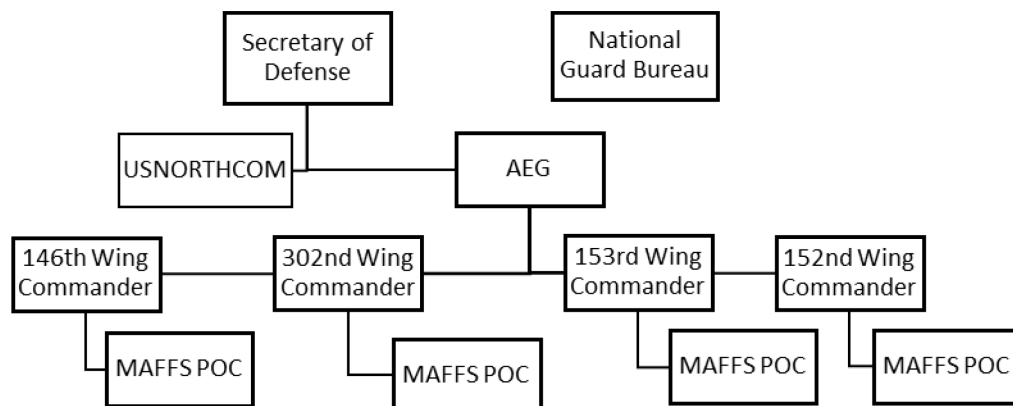
- The MC is responsible for planning, executing, and overseeing all DoD MAFFS operations during an exercise or activation.
- Ensure that missions are carried out safely, efficiently, and in accordance with federal and interagency firefighting guidelines.
- Acts as the primary liaison between the DoD and USFS regarding flight operations.
- Manages crew assignments, aircraft scheduling, and mission prioritization.
- Ensures all MAFFS missions are conducted with a strong emphasis on flight safety, especially given the challenging flying conditions of wildfire operations.
- Verifies that all personnel follow established protocols and safety standards.
- Attend and participate in all daily briefings and after-action reviews.
- Ensure daily reports are captured, completed and accurate.
- Gathers mission data and produces reports post-deployment for evaluation and improvement of future operations.
- Provides feedback to both DoD and agency leadership.

MAFFS ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS

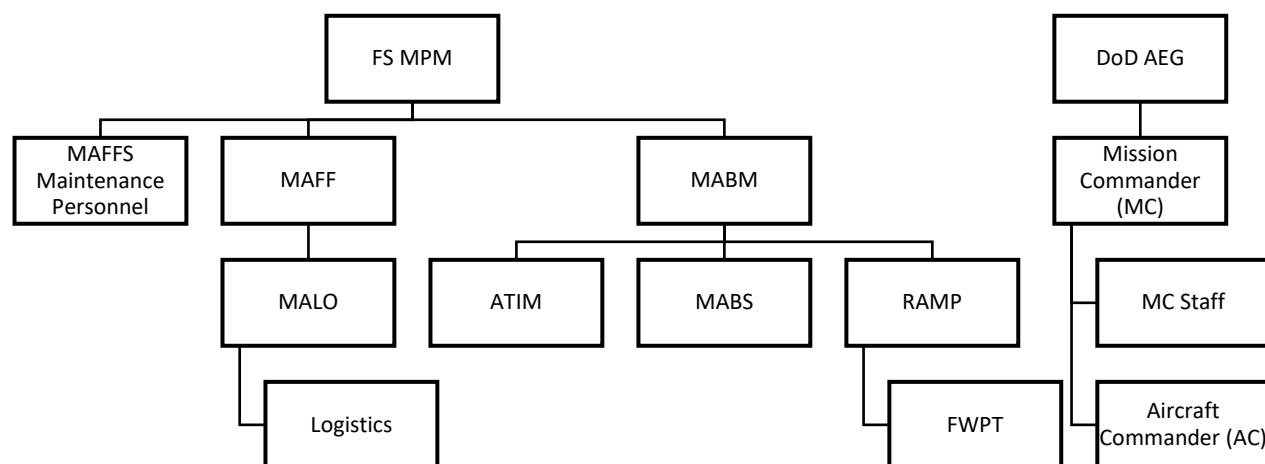
USFS MAFFS Program Organization Chart



DoD MAFFS Program Organization Chart



Activation/Exercise Agency and DoD Organization Chart



For MAFFS operations at an existing airtanker base, refer to the USFS MAFFS Operating Plan.

ORDERING PROCESS/AUTHORIZATION

- NICC confirms the shortage of contract airtankers.
- MAFFS need identified by NMAC.
- NMAC requests an RFA from the NICC.
- NICC notifies the USFS Assistant Director Operations (ADO).
- ADO submits a formal Request for Assistance to DoD via the Defense Coordinating Element (DCE).
- Upon receipt, the DoD enters the RFA in the DoD (Department of Defense) DSCA (Defense Support to Civil Authorities) Automated Support System (DDASS).
- DDASS makes the request visible to all the approvers and Secretary of Defense (SecDef).
- MAFFS approval has been delegated from SecDef to the US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) Commander.
- USNORTHCOM processes orders to get the MAFFS activated and to their destination by the requested date.

Extensions to the original RFA may be requested and granted. Follow the above process for extension requests and approvals.

REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND GUIDES

- PUBLIC LAW 94-478: Authorizes the use of DoD resources in wildfire suppression.

- DoD DIRECTIVE 3025.18: Provides policy on Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA).
- FAR 17.502-2 The Economy Act <https://www.acquisition.gov/far/17.502-2>
- Interagency Agreement for MAFFS (2020 revision): Establishes roles, funding responsibilities, and operational coordination between USFS and DoD.
- Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) and Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations (Red Book): Provide operational standards for MAFFS missions.
- AIR FORCE MANUAL 11-2C-130H VOLUME 3 ADDENDA B (ADDDB) https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a3/publication/afman11-2c-130v3addb/afman11-2c-130hv3addb.pdf
- FSH 5709.16 https://www.fs.usda.gov/cgi-bin/Directives/get_dirs/fsh?5709.16
- *FS Standards for Airtanker Operations* <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/aviation/publications>
- *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Operations PMS 514 (SAO)* <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms514>
- *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations PMS 508 (SABO)* <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms508>
- *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision PMS 505 (SAS)* <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms505>
- *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization* <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/reference-documents>
- *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)* <https://www.nifc.gov/standards/guides/red-book>
- *Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement* for qualification requirements for agency personnel. <https://iqcsweb.nwcg.gov/federal-wildland-fire-qualifications-supplement>
- Any other applicable DoD or agency policies.

TYPES OF MAFFS ACTIVATIONS/BASES (SCALE)

Activations

Standard Activation

Mobilization of one to eight MAFFS units, including the C-130 aircraft, flight crew, and support personnel (i.e. DoD and agency), along with the necessary retardant, if not collocated at an established airtanker base, and logistics, to an identified location.

