

## Chapter 50 Aircraft Operations

**AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS** Refer to RMG 50

**Fixed Wing Questions – Points of Contact** Refer to RMG 50

**Rotor Wing Questions – Points of Contact** Refer to RMG 50

**High Density Altitude Aviation Operations** Refer to RMG 50

**Aircraft Mobilization** Refer to RMG 50

Between the hours of 2000 and 0600 charter pilots shall not be dispatched. Orders for charter aircraft should not be placed with vendors between these hours unless the vendors have a separate dispatcher available. Operators should be queried to ensure duty limitations are being met.

**Ordering Tactical Aircraft** Refer to RMG 50

Cody Dispatch will utilize the Rocky Mountain Area Kneeboard for initial and extended attack aircraft mobilizations. A resource order will be placed in IROC to accompany the kneeboard request.

**Ordering Prepositioned Aircraft** Refer to RMG 50

**Local Airport Operations** Refer to RMG 50

It is the responsibility of the assigned airport personnel (Ex. SEMG, RAMP, HMGB, UAM, etc.) to keep Cody Dispatch promptly informed of all incident aircraft activity. This includes aircraft arrivals, departures, resources status, personnel, and all other pertinent information. Simultaneously, Cody Dispatch will communicate and coordinate with the assigned airport personnel as needed.

**Prioritizing Incidents** Refer to RMG 50, NMG 50

Prioritization is a key factor in rapid response and aggressive tactics. Initial Attack takes priority. When competition for aviation resources occurs, the Dispatch Center Manager will consult with the local Multi-Agency Coordination Group. Until that meeting can occur, priorities will be established in accordance with policies and procedures set forth in the National Mobilization Guide.

**Aircraft Demobilization** Refer to RMG 50 & 10

**Flight Management Procedures** Refer to specific Unit Aviation Plans, RMG 50, NMG 50

Mission Flights: All mission flights (tactical fire flights) shall file a flight plan with CDC who will ensure flight following procedures are followed. Mission flights will be documented using IROC and may require a Mission Aviation Safety Plan and Flight Request form.

1 Administrative Point-to-Point flights: All Agency contract, lease, charter, or owned aircraft, fixed  
2 and rotor wing, shall file a FAA flight plan for every administrative (point-to-point) flight mission  
3 flown for the benefit of the Agency. For all point-to-point flights, a Flight Request form will be  
4 filled out.

5  
6 **Flight Plans and Flight Following** Refer to RMG 50

7 Flight following must always be properly established and consistently maintained.

8  
9 **FAA Flight Plans and Flight Following** Refer to RMG 50

10  
11 **Agency Flight Following** Refer to RMG 50

12 Cody Dispatch local flight following procedures require a status check at 15-minute intervals.  
13 This will primarily be accomplished by utilizing Automated Flight Following (AFF). In the event  
14 AFF is not working, check-ins will be accomplished via radio transmissions.

15 The following information should be documented at each 15-minute interval:

- 16 • Time of check in.
- 17 • Current position of aircraft (Latitude/Longitude and geographic landmark if  
18 known).
- 19 • Direction of travel (unless orbiting or consistently working in one area).
- 20 • Any changes in flight plan or status.

21  
22 If radio communications cannot be maintained through the duration of the flight, the flight will  
23 be immediately terminated, and the dispatch office contacted. The exception to this is if the  
24 lack of communications is temporary and there are mitigation measures in place. For instance,  
25 if the aircraft is working in a known radio dead zone and the pilot/manager and dispatch has  
26 agreed that at predetermined intervals, not to exceed 30 minutes, the aircraft will return to an  
27 area with radio coverage and check-in as well as AFF is positively maintained. For flights  
28 crossing dispatch area boundaries, and when the aircraft has flown out of radio contact, the  
29 dispatch center area it has flown into will be contacted and the aircraft "handed off". The flight  
30 will not be closed out with CDC until it is confirmed that another dispatch center has radio  
31 communications with the aircraft.

32  
33 Refer to the Airspace Boundary Plan contained in the Unit Aviation Plan for flights taking place  
34 in the common corridor along dispatch boundaries.

35  
36 **Automated Flight Following Requirements & Procedures** Refer to RMG 50

37 Prior to any flight, the aircraft dispatcher should have a full understanding of the purpose of the  
38 mission, destination, duration, persons on board, check-in intervals, communication networks,  
39 and emergency procedures in the event of an accident/mishap. Pilots must monitor at least  
40 one predetermined radio frequency as an alternate means of flight following in the event the  
41 AFF system fails, or in case dispatch needs to cancel a mission, divert the aircraft to a higher  
42 priority incident, or relay other critical information regarding hazardous weather, TFRs, etc.  
43 Regardless of AFF being used, radio communications must be maintained with all aircraft which  
44 the dispatcher has agreed to flight follow.

