

**APPENDIX I 2016**  
**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES &**  
**CONSERVATION (DNRC) AIRCRAFT**

**AIRCRAFT USE AND SCHEDULING**

Montana State Aircraft are not approved for use by federal agencies. Under emergency circumstances, where **human life is immediately at risk** by wildfire on federal lands under federal protection, a federal line officer can approve the use of non-federally approved aircraft to address the immediate threat. This exemption must only take place when sufficient federal firefighting aircraft are not readily available to meet the emergency need. Line officers are encouraged to consult with their agency aviation management personnel to aid in decision-making. Appendix “J” of the Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guide must be completed for each response.

Definition of Montana State Aircraft: Montana State aircraft are defined as all aircraft owned and/or operated by the state and all aircraft procured under a state contract or agreement. This includes aircraft mobilized for wildfire through the Memorandum of Agreement between the Montana Department of Military Affairs, Montana Army National Guard and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conversation, Forestry Division, through the Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement (Northwest Compact), and through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).

Aircraft mobilized for wildfire under federal contracts through the national mobilization system utilizing ROSS are not considered State aircraft.

State aircraft may be utilized on federally managed fires when federal cooperative agreements are in place that approves those aircraft and pilots for the intended missions.

The utilization of State of Montana public use aircraft on federal protection is regulated by public law 103-411. In the event that State of Montana aircraft are operated on federal protection, each operational period form F-810 in Appendix “J” of the Northern Rockies Interagency Mobilization Guide must be completed.

The State may use aircraft that have not been identified as an “Approved Cooperator Aircraft” on federal lands when and where the state is the protecting agency in a reciprocal or off-set agreement or when state lands are threatened and the state maintains operational control of the aircraft.

The following conditions apply for State aircraft:

- No federal employees are allowed to ride on board the aircraft.
- No federal employee may be assigned to a position that exercises contractual control.
- They are approved to have federal personnel load retardant at federal airtanker bases, regardless of jurisdiction.
- Federal personnel may provide aerial supervision (ATGS, ASM, HELCO, Leadplane) under existing standard procedures and agreements.
- They remain under state operational control regardless of the agency affiliation of the firefighters directing the aircraft () on an incident with state jurisdiction.
- They are approved to interact with federal dispatch personnel as long as the aircraft remains under the operational control of the state or for safety reasons.

As exemptions are exercised, they must be documented by the approving federal line officer in accordance with their agencies guidance to include submitting a SAFECOM within 24hrs.

Operating procedures for Montana Army National Guard aircraft are outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement between the Montana Department of Military Affairs, Montana Army National Guard and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conversation, Forestry Division.

**Pre and Post Field Assignment time period (October – May):**

Schedule the use of DNRC aircraft directly with the Air Operations Section of the Fire & Aviation Management Bureau at 406-444-0747.

**Field Assignment time period (June – September):**

Schedule the use of DNRC aircraft with the **zone dispatch center** associated with the field assignment location:

Northwestern Land Office – Kalispell Interagency Dispatch Center

Central Land Office – Helena Dispatch Center

Southwestern Land Office – Missoula Dispatch Center

Aircraft may not be available for administrative use due to their primary fire detection and suppression mission. Aircraft may also be unavailable for use outside the field assignment location.

**Flight following for fire detection and suppression missions:**

DNRC aircraft are equipped with AFF. Flight following for fire detection and suppression missions follows procedures defined by the Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide Chapter 20 – Flight Management Procedures, and other procedures specified in local zone

mobilization guides.

**Flight following for VFR administrative aircraft use:**

Schedule an administrative flight with the Air Operations Section of the Fire & Aviation Management Bureau (406-444-0747). The ordering official must work with the pilot to provide the information needed to file a VFR flight plan with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). As the flight itinerary progresses the pilot will make departure and arrival contacts with the flight service station in accordance with this flight plan.

If this flight occurs during the field assignment time period make sure to coordinate aircraft use with the **field assignment dispatch center** so dispatch is aware that the aircraft will be in use and flying under a FAA VFR Flight Plan. Flight following with zone dispatch centers for DNRC administrative flights is not required unless requested by the pilot or chief of party.