Generally, the aircraft are activated at the same location and can either be at an existing airtanker base, or at another approved airport.

Existing airtanker bases require less personnel to be ordered to support the MAFFS activation.

Split Activation

Mobilization of more than one MAFFS unit, including the C-130 aircraft, flight crew, and support personnel (i.e. DoD) at two or more existing airtanker bases.

Split Activations allow for multiple aircraft to support multiple Geographic Areas at the same time. It also allows reduces the agency personnel needed to support the MAFFS activation. The MAFF and MALO may not be on site and may oversee multiple activation locations.

The MAFFS Program Manager can authorize off-site oversight on a case by case basis.

Aerial Quick Strike (AQS)

An annual RFA will be completed each October by the ADA and ADO that will ensure an efficient AQS response by the DoD. Request to have one or more MAFFS aircraft, fully capable of dropping retardant, staff at the airlift wing home base for a short duration (3 days or less).

There will be minimal logistical needs and minimal support personnel on site.

AQS activations should be utilized when an area of wildfire concern is within the vicinity of the airlift wing's home base and there is sufficient leadplane support nearby. The one to two aircraft would stand by at their home base, mission ready within 12-24 hours and for the 3-day maximum (mob and demob days do not count). If the need is more than 3 days, there will be a request for an activation through the RFA process.

MAFFS Operating Bases

- Bases must be reviewed and approved by the DoD prior to any MAFFS operations.
- Refer to the NWCG Airtanker Base Directory for the most current MAFFS approved airtanker bases.
- Approved bases will be reviewed every 3 years for approval. If there are any bases identified that need to be reviewed for approval, contact the MPM.

Types of Bases:

- Full Activation: Approved for loading retardant using existing pits and may also be used for overnight and staging of maintenance and support. Additionally, this location may be used to set up MAFFS specific temporary pits and set up larger operating facilities.
- Hub: Loading retardant from an approved airtanker base using existing pits and may also be used for overnight and staging of maintenance and support.
- Reload: Loading retardant from an approved airtanker base using existing pits.

RESTRICTIONS

- MAFFS must adhere to the retardant avoidance policies of the agency.
- During State activations, MAFFS are restricted to operations within that state. Unless there is a State-to-State agreement in place.
- MAFFS flight crews will follow the duty day, flight time and rest period requirements/restrictions of the contracted airtankers and agency policy.
- MAFFS will not perform operations in other than US airspace without prior written approval from WO Fire and Aviation.
- The 302nd Airlift Wing cannot be activated by Colorado's State Governor.
- The MAFFS MC may refuse an assignment if it exceeds the military operational risk management evaluation.

- A MABS/MABS (T), at a minimum, must be onsite for a MAFFS to operate out of an approved base.
- No hot loading, air, water or retardant, at this time.
- Simultaneous fueling and loading is approved, however the local base operations plan must address it and be approved.
- No hot refueling.
- No unauthorized personnel on board the aircraft during flight operations.
- All requests, regardless of entity, for tours, interviews, pictures, video etc. will be approved by both the DoD and the USFS Fire Director in coordination with public affairs and the hosting region.
- Overweight waivers are required when exceeding allowable operating weights at approved bases.

TRAINING AND CURRENCY

Annual MAFFS Training

- An annual training will be coordinated by USFS and DoD one year prior to the event, including location, with the USFS having final decision authority.
- May have more than one annual training event to ensure all four of the wings are captured every year.

DOD:

- Includes classroom sessions, simulator training (optional), and live drops.
- Mandatory for all MAFFS-qualified aircrew.

Agency:

- Leadplane pilots must attend a MAFFS exercise every four years to maintain currency.
- MAFFS qualified personnel must attend an exercise, activation, or be involved in MAFFS operations every three years.

LOGISTICS

- USFS provides MAFFS unit maintenance, loading equipment, lead planes, logistical support, and ramp personnel.
- A leadplane or ASM is required during all MAFFS drops.
- When MAFFS overnight at a base other than the activation base, the ATBM will work with the MABM to ensure the crews are supported logistically.
- Identify a procurement official at the WO level to assist with logistical support needs for exercises and activations.

QUALIFICATIONS

Flight Operations

- MAFFS crew members must be C-130 qualified and complete annual MAFFS-specific training. Refer to Air Force Manual 11-2C-130 Volume 3 Addenda B (ADDB) for specific

training and certification requirements for the flight crew. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a3/publication/afman11-2c-130v3addb/afman11-2c-130hv3addb.pdf

- Leadplane pilots must be certified in accordance with the NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision.

Base Operations

- Refer to the Federal Wildland Fire Qualifications Supplement at for qualification requirements for agency personnel. <https://iqcsweb.nwcg.gov/federal-wildland-fire-qualifications-supplement>

MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- For MAFFS exercises, there is an identified WO FAM Fire Communications Specialist assigned to work with the hosting region and the DoD Public Affairs Officers (PAOs).
- During activations, the MAFF will coordinate and collaborate with the hosting regional and local unit PAOs, Public Information Officers (PIOs), and AEG PA representative.
- The MPM and AEG should be kept apprised of any information releases, media requests, or VIP or political tours requested.
- Information should be shared regarding exercises and activations as soon as possible with the public, media, and local units.

MAFFS OPERATIONS

For specific information on MAFFS operations. Refer to the USFS MAFFS Operating Plan in Appendix D.

- When including MAFFS into the airtanker rotation, refer to the Airtanker Rotation Policy in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book).
- When MAFFS are not co-located with contracted airtankers, and are the closest resource to the requesting incident, they shall be mobilized first if a leadplane is available in the area. Refer to the National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization for specific information on closest available resource ordering.
- A Mission Commander (MC) will be assigned and be on site for each exercise and activation. For exercises, the MC may change from day to day; however, during activations the MC will remain the same for their rotation.
- During activations, flight crews will be rotated every Wednesday.
- Flight crews will not exceed 12 days on duty without having 2 days off.
- DoD personnel should not exceed 12-hours in a duty day. If there is a need for personnel to exceed 12-hours, they may go up to 14-hours with AEG approval. In order to maintain adequate coverage, the MABM will coordinate with the MAFF and GACC to stagger MAFFS on duty times.
- Flight time will not exceed 8-hours in a duty day.

DEMOBILIZATION

Under the authorization of the USFS ADA and ADO the following will apply:

- MAFFS will be released by the NICC with NMAC approval based on national fire activity and utilization of contracted airtankers. Advance notification of 24 to 36 hours with an ending day of Tuesday is preferred, not required, to provide for an orderly release of personnel and equipment.

