

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Office of Fire and Aviation**



Operations Alert

No. 05-05

August 31, 2005

Subject: Airtanker/Helitanker Effectiveness

Area of Concern: Monitoring flight parameters in high wind conditions

Discussion: Ground and Aerial Supervisors often find themselves working in extreme environmental conditions. Airtanker/SEAT operations are usually ineffective in winds over 25 miles per hour, and helitankers at 20 miles per hour.

Although these guidelines may vary in applicability depending on topography, they must be monitored. Aerial and ground supervisors must continually assess the effectiveness of aerial resources, as well as the risks to air crews, when operating in high wind environments. The best way to accomplish this is to acquire and evaluate feedback from assigned incident pilots. Supervisors and pilots have the authority and the responsibility to cease operations any time the situation warrants. In the absence of obvious trigger points, supervisors must err on the side of safety.

Accomplishing the mission is desired. Accomplishing the mission safely is required.

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