

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
AVIATION**

Aviation

Part 330 Aviation Management

Chapter 2 Aircraft Acquisitions, Scheduling, and Use

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2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter? This chapter explains how U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) employees can obtain, schedule, and use aircraft to conduct Service business.

2.2 What is the scope of this chapter? This chapter applies to all Service employees, volunteers, Youth Conservation Corps members and students, and seasonal workers who use or obtain Service aviation resources.

2.3 What are the authorities for this chapter?

A. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76, Performance of Commercial Activities.

C. OMB Circular A-126, Improving the Management and Use of Government Aircraft.

D. 353 DM 6, Aircraft Acquisition and Disposition.

2.4 Who is responsible for acquiring and scheduling aircraft?

A. The **Director** ensures a Service aircraft replacement program is in place, and that there is policy for managing the program.

B. The **Regional Directors** are responsible for buying, replacing, and transferring aircraft into and out of their Regions.

C. The **Assistant Directors – Migratory Birds and National Wildlife Refuge System and the Chief – Law Enforcement** are responsible for buying, replacing, and transferring aircraft into and out of their respective programs.

D. The **Service Aviation Manager:**

(1) Is the primary Service contact and coordinator:

(a) With the Department for all Service aviation activities, and

(b) With the Service programs and Regions for buying, replacing, and transferring aircraft.

(2) Revises and updates this policy, as necessary.

(3) Interprets the Department's and Federal Aviation Management acquisition and scheduling requirements and helps to resolve Servicewide issues about aviation.

E. The **Regional Aviation Managers (RAM):**

(1) Coordinate with the Service Aviation Manager and the Associate Director, Department of the Interior Aviation Management (NBC AM) when buying, replacing, and transferring Regional aircraft.

(2) Work with the NBC AM to complete the OMB A-76 cost analysis or lease/purchase agreement when the Region buys new aircraft (also see section 2.6).

(3) Prepare specifications on aircraft requirements and coordinate with the Service Aviation Manager and NBC AM to get feedback on the specifications.

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(4) Track the bid process and related activities with NBC AM and inform the Service Aviation Manager about progress.

F. Chief, Branch of Migratory Birds Surveys:

(1) Coordinates buying, replacing, and transferring aircraft for the branch with the Chief, Division of Migratory Bird Management; Assistant Director – Migratory Birds; the Service Aviation Manager; and the NBC AM.

(2) Works with the NBC AM to complete the OMB A-76 cost analysis or lease/purchase agreement when the program buys new aircraft.

(3) Prepares specifications on aircraft requirements and coordinates with the Service Aviation Manager and NBC AM to get their feedback on the specifications.

(4) Tracks the bid process and related activities with NBC AM and informs the Service Aviation Manager about progress.

2.5 What terms do you need to know to understand this chapter?

A. Affiliated Aircraft. Affiliated aircraft are civil aircraft operated for the mutual benefit of the Service and the affiliated party at no cost to the Service.

B. Crew Members. There are two types of crew members—air crew members and flight crew members:

(1) **Air Crew Member:** A person we assign to specialized duties not involving flying the aircraft. Examples include an observer for wildlife surveys, aerial camera operator, and wildlife tracking radio operator.

(2) **Flight Crew Member:** A pilot, flight engineer, or flight navigator we assign to duty in an aircraft. The flight crew member must hold a valid Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airman's Certificate and have passed a flight physical.

C. Official Travel. This chapter includes information on two types of official travel:

(1) **Administrative travel** is when a Service employee must travel to give speeches, attend conferences or meetings, make routine site visits, or to perform similar work.

(2) **Travel for mission requirements** is when our mission responsibilities require an employee to fly on an aircraft as part of a job task. Examples include:

(a) Surveying wildlife,

(b) Operating wildlife tracking radios,

(c) Operating data recording computers,

(d) Taking photographs with an aerial camera,

(e) Going to remote field sites to perform biological tasks, and

(f) Surveying Service lands, projects, disaster areas, etc.

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2.6 When does the Service buy aircraft? We may buy aircraft **only** when owning the aircraft is the most efficient and cost-effective option for us. Before buying an aircraft, program offices and Regions must:

A. Coordinate with the Associate Director, NBC AM and the Service Aviation Manager at least 2 years before they need the aircraft.

