

**FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT**

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## Overview, Authorities, and Responsibilities

**2.1 What is the purpose of this chapter?** This chapter describes how the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) uses, operates, and stores heavy duty motor equipment.

**2.2 What are the authorities for this chapter?** See 322 FW 1 for a list of authorities for all chapters in Part 322.

**2.3 Who is responsible for heavy duty motor equipment use, operation, and storage?** We describe our general responsibilities for heavy duty motor equipment management in 322 FW 1. The responsibilities in Table 2-1 are for equipment use, operation, storage, and maintenance.

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<b>Table 2-1: Responsibilities for Heavy Duty Motor Equipment Operation and Maintenance</b>	
<b>These employees...</b>	<b>Are responsible for...</b>
<b>A. The Director</b>	Approving or declining to approve all Servicewide policy.
<b>B. Regional Directors</b>	<p>(1) Ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Employees in their Regions are aware of the requirements in this chapter, including limitations on using heavy duty motor equipment;</li> <li>(b) Sufficient resources and support, including a qualified Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinator, are in place to implement this policy within their areas of responsibility.</li> <li>(c) Volunteers, employees of grantees, partners, contractors, and subcontractors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Have proper authorization before using heavy duty motor equipment, and</li> <li>(ii) Use heavy duty motor equipment only to perform official Government business authorized under volunteer agreements, grants, contracts, and subcontracts;</li> </ul> </li> <li>(d) Staff establish and enforce penalties for employees who knowingly use or authorize the use of heavy duty motor equipment for other than official purposes; and</li> <li>(e) Staff properly issue and use fleet charge cards for buying fuel; and</li> </ul> <p>(2) Ensuring all field stations in their Regions comply with utilization reporting standards within the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS).</p>
<b>C. National Heavy Equipment Coordinator</b>	<p>(1) Developing Servicewide policy and recommending additional requirements or changes to keep policy up-to-date;</p> <p>(2) Assisting Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinators in operator safety training efforts throughout the Service. This means he/she must periodically review operator training programs at the Regional level to evaluate their success;</p> <p>(2) Monitoring utilization reporting and recommending whether to retain, dispose of, or relocate heavy duty motor equipment;</p> <p>(3) Developing national guidelines for an equipment sharing program;</p> <p>(4) Providing guidance for Regional compliance with operator safety training established in 243 FW 1 and 321 FW 1; and</p> <p>(5) Working with manufacturers to identify and notify Regions about recalls and maintenance and safety updates.</p>
<b>D. Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinators</b>	(1) Coordinating the implementation of this policy and recommending requirements or changes to the National Heavy Equipment Coordinator;

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<b>Table 2-1: Responsibilities for Heavy Duty Motor Equipment Operation and Maintenance</b>	
These employees...	Are responsible for...
	<p><b>(2)</b> Monitoring Regional mission needs and utilization reporting and determining whether or not to retain, dispose of, or relocate heavy duty motor equipment;</p> <p><b>(3)</b> Providing operators of heavy duty motor equipment with safety training as we require in other policy (see 243 FW 1, 243 FW 3, and 321 FW 1);</p> <p><b>(4)</b> Establishing an effective equipment sharing program within their Regions to follow national standards;</p> <p><b>(5)</b> Assisting managers to identify safety devices required for the intended use of heavy duty motor equipment; and</p> <p><b>(6)</b> Periodically conducting Regional reviews of operator programs to determine compliance with this policy.</p>
<b>E. Regional Fire Management Coordinators</b>	Coordinating with Zone Fire Management Officers and Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinators to determine appropriate distribution and sharing of heavy equipment in the zones to adequately meet fire preparedness requirements.
<b>F. Project Leaders/Supervisors</b>	<p><b>(1)</b> Ensuring that employees, volunteers, and partners are qualified, competent, and authorized to operate heavy duty motor equipment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(a)</b> Documenting their authorization using <a href="#">FWS Form 3-2267</a> Authorization for Operation of Motor Vehicles and/or Equipment, when assigned,</li> <li><b>(b)</b> Reviewing the form with employees/volunteers/partners if additional training is needed, and</li> <li><b>(c)</b> Updating the form when they add new equipment to a job requirement;</li> </ul> <p><b>(2)</b> Following the suspension or revocation requirements in 321 FW 1 and amending <a href="#">FWS Form 3-2267</a> to indicate the action taken;</p> <p><b>(3)</b> Ensuring that personnel for whom they are responsible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(a)</b> Complete the mandatory training required in this and Regional policy, and</li> <li><b>(b)</b> Acquire, use, equip, maintain, and dispose of heavy duty motor equipment as described in <a href="#">320 FW series</a>, <a href="#">322 FW 1</a>, and <a href="#">243 FW 1-6</a>;</li> </ul> <p><b>(4)</b> Ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(a)</b> Operators understand and follow the requirements for reporting accidents as described in <a href="#">320 FW 8</a>, and</li> <li><b>(b)</b> If they share or loan heavy duty motor equipment to a partner, they</li> </ul>

