

WS Directive

2.620 02/06/2009

AVIATION SAFETY AND OPERATIONS

1. PURPOSE

To provide authority and assign responsibility for adherence to standards for the safe use of aircraft in Wildlife Services (WS) program activities.

2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive revises WS Directive 2.620 dated 11/12/08.

3. BACKGROUND

The WS program utilizes aircraft in its efforts to protect agriculture, natural resources, property, and human health and safety against damage or threats caused by injurious animals. Aviation operations range from the use of small single-engine to larger twin-engine aircraft and helicopters. The use of aircraft is an efficient and cost effective means for conducting activities related to the protection of livestock, wildlife, human health and safety and other resources.

The mission of the WS Aviation Training and Operations Center (ATOC) located in Cedar City, Utah is to improve aerial operations safety and provide training and guidance for WS aviation personnel and aerial activities.

The WS Aviation Operations and Safety Manual prescribes the minimum safety and operations standards for WS aerial operations.

4. POLICY

The well-being of Agency and contract personnel while performing the daily mission of WS is the primary focus of the safety and accident prevention efforts set forth by WS. All WS aerial operations and safety activities, including training and maintenance, will be conducted in strict compliance with the WS Aviation Operations and Safety Manual, the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR), the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (Airborne Hunting), any applicable State and local laws and regulations, individual WS State and WS National Wildlife Research Center program Aviation Safety Plans, Aviation Communication Plans, and Aviation Emergency Response Plans.

All pilots, crewmembers, ground crews, and aircraft maintenance personnel will adhere to the WS Aviation Operations and Safety Manual and its amendments, Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and FAR, Part 43, 61, 91, 119, 133, 135, and 137. WS Aviation Operations and Safety Manual is based on these references along with OMB Circular A-11 Exhibit 300 and A-76 studies as guides.

The authority and responsibility for providing policy, guidance, and coordination for all aviation operations conducted by the WS program rests with the Deputy Administrator for WS. This authority is delegated to the WS National Aviation Coordinator (NAC) who will coordinate with the appropriate Regional/Center Directors to implement aviation policy, procedures, and oversight. The NAC makes policy recommendations to the Deputy Administrator regarding aerial operations and the aviation safety program.

WS State Directors and Program Managers are responsible for the supervision, management and compliance for all aviation activities within their area of responsibility. This includes the development of aviation programs with local stakeholders, direct supervision of pilots and aerial operations, placement of aircraft, assuring maintenance of aircraft and training of aviation personnel are completed in accordance with established policies and guidelines, communicating aviation issues with the NAC and ATOC staff, and other duties as outlined by WS policy directives and the WS Aviation Operations and Safety Manual.

No aircraft shall be used in WS activities (either through contract, agreement, or volunteer) that have not been approved through the office of the NAC, except for military transport and commercial travel purposes.

The authority and responsibility for national development and coordination of WS aerial operations and aviation safety program resides with the NAC. The NAC serves has primary responsibility for addressing aviation issues and agreements with other Federal government agencies when appropriate. The NAC's other duties include but are not limited to:

- a. Develops, implements and ensures compliance with established policies, procedures, practices, processes and guidelines.
- b. Ensures the highest professional standards for aviation management, safety, health, operations, training, airworthiness, security, technical standards, effectiveness and efficiency are maintained.
- c. Develops, implements and coordinates the WS aerial operations aviation safety program.
- d. Supports relationships with cooperators, contractors and other Federal and State agencies.

- e. Through collaboration with State Directors, approves the acquisition, utilization, inspection, disposal and upgrades of all WS-owned aviation assets or services.
- f. Provides national coordination and guidance for the WS aviation maintenance and inspection program and works with the State Directors and Program Managers to develop aircraft maintenance contracts and oversee procurement of aircraft services.
- g. Provides leadership, implementation and coordination for the comprehensive national aircraft/rotorcraft pilot, aircrew member and ground crewmember training programs.
- h. In collaboration with the ATOC Manager, provides final approval, certification, or disqualification for all pilot applicants, pilots and aircrew members, flying for the WS program.
- i. Conduct analysis of all aviation funding to provide strategic guidance to supervisors and managers and recommends allocation of aviation safety funds for WS aerial operations programs.
- j. Oversees research activities to develop and/or test aviation-related equipment, aircraft modifications, or new aircraft platforms.
- k. Chairs the WS National Aviation Working Group consisting of personnel from the Eastern and Western Regions, NWRC, National Programs and Headquarters as appointed by the WS Deputy Administrator.

5. REFERENCES

- WS Aviation Operations Manual (05/11/04).
- WS Aviation Safety Manual (09/20/02).
- 14 CFR Part 39 - Airworthiness Directives.
- 14 CFR Part 43 - Maintenance, preventive maintenance, rebuilding, and alteration.
- 14 CFR Part 61 - Certification: Pilots, flight instructors, and ground instructors.
- 14 CFR Part 91 - General operating and flight rules.
- 14 CFR Part 119 - Applicability.
- 14 CFR Part 133 - Rotorcraft external-load operations.
- 14 CFR Part 135 - Operating requirements: Commuter and on demand operations and rules governing persons on board such aircraft.
- 14 CFR Part 137 - Agricultural aircraft operations.
- 50 CFR Part 19 - Airborne Hunting.
- OMB Circular A-11 Exhibit 300 - Planning, Budgeting, Acquisition, and Management of Capital Assets
- OMB Circular A-11 - Performance of Commercial Activities



Acting Deputy Administrator