45  
46

1 **Aircraft Accident/Incident Reporting** Refer to RMG 50  
2 All accidents and incidents will be reported immediately to Cody Dispatch and appropriate line  
3 officers. Emergency procedures will be followed as outlined in the Interagency Aviation Mishap  
4 Response Guide. SAFECOMs need to be filed by persons that observed or were involved with  
5 the incident. The Unit Aviation Officer will be notified immediately on any SAFECOMs filed in  
6 the CDC dispatch zone.

7  
8 **Overdue and Missing Aircraft** Refer to RMG 50  
9 Emergency procedures will be followed as outlined in the Interagency Aviation Mishap  
10 Response Guide.

11  
12 **Primary Sources for Aircraft** Refer to RMG 50

13  
14 **Federal Agency Owned/Leased Aircraft** Refer to RMG 50

15  
16 **State Owned Fixed-Wing Aircraft** Refer to RMG 50

17  
18 **Vendor Fixed-Wing Aircraft** Refer to RMG 50

19  
20 **Smokejumper Initial Attack Ordering** Refer to RMG 50

21 Within the RMA, initial attack smokejumper requests will be processed as an aircraft request  
22 "Load, Smokejumper, Initial Attack". The sending unit will fill the request in IROC or will forward  
23 a manifest through established ordering channels.

24  
25 Smokejumpers (SMKJ) are permanently based in West Yellowstone and Grand Junction.  
26 Through neighborhood ordering in IROC, these resources are available for CDC to request  
27 directly.

- 28 • Orders for West Yellowstone smokejumpers will be placed with Billings Interagency  
29 Dispatch Center.
- 30 • Orders for Grand Junction smokejumpers will be placed with Grand Junction Interagency  
31 Dispatch Center.

32  
33 Wyoming State Office BLM may preposition smokejumpers in Lander, WY, depending on initial  
34 attack activity and fuel conditions.

- 35 • Orders for Lander smokejumpers will be mobilized through Cody Dispatch.

### 36 37 **Aerial Fire Detection**

38 All requests for aerial detection within the Cody Dispatch area, for ongoing incidents or after  
39 thunderstorms, should originate from the FMOs/Duty Officers and be placed through the  
40 dispatch center. Coordination and prioritization will occur in the event more than one unit  
41 requests a flight. The dispatcher will initiate procedures to acquire the appropriate aircraft and  
42 coordinate with the Unit Aviation Officer.

43

1 **Aerial Supervision** Refer to RMG 50, Interagency Aerial Supervision Guide (IASG)  
2 Aerial supervision aircraft will be ordered through established dispatch processes and RMCC  
3 will advise the ordering unit of aircraft availability.  
4

5 **Air Attack/Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS) Aircraft**  
6 Exclusive Use ATGS do not belong to any one unit and will be dispatched throughout the RMA  
7 based on current/predicted fire conditions. While these assets are primarily utilized for initial  
8 attack, they may also be assigned to large fires.  
9

10 **Lead Plane**  
11 The IC and/or ATGS has the discretion to request a Lead Plane anytime they deem it necessary  
12 to evaluate drops in difficult terrain prior to requesting an airtanker. If needed to go below 500  
13 feet, a Lead Plane or Aerial Supervision Module (ASM) must be ordered.  
14

15 **Aerial Supervision Modules (ASM)**  
16 An ASM is a two-person crew functioning in the same aircraft as a Lead Plane and an Aerial  
17 Supervision platform.  
18

19 **Aerial Supervision Requirements in the RMA**  
20 When aerial supervision resources are co-located with retardant aircraft, they will be launched  
21 together on the initial order to maximize safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of incident  
22 operations. Incidents with three (3) or more aircraft assigned will have aerial supervision  
23 ordered. See the Incident Aerial Supervision Requirements table from the IASG.  
24

25 **Airtankers** Refer to RMG 50  
26 Retardant Bases are managed by neighboring dispatch centers. These bases are available to  
27 reload heavy airtankers for incidents within the CDC area:

- 28 • Billings Tanker Base, managed by Billings Dispatch
- 29 • Grand Junction Tanker Base, managed by Grand Junction Dispatch
- 30 • Jeffco Tanker Base, managed by Ft. Collins Dispatch
- 31 • Rapid City Tanker Base, managed by Great Plains Dispatch  
32