MAFFS Deactivation Checklist:

- ADA and ADO will initiate deactivation through normal channels to the MPM and the NICC. Information required:
 - Number of MAFFS to be released.
 - Date and time of the release.
 - Base from which they will be released.
- NICC will report release information to NIFC External Affairs and the NIFC Defense Coordination Officer (DCO).
- NICC will confirm DoD release information through the GACC to the MPM, AEG, MAFF and the MC.
- MAFF will provide the MPM and the NICC with estimated time of departure (ETD) and estimated time of arrival (ETA) for released MAFFS aircraft.
- GACC will report actual time of departure (ATD) of MAFFS aircraft to NICC.
- The final flight time is reported by the AEG in the final SITREP.
- For MAFFS equipment demobilization and washout refer to ADDB.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVATIONS

The Department of State, Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration, Office of International Disaster Response (PRM/IDR), will request the international use of MAFFS through the USFS International Programs and Trade (IPT), Disaster Assistance Support Program (DASP). After the contact by PRM/IDR, DASP will place the order through the NICC.

The MPM will identify the following resources to be requested to support the international assignment: MAFF, MABM, MAFFS qualified leadplane pilot. The MC position will be identified by the AEG for international MAFFS assignments. One contracted MAFFS maintenance personnel for every one MAFFS unit will be ordered by the MPM. Military personnel may be requested to assist as needed in maintenance support of the unit while at the international location. Request U.S. Embassy assistance to provide a representative and interpreter, if necessary, to assist the MAFF and MC.

Initially no more than two MAFFS will be committed to allow for adequate surge capability on domestic fires. Additional requests for support beyond two MAFFS will be made to the USFS National Fire Director, after the first two MAFFS have arrived in the host country.

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

- The MAFF will immediately inform the MPM and the NICC of all accidents/incidents. The NICC will notify the NIFC DCO, the ADO, and the MPM will notify the Fixed Wing Branch Chief (FWBC) and ADA of all accidents/incidents.
- When a DoD aircraft being used on a USFS incident is involved in a mishap, incident, or accident the agency policy on accident/incident reporting will be followed.
- All incidents will be reported to the Regional Office by the MAFF as soon as possible and immediately follow up with a (FS-5700-14 SAFECOM Aviation Safety Communiqué) <https://www.safecom.gov/>.
- Additionally, the MAFF will make an initial report for any accident or incident with potential to 1-888-4MISHAP (888-464-7427). This task may be completed by the Regional Aviation Safety Officer (RASO).
- The DoD will be responsible for accident investigations of their aircraft. Agency employees will assist in securing the accident site if required and facilitating the DoD accident team investigation. An agency may request participation in any accident involving DoD aircraft on their incidents. Agency participation may be in a formal or informal capacity at the discretion of the DoD.

CHAPTER 60

ROTARY WING AIRCRAFT

OVERVIEW

When civilian aviation resources are depleted, NMAC/GACCs and individual states can request federal activation of Department of Defense (DoD) and National Guard military to assist with wildland fire and provide aircraft to support large incidents.

Military aircraft policy and interagency wildland fire policy serve different missions and operate under distinct frameworks. However, both are forms of governmental aviation that share common principles related to safety, mission focus, and interagency coordination.

Military Aviation Operations do not fall under the same Part of the Federal Aviation Regulations/Aeronautical Information Manual (FAR/AIM) as Civilian Wildland Fire Operations unless specifically addressed in this guide. When two policies are in conflict the more restrictive policy must be followed.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The number, type, and mission sets associated with aviation units may vary, depending on the needs associated with the size and scope of fire activity and the operational theatre. A single unit, or multiple units, may be assigned to multiple incidents, single incidents, or an area command.

Military aviation units may be activated and assigned for fire operations as task forces, companies, platoons, sections or equivalent size units. The maintenance and logistical support units required to operate for an extended period will also be assigned.

The DoD Liaison to NMAC and the Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) coordinates the request for aircraft, maintenance, and logistical support through U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM).

When federally activated military are assigned to incidents, military aircraft will operate under the operational and tactical direction of the incident Air Operations Branch. When assigned within a Geographic Area, the GACC may retain TACON or control may be assigned to a theatre of operations, or specific incident.

Both federal and state activated military aviation units assigned to federal incidents will be governed by federal agency policies and procedures. Air National Guard are Reserve components of their services and operate in part under State authority.

The Military strictly adheres to federal aviation regulations, 14 CFR Part 91, in addition to their own aviation regulations. However, the Military does not operate in accordance with 14 CFR Part 133 (external load operations) or Part 137 (dispensing chemicals – retardant). These types of operations are governed by military regulations.

Training and certification of pilots are governed by military regulations. Military pilots are not subject to 14 CFR Part 61 (Pilot Certification) nor that of 14 CFR Part 67 (Medical Standards and Certification).

Public Aircraft.

Military aircraft are public aircraft as defined by Title 49 § 40102 and §40125. Military operations are governed by military rules and regulations which are inclusive of 14 CFR Part 91. It must be understood that where firefighting services are needed where 14 CFR Part 91 regulations cannot be complied with, either all or in part, that the military commander must be made aware prior to exercising this operation. Where 14 CFR Part 133 class B external loads are conducted, military commanders should be made aware of rules and regulations governing such operations. Military commanders should be made aware of *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations* (NSHO) governance standards associated with class B operations. 14 CFR Part 91 deviations, Part 133 regulations, and NSHO and should be discussed pre-emptively with military commanders prior to military operations.

OPERATIONAL AUTHORITY DEFINITIONS

Administrative Control. When assigned to an agency/incident, the military maintains administrative control of their aircraft and operates in accordance with their own internal policies.

Operational Control. Military units maintain and do not surrender operational control of their personnel, aircraft and other resources. Military respond to operational direction or TACON provided by the agency.

Operational Direction. Operational direction is defined as the authority to designate objectives, assign tasks, and provide the direction necessary to accomplish the mission. Agencies are responsible for dispatching and directing firefighting services. Agencies are responsible to collaboratively work with military commanders to address any operational conflicts that may exist as well as develop a concept of operations in the utilization, capabilities, and constraints associated with the use of military aviation

Tactical Control (TACON). Refers to the Incident or Area Commander to whom the military aircraft is assigned has the authority to direct and control the movement of these assigned aircraft to accomplish missions or tasks assigned by the Incident Commander or Area Commander.

ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Military Aircraft Utilization

Once military aviation assets are assigned to the incident and the approved mission designation has been identified, there is no delineation in the use of military or civilian aircraft. The most suitable aircraft for a mission shall be used, regardless of ownership.

The Incident Management Organization has tactical control of military aircraft and will coordinate missions with the military aviation commander. The military aviation organization is integrated within the incident Air Operations Branch to enhance planning, briefings, operational efficiency, and safety.

Interagency aviation policy is to be followed for all operations unless the military standard is more restrictive.

Formation flying of military aircraft during arrival on an incident or during incident operations is prohibited unless prior coordination is made with the Helibase and the base is prepared for multi-aircraft flights.