**DNRC AIRCRAFT AND DUTY STATIONS DURING FIELD ASSIGNMENTS**

**DNRC fixed-wing aircraft and duty stations during field assignments**

<b>Duty Station</b>	<b>Aircraft</b>
Central Land Office – Helena	Cessna 182
Southwestern Land Office – Missoula	Cessna 182
Northwestern Land Office – Kalispell	Cessna 185

**DNRC direct protection helicopters and duty stations during field assignments**

<b>Duty Station</b>	<b>Aircraft</b>
Central Land Office – Helena	<b>Helicopter</b> MT205 Carded for 8 seats
Southwestern Land Office – Missoula	<b>Helicopter</b> MT205 Carded for 8 seats
Northwestern Land Office – Kalispell	<b>Helicopter</b> MT205 Carded for 8 seats

**DNRC statewide resource helicopters and duty stations**

<b>Duty Station</b>	<b>Aircraft</b>
Various. Located in Helena, Host Dispatch HDC	<b>Helicopter</b> MT205 Carded for 8 seats
Various. Located in Helena, Host Dispatch HDC	<b>Helicopter</b> MT205 Carded for 8 seats
Various. Located in Helena, Host Dispatch HDC	<b>Helicopter</b> Bell 206III Jet Ranger Carded for 4 seats
Various. Located in Helena, Host Dispatch HDC	<b>Helicopter</b> Bell 206III Jet Ranger Carded for 4 seats

**FIXED WING AIRCRAFT**

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation operates three single engine fixed-wing aircraft; (68M, 91M and 12B). Fixed wing aircraft are statewide resources and may be considered the closest resources for all incidents under State of Montana fire

protection responsibility.

Through the field assignment months of June to September, 68M is assigned to the Central Land Office, 91M is assigned to the Northwestern Land Office, and 12B is assigned to the Southwestern Land Office.

For the pre and post field assignment months of October through May all fixed-wing aircraft are under the administrative control of the Fire & Aviation Management Bureau.

## **HELICOPTERS**

DNRC helicopters are State of Montana resources and may be considered the closest resources for all incidents under State of Montana fire protection responsibility. DNRC helicopters may be requested for initial attack operations or to support state fire incidents. The availability of these resources may be affected by statewide fire activity, individual DNRC land office/interagency mobilization levels, pilot availability, aircraft repair & maintenance, or other considerations.

### **Pre and post field assignment:**

The Air Operations Section will make every effort to maintain in ready status at least one helicopter & pilot and one fixed wing aircraft & pilot. Fire management and dispatch/coordination personnel may check directly with the F&AMB Air Operations Section to obtain an up-to-date status on any state aircraft. Once the availability status is determined, schedule the use of the available aircraft directly with the Air Operations Section. Follow procedures for flight following in the same manner as with fixed wing aircraft. A resource order is not required for point-to-point administrative flights.

Non-wildfire mission flights (i.e., radio repeater work, wildlife surveys, etc.) by DNRC helicopters are subject to certain limitations. Unless you are scheduling the flight in support of an emergency situation, please do so far enough in advance to avoid delays caused by mission restrictions, maintenance, pilot availability, or other routine activities.

### **During field assignment**

Once DNRC aircraft and pilots are assigned to field assignment duty stations for wildland fire response, the coordination and dispatching for these aircraft is the responsibility of the respective DNRC Land Office via the aircraft's **Field Assignment Dispatch Center**. Daily availability and status will be reported through normal dispatch channels.

DNRC fire managers may order Field Assignment helicopters 88M, 87M, and 94M directly and for local assignments using procedures established locally between the DNRC Land Office and the Field Assignment Dispatch Center. These helicopters may be dispatched to other DNRC field offices with approval from the Area Fire Manager or his/her designated representative (duty officer).

Statewide resource helicopters are assigned to a **Host Dispatch Center**. Unlike helicopters assigned to a field assignment location the duty station of the Statewide Resource Helicopters will be the DNRC Aviation Support Facility in Helena unless requested and moved under a preposition order. The Host Dispatch Center will work with

the aircraft's assigned helicopter manager or directly with the DNRC Aviation Support Facility to obtain and report availability status. The Host Dispatch Center for DNRC statewide resource helicopters ~~in 2013~~ is Helena Dispatch Center.