33 **Single Engine Airtankers (SEATS)** Refer to RMG 50, NMG 50  
34 SEAT Bases are located at Riverton (primary) and Greybull (secondary) within the Cody Dispatch  
35 zone. Contact the Unit Aviation Officer to activate the Riverton or Greybull SEAT base.  
36

37 Other SEAT bases around the state may include Casper, Gillette, and Rock Springs. Contact  
38 Casper Dispatch for activation.  
39

40 **Large Transport Aircraft** Refer to NMG 50  
41

## 42 **Helicopters**

43 All requests for helicopters, and helitack crews, will be placed through the dispatch center  
44 according to agency guidelines. Flight following will be conducted through the dispatch center.  
45  
46

1 **Exclusive Use Contract Helicopters** Refer to RMG 50, NMG 50  
2 High Desert District  
3 Sponsors a Type 3 helicopter located in Rawlins, WY. Orders for the helicopter will be placed  
4 with Casper Interagency Dispatch Center.  
5  
6 Wyoming State Forestry Division  
7 Sponsors a Type 3 helicopter located outside of Glenrock, WY. Orders for the helicopter will be  
8 placed with Casper Interagency Dispatch Center.  
9 \*Units using this helicopter need to be aware if a higher priority fire occurs on State  
10 and/or private land anywhere within the State of Wyoming, the State Duty Officer may  
11 require it to be released off a federal incident to respond to the State/private land  
12 incident.  
13  
14 Yellowstone National Park  
15 Sponsors a Type 3 helicopter located in Mammoth, WY. Orders for the helicopter will be placed  
16 with Yellowstone Interagency Dispatch Center.  
17 \* Yellowstone Helitack is short haul qualified.  
18  
19 Teton Interagency Fire Program  
20 Sponsors two Exclusive Use Type 3 helicopters located in Jackson, WY. Orders for the helicopter  
21 will be placed with Teton Interagency Dispatch Center.  
22 \* Teton Helitack is short haul qualified.  
23  
24 **Helicopter – Call When Needed (CWN)** Refer to RMG 50  
25 All CWN helicopters will be ordered through CDC. If the CWN is for fire suppression the order  
26 will then be placed with RMCC. If it is for a non-fire incident, CDC in conjunction with the Unit  
27 Aviation Officer, will utilize the OAS source list or USFS rental agreements and obtain an  
28 appropriate aircraft for the mission.  
29  
30 When a CWN helicopter is used, it must have appropriate level of supervision depending on size  
31 and mission. A qualified Helicopter Manager or Project Manager must inspect the aircraft prior  
32 to use.  
33  
34 Modules are not automatically ordered by RMCC when a helicopter order is filled by a CWN  
35 aircraft. CDC dispatchers need to order the module upon notification that a CWN is filling the  
36 order. The module personnel will be ordered as Overhead and cross-referenced with the  
37 Aircraft order in special needs.  
38  
39 Refer to the appropriate agency aviation plan and Unit Aviation Officer for guidance concerning  
40 use of aircraft for non-fire flights and projects.  
41  
42 **Helicopters: Cooperator Aircraft** Refer to Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation  
43 Operations CH 16  
44 The use of Cooperator aircraft must involve a “significant and imminent threat to life or  
45 property”. This will be documented daily on the Cooperator Aircraft Use Validation Worksheet  
46 as justification for aircraft utilization.