B. Complete a comparison of the cost of buying an aircraft to the cost of getting comparable aircraft services from the private sector (see OMB Circular A-76 for cost comparison requirements).

2.7 Who is responsible for getting additional or replacement aircraft? NBC AM is responsible for buying additional or replacement aircraft. The Service requests the aircraft and gives NBC AM the money to buy it.

2.8 May the Service own and operate seized aircraft? Yes. We may own and operate aircraft the Government seizes during law enforcement operations. We must coordinate with NBC AM to get the aircraft, and we may only do so **if**:

A. Congress authorizes it, and

B. A court order transfers title of the aircraft to us.

2.9 What are the approved sources for getting aircraft services for official travel?

A. In most circumstances, Service employees use commercial airlines for official travel.

B. The Associate Director, NBC AM must approve and acquire **all other** aircraft, commercial pilot services, and associated aviation equipment (excluding personal pilot gear) that Service employees use. Personal pilot gear includes, but is not limited to, such items as a hand-held GPS, communications radio, and survival equipment.

2.10 What sources are there for Service employees to get aircraft for Service missions, and how do they schedule them? There are several sources of NBC AM-approved aircraft and pilot services that you may use:

A. Fleet aircraft. These are the aircraft we own that our pilots fly. Contact your RAM to find out what fleet aircraft are available and who to contact to schedule their use. We charge the program/station an hourly cost for using fleet aircraft.

B. Aircraft Rental Agreement. NBC AM has contracts with commercial vendors throughout the United States that you may use for Service missions.

(1) You may only use Aircraft Rental Agreement vendors for missions where costs will not exceed \$25,000. Procedures for requesting aviation services in excess of \$25,000 are in 353 DM 1.

(2) NBC AM:

(a) Inspects all Aircraft Rental Agreement aircraft to make sure they meet Departmental requirements,

(b) After the aircraft pass inspection, issues the vendor a DOI Aircraft Data Card that lists the types of missions/conditions the aircraft may fly.

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(c) Reviews the vendor's pilot qualifications and issues DOI Pilot Qualification Cards to pilots who meet the requirements. The DOI Pilot Qualification Card lists the types of missions they may fly (for example, transporting people, wildlife surveys, external load helicopter operations, etc.).

(3) A list of Aircraft Rental Agreement vendors and their qualifications information is on the NBC AM Web site. Before you contact them, you must check to make sure that both the pilot and the aircraft have a current DOI Pilot Qualification Card and Aircraft Data Card approving them for the type of mission you are planning. Contact your RAM or a NBC AM Flight Coordination Center for assistance. You can find current telephone numbers for NBC AM Flight Coordination Centers on the NBC AM Web site.

(4) NBC AM receives the bill for Aircraft Rental Agreement costs and charges us.

C. Call When Needed Helicopter Contracts.

(1) NBC AM has Call When Needed contracts with helicopter vendors we use primarily for interagency firefighting. The helicopters on Call When Needed contracts are larger than those available from Aircraft Rental Agreement vendors. You must schedule Call When Needed helicopters through NBC AM Flight Coordination Centers (East Area, West Area, or Alaska Region) or the National Interagency Fire Coordination Center. Telephone numbers for NBC AM Flight Coordination Centers are on the NBC AM Web site.

(2) NBC AM has special Call When Needed contracts with vendors qualified to conduct Aerial Capture, Eradication, and Tagging of Animals (ACETA). You must contact a NBC AM Flight Coordination Center to schedule a Call When Needed ACETA vendor. (See 330 FW 4 for special considerations related to ACETA missions.)

D. Aircraft Contracts for Costs Exceeding \$100,000. Only NBC AM may contract for projects requiring aviation services that exceed \$100,000 in total costs. To get the contract in place, you:

(1) Send a Request for Contract Services, Form AM-13, to NBC AM at least 120 days prior to the date you need the service.

(a) Send the form to the NBC AM Headquarters in Boise, Idaho. If you are in Alaska or Hawaii, send it to the DOI Alaska Regional Office. NBC AM mailing addresses are on its Web site.

(b) A Service employee with budget authority must sign the AM-13.

(c) Contact your RAM if you need assistance with the contracting process.

(2) Send a completed Airplane Questionnaire, Form AM-13A, or a Helicopter Questionnaire, Form AM-13H, with the AM-13 to the NBC AM Headquarters or Alaska Regional Office, as appropriate.

