



File Code: 5700

Date: July 30, 2016

Route To:

Subject: Approval of the Distributed Real Time Infrared Aircraft and JTAC

To: Lt. Colonel Jeremy Higgins
RC-26 Program Manager/Pilot
141 OG, Fairchild AFB
Spokane WA 99011

The USDA Forest Service (USFS) National Aviation Division approves the Washington Air Guard RC-26 Block 25/25R aircraft (Tail # 94-0262) and support personnel for wildland fire infrared support operations also known as Distributed Real Time Infrared (DRTI). Operations shall be conducted in accordance with Forest Service Manual 5700 and Forest Service Handbook 5709.16 and the appropriate Air Force regulations.

The RC-26 DRTI mission in support to wildland fires is well within the scope of the existing RC-26 missions in support of the U.S. military. No special approvals of aircraft or personnel are needed to conform to wildland fire support missions.

The DRTI RC-26 will fly at least 2,000 feet above the Fire Traffic Area (FTA) ceiling or the Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) ceiling whichever is higher when working over a fire. Another intelligence collecting aircraft owned or contracted by the Forest Service are operating on fires in the western U.S. this season. The National Infrared Operations (NIROPS) aircraft and the Aerial Firefighting Aircraft Use and Effectiveness study (AFUE) aircraft generally will operate between 8,000 and 12,000 feet above ground level. DRTI, NIROPS and AFUE personnel must coordinate with each other prior to flights when in the same geographic area and communicate on frequency 123.450 in the air. Points of contact have been exchanged with all aircraft to facilitate communication.

Interagency fire personnel may ride on the DRTI aircraft as passengers during missions to facilitate fire situational awareness. Personnel will be authorized by Joel Kerley, the interagency liaison assigned to DRTI.

Three JTACs are included in the DRTI group. They can be assigned to different Divisions (or the ICP) on the same fire, or can be split among several fires in the same geographic area.

Observations will be conducted from the air and the ground. The interagency liaison will coordinate observation assignments between the National Interagency Coordination Center, Geographic Area Coordination Centers, and local dispatch offices.



This Letter of Approval shall be maintained within the RC-26 DRTI aircraft and made available for inspection upon request.

Questions regarding this Letter of Approval should be directed to:
USFS Washington Office – Paul Linse, Branch Chief, Aviation Operations (202-557-1545), or Interagency Liaison – Joel Kerley, DOI/ BIA, (208-859-7215)

This Letter of approval expires on December 31, 2016.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PL', written over a horizontal line.

Paul Linse
for
Art Hinaman
Assistant Director, Aviation

Cc: Aaron Schoolcraft, Jeff Power, Sam Ramsay, Rusty Warbis, Joel Kerley, Jon Rollens, Art Hinaman, Larry Sutton, Kim Christensen, Tom Ricks, John Nelson, Mike Peitz, Jerry Stoddard