1 **Helicopters: National Guard** Refer to RMG 50  
2 Wyoming Army National Guard helicopters are in Cheyenne, WY. Their mission purpose is  
3 limited to emergency lifesaving and/or wildland fire fighting activities as specified in the  
4 Wyoming State Interagency Cooperative Fire Management Agreement.  
5  
6 Commercial sources must be exhausted or not immediately available, during times when there  
7 is a threat to life and property, prior to activation of National Guard units for federal fires.  
8  
9 WY National Guard helicopters are hoist extraction capable and are ordered through CDC. The  
10 dispatch center will contact the Wyoming State Forest Duty Officer to make the request. The  
11 WYS DO will contact the Division of Homeland Security and make the request for the WY  
12 National Guard helicopter(s).  
13  
14 See the Cody Dispatch Serious Injury/Accident or Interagency Aviation Mishap Response Plans  
15 for National Guard emergency mobilization process.  
16  
17 **Airspace Coordination** Refer to NMG 50, Standards for Airspace Coordination  
18  
19 **Airspace Conflicts** Refer to RMG 50, Standards for Airspace Coordination  
20  
21 **Aircraft Conflict Initial Report** Refer to RMG 50  
22 All aircraft conflicts will be reported to the Unit Aviation Officer.  
23  
24 **Military Training Routes (MTR) and Special Use Airspace (SUA)** Refer to RMG 50, Federal  
25 Aviation Administration Special Use Airspace website <https://sua.faa.gov/sua/siteFrame.app>  
26 Ellsworth AFB has two military training routes that run through the CDC zone. If fires are within  
27 10nm of an MTR, or flights will be crossing through an MTR, the aircraft dispatcher will  
28 deconflict the airspace. Both IR 499 and IR 473 are continuous hours of operation and run at  
29 altitudes from 100 ft AGL to 13,000 ft MSL.  
30  
31 **Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)** Refer to RMG 50  
32 Within the CDC zone, there are two type 3 unmanned rotor wing aircraft available for use.  
33 Contact the UAM for additional information.  
34  
35 **Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR) (FAR 91.137)** Refer to RMG 50  
36 All TFR's will be ordered through Cody Interagency Dispatch Center and placed with RMCC.  
37 Once a TFR is no longer needed, notify CDC immediately to release the TFR in IROC and the  
38 FAA.  
39  
40 **National Infrared Operations (IR) Fire mapping Infrared Aircraft – IR – Airborne Thermal Fire  
41 Mapping – NIROPS** Refer to RMG 50  
42 All NIROPS requests must be generated in the NIROPS website, an IROC A# placed with RMCC,  
43 and an IRIN O# placed with RMCC before 1530 MST. IR flights must be ordered daily, as needed.  
44  
45 **FAA Temporary Control Tower Operations** Refer to RMG 50  
46

1 **Dedicated Radio Frequencies and Management** Refer to RMG 50  
2 Refer to the specific Statewide County Annual Operating Plan for the shared frequencies within  
3 the CDC zone.

4 Federal and State Land Management Agencies agree to the sharing of specific radio frequencies  
5 that are authorized/licensed for each agency. Shared frequencies are to provide efficient, cost-  
6 effective radio/communication support in protecting life and property. The sharing of  
7 frequencies is under the authority of the NTIA Regulations Manual, Sections 7.3.1,7.3.4, and  
8 7.5.1 and the FCC Rules and Regulations, Part 90, Sections 90.405 and 90.407.

9  
10 The publishing of any federal frequency (provided by NIICD) must be marked at the top and  
11 bottom of each frequency listed page “Controlled Unclassified Information/Basic”  
12

13 **Initial Attack Frequency Assignments** Refer to RMG 50  
14 The CDC aircraft dispatcher will assign an air to ground and air to air frequency for initial attack  
15 incidents.

16  
17 **Notifications to Unit Aviation Manager**  
18 The UAM, and CDC staff, came up with the following guidelines to ensure timely notifications  
19 are being made on aircraft operations to the UAM or his Acting. In addition to the guidance  
20 below, CDC has set up a daily IROC Report that will be emailed directly to the UAM. This report  
21 will show all A #'s that were filled/at incident/released during the previous operational period.  
22 CDC, and the UAM, realizes not every incident will always be black or white. Therefore, both  
23 parties will maintain excellent communications, coordination, and cooperation to support local  
24 aviation operations.

25 Initial Attack  
26 CDC will text out initial aviation resource responses for new IAs. The UAM considers the text as  
27 the immediate notification and understands aviation operations are occurring in the dispatch  
28 zone.

- 29 • Immediate Notification:
  - 30 ○ If the UAM needs to staff a local seat base for new IA fire support
  - 31 ○ SAFECOM incident/accident that CDC has been notified about
    - 32 ▪ Examples, cooperators are using UAS on federally managed fires, TFR
    - 33 intrusion, communication issues, etc.
- 34 • No Notification Needed:
  - 35 ○ Cooperators using UAS on private lands...if, there is no conflict with other
  - 36 responding aviation resources, mobilization of large airtankers/lead
  - 37 planes/ATGS, TFR's set up by dispatch, frequencies being utilized, local seat
  - 38 bases are already staffed with appropriate supervision, demobilization.