E. U.S. Forest Service Approved Vendors and Pilots.

(1) You may use Forest Service-approved vendors and pilots only after following the requirements under Operational Procedure Memorandum-39, DOI Use of Forest Service Approved Flight Services.

(2) You should submit requests to use Forest Service-approved flight services to NBC AM at least 30 days in advance of the planned flight(s).

(3) You must not use Forest Service fixed wing aircraft and pilots for special use activities on flights below 500 feet above ground level. Special use activities are operations that require special equipment, techniques, or skills. Examples include fire suppression and aerial ignition (see 330 FW 3 for more

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examples).

(4) Contact your RAM or NBC AM Flight Coordination Centers if you need assistance.

2.11 What do Service employees need to do to fly on a cooperator-operated aircraft?

A. We perform cooperative projects with private corporations, State and other Federal agencies, and the military. We call these agencies/organizations “cooperators.” For cooperator flights, you:

(1) Must get NBC AM approval before you fly on cooperator-operated aircraft.

(2) Give the pilot an AM-23 form to complete. You are responsible for sending it to NBC AM.

B. There are three types of cooperator-operated aircraft—affiliate (i.e. corporate aircraft), military, and other Government agency aircraft. The aircraft and pilots must meet Departmental standards for us to use them. A Service pilot may not serve as a crew member or pilot on a cooperator-operated aircraft.

(1) Affiliate Aircraft. You may be a passenger on an affiliate aircraft if:

(a) You do not have to pay for the flight,

(b) It is of mutual benefit to the Government and the cooperating person/organization,

(c) The pilot and aircraft meet Departmental standards, **and**

(d) You submit a written request to NBC AM, and NBC AM approves it.

(2) Military Aircraft.

(a) Incidental Use. You may be a passenger on military aircraft if the military requests your help during response to a special event. No NBC AM approval is necessary. For example, you may fly on a military aircraft if they ask for someone from the Refuge to help them look for an aircraft that crashed in or near the Refuge.

(b) Uses Other than for Special Incidents. You may be a passenger on military aircraft for other uses only in the following circumstances:

(i) If there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place for uses other than special incidents. Contact one of the NBC AM area offices to find out if there is an MOU.

(ii) If there is a Joint Management Agreement. We sometimes have Joint Management Agreements with the military when Service lands are within the boundaries of military reservations. The management agreement must state the type of aviation support the military will provide, and include a requirement that the pilot must have a minimum of 500 hours flying time in that aircraft category whenever Service employees are on the aircraft.

(3) Other Government Agency Aircraft. You must get approval from the NBC AM to fly on aircraft operated by State or county law enforcement agencies, State Game Departments, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Customs, etc.

2.12 What does a Service employee have to do first to engage aircraft services? Before you can use

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aircraft for Service missions, you must get an NBC AM billee code.

A. Billee codes identify the specific organization within the Service that we will bill for aircraft services.

B. To get a code:

(1) Contact your Project Leader, Supervisor, or Regional Finance Office, and

(2) Coordinate with NBC AM.

C. You must put the billee code on the forms you complete after a flight (see section 2.13 below).

D. Billee codes NBC AM has assigned to projects are on their Web site.

2.13 What forms must Service employees complete after they use fleet aircraft, aircraft vendors, cooperator aircraft, or Forest Service aircraft? There are several forms that you must send to NBC AM to record and track billing and aircraft use (flight hours, purpose of flight, etc.).

A. Fleet Aircraft Flight/Use Report, [Form OAS-23](#). You must complete Form OAS-23 to record flight information and project cost codes when you use fleet aircraft. If there are not copies of the form on board the aircraft, you can get them online or from NBC AM Headquarters or area offices.

B. Vendor and Cooperator Aircraft Use Report. You must also use Form OAS-23 to record flight information and project cost codes when you use aircraft from an Aircraft Rental Agreement, contract aircraft, or cooperator-operated aircraft. Copies of the form should be available on board the aircraft, or you can get them online or from NBC AM Headquarters or area offices.

(1) The pilot fills out the form, and you must sign it to authorize payment for the services. Instructions for completing the form are on the NBC AM Web site.

(2) The pilot sends the form to NBC AM. You should keep a copy.

(3) You must also complete Form OAS-23 when you use non-revenue flights. Write “nonrevenue flight - information only” on the form and send it to NBC AM.