Federal approval shall be indicated by hosting a letter of approval onboard each helicopter. The following considerations will be articulated in the letter of approval. Determination of mission approval shall be assessed by a federal helicopter pilot inspector or National Helicopter Standardization Pilot in coordination with the military commander.

- Aircraft approval may be generalized by make/model or specifically by the N#. This is due to military aircraft replacement or being reconfigured for the type of mission to be performed. Approval of the helicopter by mission type need not be indicated.
- Flightcrew approval may be generalized through a summary listing of flightcrew names or by the designation standards associated with a military commander designation that satisfy the types of agency missions to be conducted.
- Mission approval will be indicated by listing interagency mission types that have been approved.

Federal flightcrew and helicopter approval will satisfy the requirements of this guide.

INCIDENT/OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS

Aviation operations shall comply with the requirements in the applicable military governance and interagency guides and standards as listed below.

- *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations, PMS 510*
- *NWCG Aquatic Invasive Species Guide, PMS 444*
- *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision, PMS 505, NFES 002544*
- *NWCG Standards for Airspace Coordination, PMS 520*
- *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book) NFES 2724*
- *National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*

A qualified Helicopter Manager (HMGB), Helicopter Coordinator (HLCO) or Agency Aviation Military Liaison (AAML) will be assigned to assist the helicopter flight crew(s) to work with the incident. This shall occur after the initial attack period when moving into extended operations.

Helicopter managers for National Guard helicopters shall be ordered and mobilized through Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC).

FS/DOI helicopter managers shall not be assigned to manage non-FS/DOI approved helicopters.

Federal firefighters may be transported on military helicopters.

Agency aviation staff may perform Quality Assurance oversight reviews of training and operations when on federal lands.

An Aviation Safety Communique (SAFECOM) shall be submitted to report any hazard, incident, observation, maintenance problem, or other circumstance with personnel or aircraft that has the potential to cause an aviation related mishap.

Missions are limited to daytime/VFR unless otherwise authorized for night operations.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications (Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground) are required and must satisfy the requirements of this handbook. Communication shall be tested prior to flight into a dispatch zone or the fire traffic area. Contact with the appropriate dispatch office should be made when entering the dispatch zone or incident.

ON INCIDENT OPERATIONS

Aviation resources shall be provided initial information (other aviation resources on scene, frequencies, flight hazards, etc.) prior to actual operations. ICs/AOBDs should also provide mission objectives and expectations. After the first initial attack period an operational briefing shall be provided to all aviation resources.

If military aviation resources are FS/DOI approved, government employees may be approved to fly on the aircraft regardless of jurisdiction, providing the employee is required for the mission and has the appropriate level of aviation training.

Administrative use of military helicopters to stage personnel and equipment to/from airports, administrative logistical sites, base camps is authorized where expediency is required and within the local incident operating area.

Military aviation units shall be part of an existing agency Air Operations Branch and be directed by the incident helibase organization.

The military commander shall remain informed of the types of missions to be performed. Where emergency extraction using a non-medivac helicopter is proposed, the military commander's approval shall be received prior to that operation.

If a state has activated (Title 32) military resources on federal jurisdiction, the IC should determine if resources are federally approved. A cooperater letter of approval identifying military aircraft and pilots approved for FS/DOI operations shall be on board the aircraft. If approved, the IC can retain these resources during the mutual aid period until government owned, contracted or leased resources are filled. Once filled, military resources must be released. Where a desire is to retain these military resources, the incident must submit a resource request with NICC. If the order is not approved, the IC must release the military resources.

Aerial Supervision

Aerial supervision (ASM or ATGS) is required when military helicopter resources are on an incident. A Helicopter Coordinator (HLCO) is highly recommended.

Federally carded aerial supervision, preferably a federally carded HLCO, shall be utilized whenever military aircraft are engaged in bucket operations.

Aerial supervision and helicopter coordination may be performed aboard military helicopters for those aircraft properly equipped and configured. Personnel shall be trained and qualified.

HELICOPTER MANAGEMENT

Every military helicopter assigned to support suppression activities shall have a military crew chief assigned. The crew chief performs many of the duties assigned to agency helicopter managers.

At a minimum, one qualified helicopter manager (HMGB) shall be assigned at a ratio of one HMGB for each four military helicopters. The HMGB assures proper integration of military assets and functions as a liaison with military crew chiefs and pilots. Allowing one HMGB to manage four helicopters is approved only when all helicopters are working at the same helibase.

Military aviation units shall be part of an existing incident Air Operations Branch and be directed by the incident helibase organization. Reference the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations* for any additional operational, qualification and training requirements.

Air Medical Extraction

Emergency extraction may be performed consistent with agency standards. Non-medically equipped helicopters should serve as a last resort when commercial life flight and/or incident assigned aircraft are not immediately available and an immediate response is required.

Military proficiency flights may be performed as required to maintain proficiency requirements and fire orientation for assigned medevac responsibilities.

Night Operations

Military medevac aircraft and pilots can be used for emergency night operations if approved for the mission. The military will use their standard medevac mission protocols. Utilization of night vision goggles depends on the assigned units SOP to include consideration of illumination, obscuration, and meteorological conditions.

Military night vision goggle proficiency flights may be performed as required to maintain proficiency requirements and fire orientation for assigned medevac responsibilities. Coordinate and schedule these flights with the Area Command/Incident Management Team and local administrative unit.

Proficiency Flights

Federal agencies only pay for proficiency flights that support missions directly related to fire suppression activities. The cost of all other proficiency flights necessary for the military to remain proficient with other mission profiles is borne by the military.

Mission Brief and Debrief

Military Operations Officer(s) and flightcrew are included in daily agency pre- and post-operational aviation briefings and planning meetings. The exception being flightcrew who are not collocated with agency flightcrew. Where this occurs, the military or agency personnel via the helicopter manager shall provide necessary briefing elements to flightcrew. Pilots shall participate in all Helibase morning prelaunch briefings for assignments, weather, and hazard updates.

Following military aircraft missions, military flightcrew should provide debrief items to the agency and their military chain of command. Debrief items should then be provided to the incident Air Operations Branch.

Load Calculations

Military performance planning cards (PPC) may be used, at the discretion of military pilots, in lieu of the Interagency Helicopter Load Calculation from (OAS-67/ FS 5700-17/ HCM-8).

Throughout the duration of the incident, military pilots and military operations duty officer should remain informed of any associated change in operating altitudes and temperatures to update military performance planning calculations.

Manifesting

Incident management personnel are responsible for manifesting agency personnel. The military is responsible for manifesting military flightcrew and military equipment. Military flightcrew will provide payload capabilities to the helicopter manager to ensure an accurate accounting of payload capability.

The helicopter manager is responsible for providing the military flightcrew with an accurate manifest of passengers and cargo. See the NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations for further details.