### **Ordering DNRC Statewide Resource Helicopters:**

1. Check aircraft availability with the Aircraft's Host Dispatch Center.
2. The Air Operations Section will maintain ongoing discussions with the F&AMB Bureau to establish aircraft use priorities and other considerations in the use of Statewide Resource helicopters. DNRC statewide resource helicopters are deployed to the highest priority incident. Requests are coordinated by the Fire Bureau Duty Officer. The F&AMB must authorize the use of the aircraft.
3. Order the DNRC helicopter through your **zone dispatch center**. Dispatch will initiate a resource order with a name request for the specific aircraft and place it through a **direct order** to the aircraft's **host dispatch center or field assignment dispatch center**. If the ordering dispatch is the host dispatch center they may initiate a resource order and fill it locally with the DNRC Statewide Resource helicopter but must first make contacts as described in #2 above.
  - a. If this is a mission flight for an incident under Montana DNRC fire protection, ensure the order is on a Montana DNRC incident number.
  - b. DNRC Statewide Resource Helicopters may be dispatched to an initial incident with minimal information provided via a phone call, local aircraft request form, etc. The basic information that will be provided should try to include geographic location of incident, incident name, contact name and frequencies. If the resource is being sent outside of the host dispatch centers zone, the initial order should be followed up with a ROSS order as soon as possible.
  - c. Your order may be delayed if you attempt to order a DNRC aircraft on an incident under federal fire protection or on a resource order identifying the incident as under federal fire protection. In these circumstances the aircraft dispatcher may attempt to locate a closest forces contract resource.
  - d. State owned aircraft are considered closest resources for any incident under DNRC fire protection responsibility.
  - e. Federal agencies may also order state aircraft as a closest resource but must submit an order to replace it as soon as possible with a private vendor. The requesting dispatch shall fill out the Public/Civil Aircraft Utilization Dispatch Worksheet/ Documentation Record (Appendix S) for each operational period to certify that a civil operator is not available. **As of 2010, dispatch centers must submit their filled out Appendix S to Northern Rockies via fax or email each operational period.**

4. Orders for statewide resource helicopters will generally be filled on a “first-come-first-served” basis unless circumstances concerning the statewide fire situation dictate otherwise.
5. Depending on fire danger and other circumstances, a helicopter designated as a statewide resource may be ordered under a DNRC preposition resource order. Once the helicopter has flown to its destination the ordering dispatch will become the host dispatch center until the helicopter is released back to its original host dispatch center. Orders for this helicopter, while deployed on the pre-position order, are placed to the pre-position dispatch center in the same manner as described above, with coordination between the user, the Air Operations Section, and the Fire and Aviation Management Bureau.
6. The DNRC will make every effort to staff the statewide resource helicopters with a helicopter manager and module. To order one of the remaining statewide resource helicopters the ordering incident must provide or request appropriate helicopter management and support personnel. A complete helicopter module is not required for dispatch. However, a helicopter manager must be assigned to and meet the aircraft prior to arrival at the incident. A separate overhead order is not normally required for either the pilot or helicopter manager. These individuals may be assigned to the aircraft by telephone or other appropriate means of communication notifying the aircraft dispatcher of the identity of the filling individual(s). The assignment record may be completed by simply adding this information to the resource order documentation.
7. During initial action, all agencies (federal, state, local, and tribal) accept each other’s operating standards. Once the incident jurisdiction is clearly established, the standards of the agency with jurisdiction prevail.<sup>1</sup> In the case of a wildfire under State of Montana fire protection responsibility employing federal personnel, the ordering incident must provide a NWCG Certified helicopter manager and helicopter module. Similarly, DNRC aircraft may not be reassigned to non-state fire protection wildfires unless the management, operations, and equipment standards of the ordering agency are met.

**All uses of State of Montana aircraft will comply with Public Law (103-411).**

When ordering DNRC helicopters, please refer to the Public Law Decision Matrix (Public Law 103-411) and Appendix S of the Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide.

Questions regarding State of Montana aircraft should be addressed to Chuck Brenton, DNRC Chief Pilot, 406 444-0747 or John Monzie F&AMB 406-542-4220.

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<sup>1</sup> National Wildfire Coordinating Group memo March 22, 2004 – Qualification Standards During Initial Action