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<b>Table 2-1: Responsibilities for Heavy Duty Motor Equipment Operation and Maintenance</b>	
These employees...	Are responsible for...
	<p style="text-align: center;">develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to protect all parties involved (see section 2.5D);</p> <p><b>(5)</b> Ensuring the safety devices we require (see 243 FW 1 and 3) are identified and installed before personnel use the equipment; and</p> <p><b>(6)</b> Complying with the utilization reporting requirements.</p>
<b>G. Accountable Officers (AO)</b>	<p><b>(1)</b> Safeguarding heavy duty motor equipment and fuel cards by establishing measures to prevent loss, theft, misuse, and abuse;</p> <p><b>(2)</b> Maintaining records for all heavy duty motor equipment for which they are responsible;</p> <p><b>(3)</b> Reporting performance information as required by Federal regulation when the Regional Property Manager requests it;</p> <p><b>(4)</b> Ensuring heavy duty motor equipment inspections are competently performed and deficiencies corrected;</p> <p><b>(5)</b> Ensuring that repairs that warranties cover are performed under the warranty so that the Service does not pay for them;</p> <p><b>(6)</b> Identifying and reporting suspected incidents of operator abuse; and</p> <p><b>(7)</b> Ensuring heavy equipment replacements and repairs comply with the policy in 322 FW 1, Tables 1-2 and 1-3.</p>
<b>H. Heavy Duty Motor Equipment Operators</b>	<p><b>(1)</b> Properly operating, maintaining, and securing Service heavy duty motor equipment;</p> <p><b>(2)</b> Complying with local, State, and Federal laws and motor vehicle operator regulations;</p> <p><b>(3)</b> Complying with the operator requirements in <u>243 FW 1</u> and <u>321 FW 1</u>; and</p> <p><b>(4)</b> Ensuring required safety equipment is installed before they start operation (see 243 FW 1 and 3).</p>

## Operators

### 2.4 When can personnel operate heavy duty motor equipment?

**A.** Personnel may only operate heavy duty motor equipment to accomplish official Government work. "Official" means using the equipment to perform our mission(s) as authorized by the Service. Official use of heavy duty motor equipment includes:

- (1)** Carrying out authorized programs, including program work under contractual arrangements, and

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(2) Assisting in major disasters or emergency situations under either the Service's or the Department's direction.

**B. Operators must:**

(1) Comply with the motor vehicle and motor equipment safety requirements in this chapter. In addition, there are restrictions to operating equipment at night and during periods of low light or limited visibility (see section 2.6C).

(2) Complete and meet all requirements in 321 FW 1 and 243 FW 1 before operation except:

(a) During an emergency, or

(b) When necessary to prevent serious injury, loss of life, or property.

### **2.5 Who may operate heavy duty motor equipment?**

**A. Employees:** Qualified employees may operate heavy duty motor equipment.

**B. Volunteers:** Volunteers must have a signed Volunteer Services Agreement ([Optional Form \(OF\) 301A](#)) and complete appropriate training before operating any Service heavy duty motor equipment. The OF 301A protects the Service and the volunteer.

**C. Contractors:** Contractors (including temporary office help hired through a private temporary service) and cooperative farmers may operate their own equipment on Service lands when and where allowed. We do not allow them to operate Service heavy duty motor equipment unless we have a signed contract or agreement clause to cover issues of liability and insurance. As required in [320 FW 5](#), Service managers must ensure contractors and cooperators only use motor equipment for the work authorized by a contract or agreement.

**D. Partners:** Service partners and State agencies that have co-purchased, shared, or borrowed Service heavy duty motor equipment for the Service's benefit may operate it only:

(1) After we enter into an MOU with the partner/agency. Such an MOU must limit the Service's responsibility for any damage, injury, or tort claims. Following is an example liability statement:

*To the extent authorized by law, neither party will hold the other party harmless from responsibility for damages or other liability arising from this MOU. Instead, each party is responsible for its own acts and their results and is not responsible for the acts of the other party and those results. Each party agrees to assume all risks and liability for itself, its agents or employees, and for any injury to people or property resulting from operations of its agents or employees under this MOU. Each party also agrees to assume risk and liability for any loss, cost, damage, or expense resulting from acts, negligence, or the failure to exercise proper precautions of or by itself or its agents to this agreement. If both parties are liable, the degree of each party's financial responsibility is limited to its degree of culpability. Liability of the Federal Government is governed by the Federal Tort Claims Act ([28 U.S.C. 2761 et seq.](#)) and liability of the partner is governed by applicable Federal and State laws.*

(2) After the operator completes Service safety training (e.g., heavy equipment training (see 321 FW 1)),

(3) By using applicable safety equipment, and

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(4) Following the requirements in 321 FW 1 and [243 FW 1-6](#).