Personnel Transport

Incident and cooperator personnel are authorized to be transported by agency authorized military aircraft. All personnel must receive a flight safety brief, be manifested by agency personnel, and satisfy agency PPE requirements.

A flight safety brief is required to be provided by military flightcrew. The military may delegate this authority to qualified incident personnel who have been briefed by the military flightcrew.

Internal Cargo Transport

Internal cargo shall be secured in the aircraft in accordance with military standards.

Passengers may not be carried on cargo missions unless cargo is secured in such a manner that the cargo does not pose a hazard.

Movement of hazardous cargo shall satisfy agency operational standards as specified with the *NWCG Standards for Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials, PMS 513*.

Cargo shall be weighed and manifested. A copy of the manifest will be provided to the pilots, crew chief and HMGB in accordance with the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations*.

External long-line and short-line (Belly-Hook) Cargo Transport

If authorized external cargo shall be rigged and secured in accordance with military standards.

Movement of hazardous cargo shall satisfy agency operational standards as specified with the *NWCG Standards for Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials, PMS 513*.

Notification of the weight and type of cargo shall be provided to the flightcrew in accordance with the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations* and the *NWCG Standards for Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials*.

Bucket Operations, Long-Line and Short-Line

Military helicopters may be authorized by agency approval for long-line/bucket and/or short-line/bucket operations.

Non-Qualified Crewmember During External Load Operations

If the military aviation unit has been approved for external loads, a HMGB may be aboard the aircraft during the mission only when authorized by both the incident, military commander, and

agency policy authorizes. Flight during external load operations should only occur when the safety of the mission can be substantially enhanced. A Risk Assessment shall have been performed prior to operation in accordance with the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations* and agency policy standards. This practice shall not be a routine occurrence and shall be held to an absolute minimum.

Agency personnel shall satisfy agency PPE requirements and satisfy associated agency standards for passenger security, inclusive of secondary harnessing systems.

Hoist Operations

The military flightcrew, if trained and the aircraft is properly equipped, may be approved for hoist operations. Hoist operations shall be conducted in accordance with military policies and procedures.

Where assessed as critical, a HMGB or spotter may fly aboard as a non-qualified crewmember to enhance situational awareness, improve safety, and increase the likelihood of mission success.

Cargo Letdown

Military flightcrew do not normally perform cargo letdown operations. If the aircraft is properly equipped, it may be approved for agency cargo letdown operations.

Cargo letdown operations shall be pre-briefed with flightcrew.

ORDERING PROCESS/AUTHORIZATION

Orders for military aircraft must specifically identify the intended missions such as medevac, personnel transport, internal and external cargo transport, hoist, command and control, NVG etc., and be accompanied by estimations of flight hours per day, pounds of cargo per day, number of passengers to transport per day, etc. Requirements for Non-Designated Military Missions must be noted on the request and will generate appropriate attention and actions.

See Chapter 10 for further details on different types of activations.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE AUTHORITY / MUTUAL AID

In response to a request for assistance from a civil authority and under imminently serious conditions, DoD and National Guard can provide an immediate response.

Military aircraft must not exceed the 72-hour mutual aid period and government contracted aircraft must be on order.

Under imminently threatening conditions DoD can provide immediate response to save lives or mitigate property damage within the United States. Immediate response does not imply free response when other resources are available and capable.

Immediate response authority is generally associated within the normalized area of operations from the location of the military facility or deployment site.

Cost will be reciprocated by the requesting agency.

SPECIAL-USE MISSION APPROVALS

Military units perform military operations where those missions are directly related to aviation firefighting missions, such as troop transport, hoist medevac or night vision goggle operations. These are termed as Designated Military Missions.

Then there are agency missions that are implied by the types of operations that military units conduct, such as low-level operations or mountainous terrain flight. In these cases, the military routinely trains, qualifies flightcrew, and performs operations but may not identify an associated flightcrew designation nor specific mission type.

Then there are also missions where military units do not perform, or perform on an infrequent basis, such as long-line/bucket or short-line/bucket. Both these types of mission types are termed Non-Designated Military Missions.

To facilitate a common understanding of what type of military can be performed in support of wildland aviation firefighting activities, a letter of authorization shall accompany each helicopter. The letter will indicate, using standard agency mission terminology, the types of missions that are authorized to be performed.

The development of mission approvals and authorizations is a collaborative effort between the military unit commander and the agency to determine what mission will be authorized. Military commanders may prohibit some types of operations to be performed and vice versa. Additionally, for some mission authorizations, the agency requires verification and validation in accordance with this handbook.

FS/DOI helicopter standardization and inspector pilots shall provide recommended authorization of approved missions to the agency signatory authority responsible for signing the letter of authorization.

Copies of the letter of authorization indicating agency mission approvals shall be carried aboard each helicopter.

TRAINING AND CURRENCY

Military aviation units enforce strict pilot qualification standards. Interagency Standardization Pilot Inspectors work with the Military Operations Officer to ensure experience level of pilots is considered in crew pairing to obtain the safest overall flight crews. The Military Operations Officer assigns only crews meeting full military mission qualifications. Each military Pilot-in-Command (PIC) assigned to fire incidents shall have a minimum of 500 hours PIC experience in category and are to be at the flight controls for takeoffs and landings whenever passengers are on board unless safety considerations determined by the PIC dictate otherwise. Where appropriate, the Military Operations Officer shall assign pilots who have demonstrated mountain flying skills or show they have received training in mountain flying techniques prior to deployment to an incident. “Designated” and “Non-Designated Military Missions” are to be continually evaluated by interagency aviation personnel for conformity to agency standards.

All military flight crews receive the following minimum training prior to being deployed in support of fire suppression activities. Training may be conducted at the deployment site or another designated location. The training session may occur pre-season or when the military unit is

activated. Instruction is provided by interagency Standardization/Pilot Inspectors, Aviation Management Specialists and Wildland Fire Specialists, as necessary.

- Interagency aviation policy and safety
- Incident Command System/organization/terminology
- Missions and roles
- Basic fire tactics and fire behavior/fire shelter
- Ground school, mountain flying techniques, or demonstrated ability in a mountain environment.
- Communications/Fire Traffic Area
- Medevac/emergency evacuation
- Cargo (internal/external)
- Reconnaissance
- Passenger haul
- Mobilization and demobilization (including return of interagency equipment).

Military aviation units pre-identified to perform Non-Designated Missions must complete the following training syllabus in addition to the minimum training requirements listed above. It is suggested that only Reserve and National Guard units be identified to receive training in Non-Designated Military Missions. However, a small number of active-duty military units have conducted this training in recent years. This specialized training may be conducted at the military unit's home station or another predetermined site before the beginning of fire season. Non-Designated Missions is not performed if the unit has not been pre-identified by the military and has not completed the training and approval process for those missions prior to mobilization. Non-Designated Missions may include:

- Mountain flying
- External loads (longline)
- Bucket operations (water and retardant application).
- Functions of Helicopter Coordinator/Air Tactical Group Supervisor
- Expanded instructions on the fire aviation organization.