39 Prepositioned Aviation Resources

- 40 • Immediate Notification:
  - 41 ○ Resources will need a briefing upon arrival, aquatic invasive species needs to be
  - 42 mitigated
- 43 • No Notification Needed:

- 1           ○ Aviation resource/crew swap outs, demobilization

2 **Large Fire Support**

- 3           • Immediate Notification:
  - 4           ○ If an IMT has been ordered for a local zone fire, the UAM will be notified
  - 5           immediately to coordinate the large fire support and aviation needs. The Center
  - 6           Manager or Acting will coordinate with the UAM and Agency Administrator/FMO
  - 7           on the IMT’s aviation pre-order request, incident TFR, assigned frequencies, and
  - 8           any other aviation needs.
  - 9           ○ SAFECOM incident/accident that CDC has been notified about
- 10          • No Notification Needed:
  - 11          ○ Aviation resource/crew swap outs, demobilization

12

13 **Local Aviation Supervision**

14 Recognizing there is one shared Unit Aviation Officer within the zone, this section serves as a  
 15 reminder to request additional support in times of heightened fire activity, when the heaviest  
 16 use of aircraft typically occurs. The Cody Dispatch Center Manager will follow the Mobilization  
 17 Guide procedures to determine the zone Preparedness Level. The Planning Level in conjunction  
 18 with the Preparedness Level will help guide the need for additional aviation management  
 19 leadership, oversight, and support. This matrix will encompass the Cody Interagency Dispatch  
 20 Zone, as agreed to by the representative Unit Aviation Officer, Forest FMOs and BLM FMO.

21 Recommendations for additional aviation support may come from the Aircraft Dispatcher,  
 22 Center Manager, FMOs of units, Unit Aviation Officer, or line officers of units. This matrix is to  
 23 be used as a guide to consider when fire activity or aviation complexity warrants ordering  
 24 additional aviation leadership, oversight, and support. Despite high planning or preparedness  
 25 level, the zone may not actually get larger incidents, so a request for the extra oversight  
 26 personnel should be tied to larger incident activity that is incorporating aviation use as  
 27 described below. The following positions listed imply either/or, not both.

28 **Planning Level**

Preparedness Level	Low	Moderate	High	Very High	Extreme
PL-1					
PL-2				AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM
PL-3			AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM
PL-4		AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM
PL-5		AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM	AVSP/UAM



1 AVSP: Aviation Specialist- eg. Air Ops Branch Director (AOBD) qualified, Aviation Tech.  
2 Specialist. These may also be Helicopter Operations Specialist, Check Pilots, Maintenance  
3 Specialist, Aviation Safety Specialists, etc.  
4 UAM: Unit Aviation Manager (BLM equivalent, could also request BLM State Aviation Manager)

5  
6 **Additional Considerations:**

7 Special consideration for aviation management should be given if fire activity occurs in multiple  
8 fire management units. Simultaneously consider ordering additional State and or Unit Level  
9 Aviation Leadership support if fire activity or predicted activity warrants.

- 10 • Consider ordering an AVSP/UAM for a unit hosting an IMT1/IMT2 or delegate additional  
11 forest aviation duties to the assigned AOBD of the team. If IMT3 is using multiple  
12 aircraft, this should also be considered.
- 13 • Consider ordering an AVSP/UAM for any unit experiencing extreme fire danger  
14 predictions and/or a predicted weather event.
- 15 • Consider ordering an AVSP/UAM if multiple (>4) prepositioned aviation assets are in the  
16 zone.

17

18 **Roles and Responsibilities - Aviation Support Position**

- 19 • This position works for and represents all the federal agencies within the Cody Dispatch  
20 zone
- 21 • Receive in-briefing from Unit Aviation Officer to represent all federal agencies within the  
22 Cody Dispatch zone
- 23 • Provide aviation management oversight for initial attack and extended attack operations
- 24 • Serve as a liaison between zone cooperators, vendors and IMT's
- 25 • Provide briefings to aviation assets not associated with a team fire (initial attack,  
26 severity, prepositioned resources)
- 27 • Coordinate with the Cody Dispatch Center Manager on ordering and placement of  
28 aviation assets for initial attack, severity, and prepositioned resources as requested by  
29 agency Duty Officers
- 30 • Coordinate with the Cody Dispatch Center Manager on out of area movement or  
31 repositioning of aircraft within the Cody Dispatch zone
- 32 • Ensure Daily Cost Summaries and loads of retardant delivered are submitted daily to the  
33 Unit Aviation Officer
- 34 • Reviews SAFECOMs and take appropriate corrective action, briefs agency FMO, D.O. and  
35 Line Officer on situation
- 36 • Provide situational briefings to agency FMO's, duty officers and line officers as needed  
37 or requested

38

39

40