C. Forest Service Flight Use Report.

(1) After using Forest Service aircraft, you must complete:

(a) Standard Form FS-6500-122. We use the FS 6500-122 to pay the Forest Service for their services.

(b) Form OAS-23. Include a comment that says, “for information only” and send it to NBC AM. They use the OAS-23 to document the number of flight hours.

(2) If copies of the forms are not available on board, you can get them from NBC AM Headquarters, online, or from area offices.

2.14 Who may travel as a passenger on Service aircraft?

A. Passengers who may travel on Service aircraft in an official capacity include (see section 2.5C and also

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see 330 FW 3 for passenger training requirements):

- (1) Officers and employees of the Federal Government traveling on official business.
- (2) Members of Congress and employees of Congressional Committees whose work relates to Service programs.
- (3) Non-Federal passengers if they are doing work that helps accomplish a Service program, such as:
 - (a) Employees of cooperating State, county, or local agencies;
 - (b) Representatives of foreign governments; and
 - (c) Contractor representatives of those agencies/governments.
- (4) Passengers we allow to travel when space is available and who meet the requirements in OMB Circular A-126 (also see section 2.18).

B. No other passengers may travel on aircraft we own or lease or that others operate on our behalf.

2.15 When may Service employees use Government aircraft for administrative travel?

A. You may use Government aircraft for administrative travel if:

- (1) Your supervisor and the RAM or the Service Aviation Manager approves it, and
- (2) It does not cost more than commercial sources, or
- (3) You need to travel within a 24-hour period and there are no commercial flights reasonably available to meet your requirements.

B. The RAM or Service Aviation Manager may make an exception to these requirements if you can document that there are extraordinary circumstances requiring the flight to accomplish Service mission activities.

2.16 Are there special requirements for Senior Executive Service (SES) travel on Government aircraft? Yes. OMB and the Department have many restrictions about when SES employees and other senior officials may travel on Government aircraft. For example, before traveling on Government aircraft, an SES employee must get approval from the Department's Solicitor or the Deputy. These restrictions are available on the NBC AM Web site.

2.17 May Service employees use Government aircraft in an emergency? Yes. Project Leaders and supervisors may authorize the use of Government aircraft (meaning aircraft the Government owns, leases, charters, or rents) to assist in emergencies with life-threatening circumstances such as disaster relief efforts. You must document the circumstances on Form OAS-2 (when you use fleet aircraft) or Form OAS-23 (when you use vendor aircraft).

2.18 In addition to the situations described in sections 2.15 through 2.17, may Service employees use Government aircraft when there is space available?

A. Yes, you may use Government aircraft when space is available if you get approval from your RAM or

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2.18 In addition to the situations described in sections 2.15 through 2.17, may Service employees use Government aircraft when there is space available?

A. Yes, you may use Government aircraft when space is available if you get approval from your RAM or the Service Aviation Manager.

B. OMB Circular A-126 includes several restrictions for Government employees traveling on Government aircraft when space is available. For example, if you are traveling on a space-available basis, you may only do so on an aircraft that was already scheduled for an official purpose.

2.19 May Service employees use their own aircraft for official Service business?

A. You may fly your own aircraft for administrative travel if:

(1) It has an FAA registration showing you as the owner or as a member of a flying club that owns the aircraft;

(2) You are a qualified dual-function pilot or incidental pilot to fly aircraft on Government business. A dual-function pilot is a pilot whose job description includes pilot duties and other duties (for example, GS-486 biologist pilot or GS-482 fisheries biologist pilot). An incidental pilot is anyone who pilots an aircraft on Government business, but whose job description does not include pilot duties;

(3) Your aircraft meets all Departmental aircraft maintenance and inspection requirements in 330 FW 4; and

(4) Your Project Leader or supervisor approves the use.

B. You may fly your own aircraft to perform mission-related requirements (see 2.5C) if you certify it as a "vendor" aircraft. See 351 DM 1.

2.20 May Service employees decline to board an aircraft if they think their safety is at risk? Yes. Service employees and volunteers may decide not to fly any time they consider it to be unsafe, **without fear of reprisal**. You must tell your immediate supervisor, Regional line manager, or the Service Aviation Manager as soon as possible after you decide not to get on an aircraft. They will investigate your safety concerns and make sure we take any necessary corrective actions.


DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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