CHAPTER 70

INCIDENT BUSINESS

OVERVIEW (COMP/CLAIMS)

NWCG and Military Personnel:

Injuries that occur on the fireline involving NWCG personnel assigned to the Military Mobilization are managed by the Incident Management Team (IMT) responsible for that incident. The IMT is responsible for initiating and overseeing the medical response, ensuring appropriate care, documentation, and reporting in accordance with NWCG standards and agency policies.

For injuries that occur within the military camp (non-fireline), coordination will occur with the Military Mobilization Incident Management Organization (IMO).

Military Personnel:

The Safety Officers assigned to Military Mobilization will work directly with IMT's Safety Officers that are hosting military personnel to ensure the chain of command and communication protocols related to medical incidents for military personnel are clearly outlined.

NICC link to Medical Continuity of Operations in Appendix. Title the link: Medical Continuity of Operations. (please provide this brief description below)

- Roles and responsibilities of all personnel in medical incidents involving military members
- Definitions

Government Property Loss and Damage OF-289

All government property loss or damage resulting from incident operations must be reported to the incident responsible for the loss or damage. This includes both accountable and durable property issued for use during the incident

NON-MONETARY AWARDS

Guidance – indication of significance of awards

Initial coordination for non-monetary awards should begin during the preliminary in-person meeting between the agency's advanced part and the assigned military unit. Early identification of award needs helps ensure timely processing and approval.

- Work directly with Workforce Development, Training, and Education (WDTE) for coordination and guidance. A completed AD-700 form must be submitted along with all required supporting documentation. WDTE will review AD-700 and supporting documentation. Once approved, program funding will be allocated for the purchase of the approved non-monetary award(s).
- Suggested non-monetary awards:
 - Challenge Coins
 - Patches, pins, etc..

COST REPORTING

Chargeable Costs to Incident (Military Mob Including Pre-Mob Vs Host Incident)

All costs directly associated with the military mobilization (mob) are chargeable to the military mob code.

Daily cost reports will be generated from e-ISuite and emailed to NMAC or their designee, IC of military mobilization and assigned INBA. See the finance section of *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook* for more details.

Military Resources Costs

When additional support is required outside the scope of the established Department of Defense (DOD) Interagency Agreement - such as care, feeding, or other logistical needs for military resources – these costs will be assigned an S-number and captured on the final invoice.

Business operations will proceed in accordance with standard practices. However, it is imperative that all parties engage in clear and timely discussions regarding the specific support requested from the military prior to any purchases being made.

As with all incident related expenditures, coordination with the Incident Business Advisor (INBA) is required. This ensures alignment with established incident business protocols and facilitates appropriate documentation and cost accountability

MEDICAL CARE

DoD protocols for services at medical facilities is outlined in *Appendix C: Military Ground Resources Playbook*.

PROCUREMENT BILLING PROCEDURES

Financial Codes

All Military Mobilization personnel will charge their time to the designated Military Mobilization charge code, regardless of the incident they are supporting.

The Military Mobilization IMO is responsible for:

- Collecting all time documentation for military mobilization personnel.
- Ensuring accurate and timely posting of time.
- Ensuring all service, supplies, and resources in support of military mobilization are ordered under military mob code.

LINES OF AUTHORITY

Considerations:

- Depending on single hosting IMT or multiple – direction needed from NMAC.
- Each deployment may need a different letter from NMAC.
- Letter: Include HR issues.

- Creating Code(s): NICC will create national code based on leaders' intent from NMAC.

DEPLOYMENT LENGTH

Rest and Recovery (R&R)

It is the expectation that all personnel, military and NWCG, are afforded adequate rest to maintain their health and safety.

Due to the unique structure and deployment rotation of both military and NWCG personnel, feathering of days off may be implemented to ensure adequate operational coverage while allowing all personnel the opportunity to rest. Feathering involves staggering time off across individuals or small teams, rather than giving all personnel assigned to particular mission or unit the same day off. This approach promotes continuity of operations while fulfilling the intent of rest and recovery policies as outlined in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations.

https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/redbook-files/RedBook_Final.pdf

CHAPTER 80

PUBLIC INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

The military has been a key partner in wildland firefighting for decades, providing personnel to serve as wildland firefighters, as well as providing aircraft support. Recognizing the differing public affairs roles, missions, and regulations among the military services and the civilian fire management agencies, careful advance planning when incidents involve military forces is essential for accurate and timely communication with the public, stakeholders, and other audiences.

This chapter is designed to identify roles, responsibilities and relationships of military and civilian Public Affairs Officer/s (PAOs) and Public Information Officer/s (PIOs). The plan provides for a joint, coordinated public affairs effort with NIFC External Affairs, the incident and Area Command staff, the region and unit/s where the military resources will be working, and the military.

GENERAL

Historically, wildfires have always attracted media attention. Members of the press typically seek opportunities to cover the national fire situation, including access to areas of firefighting activities, particularly when the military is engaged.

Once military resources are requested, either MAFFs or ground resources, a member of the NIFC External Affairs shall be immediately identified (and notifications made) to serve as the point of contact (POC) with the military PAO and within the NWCG agencies.

Military Concept of Operations.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) provides military public affairs guidance and policy through Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) and U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) Public Affairs, for public affairs support of wildland firefighting operations by DoD components.

Public affairs planning commences concurrently with operational planning. The EA Office at NIFC and Army North Public Affairs Personnel monitor ongoing situations and communicate the anticipated deployment of military forces, as soon as the RFA is accepted. This coordination needs to commence as soon as possible.

Contacts

It's important to identify key contacts early in the mobilization so information can be coordinated at all levels in both the military and participating agencies.

There are multiple layers of public affairs within Military and Civilian organizations. DoD has Command, Brigade, Battalion and Unit public affairs personnel similar to the Civilian Wildland Firefighting agencies having, National, States/Regions Unit and program personnel. It's important to loop in all-levels of communication programs and personnel to speak with one message. (see Key Contacts Template)

Coordinating Instructions

- Participating military and civilian PAOs and PIOs are authorized and encouraged to communicate and coordinate with each other.
- In coordinating the release of public information, military releases such as hometown releases, internal information, and briefings for higher headquarters, shall follow appropriate military public affairs guidelines. All incident information jointly involving the military and civilian agencies is coordinated through both civilian and military PAOs and PIOs.
- Civilian and military PAOs and PIOs will work together to produce and develop; graphics, awards, photo clearances and sharing, talking points, media engagements, observances, recognition events, VIP visit agendas and packets.

RESPONSIBILITIES**External Affairs (EA) Office at NIFC**

- Disseminates national wildfire information. The EA Office does not disseminate specific incident information, that is the responsibility of the local unit and/or the assigned Incident Management Team (IMT).

NIFC External Affairs Point of Contact (EA POC):

- Point of contact with the designated military public affairs personnel and above (department, pentagon, DCE, Army North)-works directly with the military designated PAO(s) to provide information on the deployment to the public and media.
- Official spokesperson for media inquiries received at NIFC. NIFC EA POC works jointly with military public affairs personnel to make sure talking points and messages are consistent and accurate. (see communications tools and products for FAQs and Talking Points templates).
- Coordinates the joint, total public affairs effort with the Army North Public Affairs Liaison and ensures “speaking with one voice” tenets are observed and produces total public affairs contact list for the mobilization. (see key contacts template).
- Ensures conformity of military and civilian public affairs activities with the relevant regulations of all agencies involved.
- Determines, in coordination with the NMAC Chair and Military PAO, procedures for joint casualty reporting. All such injury or fatality information shall be cleared by the Incident Commander (IC) having jurisdiction over the incident. Release of such information involving either military or civilian personnel traveling in military transport, shall be joint and simultaneous by the appropriate civilian and military authorities.
- Participates in conversations to determine if PIO(s) should be assigned to the military detachment to continue liaison duties once the resources deploy into the field or if this can be covered by the receiving IMT PIO staff.

Army North/Military Public Affairs Personnel:

- Responsible for the management of military public affairs activities in support of military forces engaged in wildland firefighting operations.

- Assists the civilian media in their news-gathering operations. When military forces are assigned to support civilian wildland firefighting activities, the Army North Public Affairs Office should arrange a liaison element to NIFC EA POC.
- Each military unit may deploy with an attached Public Affairs Detachment (PAD) and or photographer/videographer. Deployed PADs conduct joint, coordinated public affairs activities with civilian (land management) incident information personnel and coordinate all media needs with the NIFC EA either directly or via an assigned IMO PIO.
- Clears all news releases (release authority) (electronic or print) whether they are from home installation public affairs offices or from the field when the subject is military support of wildland firefighting.
- Determines, in coordination with the NMAC Chair and NIFC EA, procedures for joint casualty reporting. All such injury or fatality information shall be cleared by the Incident Commander (IC) having jurisdiction over the incident. Release of such information involving either military or civilian personnel traveling in military transport, shall be joint and simultaneous by the appropriate civilian and military authorities.

MAFFS MOBILIZATION AND DEPLOYMENT

Ground Deployment Mobilization and Deployment

There are a handful of roles and responsibilities that follow the military resources beyond initial mobilization and arrival to their assigned wildland firefighting mission that the IMT PIO staff of the receiving incident may have the capacity to cover or may require an assigned PIO staff for the duration of the deployment.

The Army North Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) plan is the guide for military public affairs support. Army North should deploy a public affairs liaison to accompany the deployed resources. The military PAO accompanies the military resources to the incident and maintains communications with the NIFC EA in coordination/via the assigned Military PIO (if present).

After a deployment, military PAOs should attend the after-action report conducted by the deployed unit and the civilian firefighting agencies.

CIVILIAN PIO RESPONSIBILITIES

IMO PIO (if assigned)

- Connect the military PAO with incident (IMT) PIO and corresponding unit PAO, to continue information sharing, and reduce confusion on points of contact.
- Coordinates military and civilian public affairs activities at the field level, alleviating the extra workload on IMT PIOs and maintaining consistency between IMTs working with the military throughout the mobilization.

IMO PIO (if assigned) or Receiving Incident IMT PIO

- Ensures military and civilian public affairs products conform to relevant regulations of all agencies involved.
 - Photo clearances and dissemination
 - Provides talking points and messages

- Approves written products such as social media posts to ensure accuracy
- Graphics, awards, certificates
- Special ceremonies and observances
- VIP visit agendas, packages
- Camp postings

Receiving Incident IMT PIO/s

- Coordinates and makes appropriate notifications to Army PAO, NIFC EA via Assigned Military PIO (if present) when requests, questions or problems arise regarding military resources
- Releases approved highlight stories.
- Ensures photographs and videos are cleared through the established process before posting/publishing.
- Provides qualified fireline escorts for news media and/or DoD PADs going to the fireline.

APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

Month Day, Year

To: Executive Secretary of the Department of Defense

From: The National Interagency Fire Center

Subject: Request for Military Support

The National Preparedness Level is currently at Planning Level 5. Multiple geographic areas are experiencing significant fire activity, in particular the states of California, Oregon, Washington, and Montana. Additional activity is also occurring in Idaho, Colorado, and Arizona.

Support of ongoing and emerging fire incidents has significantly drawn down our national crew capability. Given the dry fuels and severe drought conditions, elevated fire activity is expected to continue through September.

The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) requests DoD's support with the following Wildland Firefighting (WFF) assets:

- Train and prepare to deploy 200 personnel and appropriate command and support personnel (not to exceed 50) to assist firefighting efforts. Anticipated deployment location is within the states of Oregon and Washington. The specific fire(s) have yet to be determined.
- Upon completion of training if an appropriate fire has not been identified, ground forces and NIFC cadre will take a tactical pause for up to 14 days. During this time the unit will be placed in a 48-hour call-back status (PTDO).
- If an appropriate fire has not been determined within 14 days after the completion of training, the unit will be released.
- Once a candidate fire is identified, provide ground transportation for DoD personnel from the military installation to the incident base camp.
- Any required medical support will be provided by the Forest Service and/or partner agencies.

The anticipated duration is thru on or about 15 September 2024 unless released earlier.

DoD personnel will receive fireline training and be issued personal protective equipment at the installation prior to deployment. Training will be conducted by a highly trained and experienced Cadre. DoD personnel will be utilized to construct fireline and conduct line holding actions. All firefighting actions will be conducted with consideration to the safety and well-being of all firefighting personnel.



National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

The Training Cadre will arrive at the designated installation on 12 August to begin preparations at the installation and assemble PPE and gear. The NIFC ADVON will arrive at the base support installation on 14 August to brief the command element. Training will be conducted on 15 August.

All DoD incurred costs in support will be reimbursed in accordance with 31 USC Section 1535 of the Economy Act to include pay and allowances. Sufficient funds will be obligated upon receipt of estimated DoD costs for this mobilization.

If you have questions concerning this Request for Assistance, contact Sean Peterson, NICC Center Manager.



APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE NMAC CORRESPONDENCE MEMO FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

3833 South Development Avenue; Boise, ID 83705

NMAC Correspondence M2024-03

Month Day, Year

To: Geographic Area Coordinating Groups

From: National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group

Subject: Outreach for 2024 Military Activation Operational Support

At [National Wildland Fire Preparedness Level](#) 4 or 5 (PL4-5) and if all civilian and national guard hand crews are committed or not reasonably available, NMAC may submit a Request for Assistance (RFA) to the Department of Defense (DoD) for use of active-duty military assets. Mobilization of active-duty military ground force assets is a complex and detailed process. The task cannot be accomplished within an existing organizational structure; therefore, additional personnel are assigned to various organizational positions.

To be prepared, we are seeking NWCG qualified individuals to participate if/when a military activation would occur in the 2024 fire year. Trainees will also be considered. The following positions are integral to the success of the activation:

- Task Force Leader (TFLD)
- Strike Team Leader Crew (STCR)
- Strike Team Leader Military (STLM)
- Crew Boss, Single Resource (CRWB)
- Military Crew Advisor (MCAD)
- Safety Officer Complex (SOFC)
- Safety Officer, Field (SOFF)
- Safety Officer, Line (SOFR)

Typical assignments are up to 34 days. A standard 14 or 21 day assignment may be possible on a case-by-case basis. However, the preference is for individuals to be available for the entire duration. All incident business guidelines are followed including the work/rest ratio.

Individuals that are interested in participating should complete the following form:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=5zZb7e4BvE6GfuA8-g1Gl-q5Vkt8kclBrt9tNMJEJf1UODIySUYzQ0RZQlI0UEIGRDJFSEtMSktDWC4u>

Completion of the form is not a commitment to participate in a Military Activation but an expression of interest. Additional information will be shared with those that express interest through the form if/when the military is activated throughout the 2024 Fire Year.

Please contact Daniel Cottrell at daniel.cottrell@usda.gov for additional information.

/s/ XXXXXXXXX

Chair, National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group



APPENDIX C: MILITARY GROUND RESOURCES PLAYBOOK

The Military Ground Resources Playbook is a standalone supplement to this handbook and is hosted on the NICC website at:

https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/NICC/3-Logistics/Reference%20Documents/Appendix_C_Ground_Resource_Playbook_508.pdf

APPENDIX D: MAFFS OPERATING PLAN

The MAFFS Operating Plan is a standalone supplement to this handbook and is hosted on the NICC website at:

https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/NICC/3-Logistics/Reference%20Documents/Appendix_B_NMAC_Correspondence_Memo_for_Military_Assistance_508.pdf

APPENDIX E: ROTARY WING OPERATING PLAN

The Rotary Wing Ops Plan is a standalone supplement to this handbook and is hosted on the NICC website at:

https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/NICC/3-Logistics/Reference%20Documents/Appendix_E_Rotary_Wing_Operating_Plan_508.pdf

APPENDIX F: ACRONYMS, GLOSSARY AND CROSSWALK OF TERMS

The following acronyms are used throughout the Military Use Handbook:

AAML	Agency Aviation Military Liaison
AARs	After Action Reviews
ADA	Assistant Director, Aviation
ADO	Assistant Director for Operations
ADO	Assistant Director for Operations
AEG	Air Expeditionary Group
AES	Air Expeditionary Squadron
AIM	Aeronautical Information Manual
AMLO	Assistant MAFFS Liaison Officer
ANG	Air National Guard
AOBD	Air Operations Branch Director
AOP	Annual Operating Plans
AQS	Aerial Quick Strike

ASM	Aerial Supervision Module
ATBM	Air Tanker Base Manager
ATGS	Air Tactical Group Supervisor
BAS	Battalion Aid Station
BHA	Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
BPA	Blanket Purchase Agreement
C&G	Command and General staff
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	Commanding Officer
COD	Coordinator on Duty
CRWB	Crew Boss
CSA	Cost Share Agreement
DASP	Disaster Assistance Support Program
DCE	Defense Coordinating Element
DCO	Defense Coordinating Officer
DDASS	Department of Defense Automated Support System
DoD	Department of Defense
DOI	Department of the Interior
DSCA	Defense Support of Civil Authorities
EA	External Affairs
EDSD	Expanded Dispatch Support Dispatcher
EDSP	Expanded Dispatch Supervisory Dispatcher
EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
ETD	Estimated Time of Departure
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAM	Fire & Aviation Management
FAR	Federal Aviation Regulations
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency

FMO	Fire Management Officer
FWBC	Fixed Wing Branch Chief
GA	Geographic Area
GACC	Geographic Area Coordination Center
GMAC	Geographic Multi-Agency Coordinating Groups
HLCO	Helicopter Coordinator
HMGB	Helicopter Manager
HQDA	Headquarters, Department of the Army
IA	Initial Attack
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
IMO	Incident Management Organization
IMT	Incident Management Team
INBA	Incident Business Advisor
IP	International Programs
IQCS	Incident Qualifications and Certifications System
IROC	Interagency Resource Ordering Capability
ISO	Incident Support Organization
IWI	Incident Within an Incident
LFA	Lead Federal Agency
MABM	MAFFS Airtanker Base Manager
MABS	MAFFS Airtanker Base Specialist
MAC	Multi-agency Coordinating Group
MAFF	MAFFS Program Manager
MAFFS	Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System
MALO	MAFFS Assistant Liaison Officer
MC	Mission Commander
MCAD	Military Crew Advisor
MLO	Military Liaison Officer
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding

MPM	MAFFS Program Manager
MSC	MAFFS Steering Committee
NERV	National Enterprise Rental Vehicles
NFES	National Fire Equipment System
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
NICC	National Interagency Coordination Center
NIICD	National Interagency Incident Communications Division
NIFC	National Interagency Fire Center
NMAC	National Multi-Agency Coordinating
NMLO	National MAFFS Liaison Office
NORTHCOM	US Military Northern Command
NSHO	NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations (PMS 510)
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
PA	Public Affairs
PAD	Public Affairs Detachment
PAO	Public Affairs Officer
PIC	Pilot-in-Command
PIO	Public Information Officer
PL	Preparedness Levels
POC	Point of Contact
PPE	Personal Protection Equipment
RASO	Regional Aviation Safety Officer
RFA	Request for Assistance
SABO	Standards for Airtanker Base Operations (PMS 508)
SAD	State Active Duty
SAFECOM	Aviation Safety Communique; safecom.gov
SAO	Standards for Airtanker Operations (PMS 514)
SAS	Standards for Aerial Supervision (PMS 505)
SecDef	Secretary of Defense
SITREP	Situation Report

SOF	Safety Officer
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
STCR	Strike Team Leader Crews
STLM	Strike Team Leader Military
TACON	Tactical Control
TAG	The Adjutant General
TFLD	Task Force Leader
THSP	Technical Specialist
TOC	Transfer of Command
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice
USAF	United States Air Force
USC	United States Code
USFS	United States Forest Service
UTF	Unable to Fill
VFR	Visual Flight Rules
WDTE	Workforce Development Training and Education
WO	Washington Office