E. Project Leaders/supervisors must not allow anyone other than those people we describe above to operate Service heavy duty motor equipment. Regardless of the status of the operator (e.g., employee, volunteer, partner, etc.), the Service supervisor must first authorize them to operate the equipment. Based on a safe driving record, operators must continue to demonstrate competence to operate the type of motor equipment to which they are assigned.

**2.6 What rules do heavy duty motor equipment operators have to follow?**

A. Table 2-2 describes several, but not all, of the requirements for operators of Service heavy duty motor equipment (also see [243 FW 1](#) and [321 FW 1](#)).

<b>Table 2-2: Operator Requirements</b>	
<b>When driving Service heavy duty motor equipment, operators must...</b>	
<b>(1)</b>	Carry a valid driver's license from the State, territory, or other government where they will operate the equipment.
<b>(2)</b>	Carry a valid Service personnel identification card.
<b>(3)</b>	When operating on public roads and highways, follow all applicable driving rules (local, State, and Federal).
<b>(4)</b>	Wear a safety belt or use other restraint system.
<b>(5)</b>	Not operate the vehicle under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
<b>(6)</b>	Wear all personal protective equipment required in 243 FW 1, 243 FW 3, and 321 FW 1.
<b>(7)</b>	Lock the equipment when unattended.
<b>(8)</b>	Take precautions to protect Government personal property stored in the equipment. If possible, remove property from the equipment when you park it overnight.
<b>(9)</b>	Ensure safety and emergency repair items are in the equipment and in working condition.
<b>(10)</b>	When available, park or store the equipment in a place that protects it from theft or damage.
<b>(11)</b>	Not make alterations or modifications that affect the safe operation or rated capacity to the equipment without the manufacturer's written approval.

B. Operators of heavy duty motor equipment and those who transport it must meet Department of Transportation (DOT) certifications and requirements for using and moving heavy equipment, including driving limitations, Commercial Driver's License (CDL) requirements, and pilot car use.

C. Operators must follow these requirements for operating heavy duty motor equipment at night, during periods of low light, or in limited visibility conditions:

(1) Operators must meet the following conditions:

- (a) The Project Leader or supervisor determines that the activity is essential during the night, low light, or limited visibility period;
- (b) The operator has documented approval from his/her supervisor;
- (c) The illumination requirements we describe in subsection (2) below are met;
- (d) Operators and supervisors have completed a Job Hazard Analysis/Risk Assessment for *Heavy Equipment Operation Under Low Light/Limited Visibility*; and

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- (e) The operation complies with the equipment and safety requirements in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations*.

(2) Following are the illumination requirements:

- (a) All heavy duty motor equipment used between 1 hour after sunset or 1 hour before sunrise must be equipped with at least one headlight that will illuminate the area in front of the equipment to a minimum of 100 feet.
- (b) All heavy duty motor equipment used at night (after sunset, before sunrise) or during periods of low light or limited visibility, must be equipped, in addition to the headlight required above, with at least one light on the rear and one light on each side that will illuminate the rear and side operating perimeter for a minimum of 100 feet. Operators must use additional lighting where the operation requires adjustment to the equipment's location or the operator's attention.

**2.7 Can an employee be suspended from using heavy duty motor equipment?** Following Human Resources procedures, a Project Leader or supervisor may suspend an employee without pay for willfully misusing or authorizing someone else to misuse Service heavy duty motor equipment. A supervisor may suspend an employee from duty immediately, and the suspension must be for at least 30 days. (Also see section 2.17.)

## **Use and Care**

**2.8 What are the standards for the use and care of heavy duty motor equipment?** Operators must take good care of our heavy duty motor equipment at all times.

**A.** Misconduct and improper operation include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs,
- (2) Willful abuse or misuse of heavy duty motor equipment, and
- (3) Operating heavy duty motor equipment in a willfully negligent or careless manner, including, but not limited to:
  - (a) Not paying attention or adjusting operating speed to compensate for visibility, change in terrain conditions, and inclement weather; and
  - (b) Attempting to use the equipment for a purpose or at a capacity it was not originally designed for by the manufacturer.

**B.** If an operator damages Service-owned, leased, or rented heavy duty motor equipment because of misconduct or improper operation, the operator may be financially responsible for the damage.

**2.9 Who controls the use of fleet charge cards?** If a fleet card is issued to a piece of heavy duty motor equipment, the following applies:

**A.** The Regional Property Manager orders new and replacement fleet charge cards. He/she must establish procedures to:

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- (1) Destroy cancelled or expired fleet charge cards and cards no longer needed;
- (2) Ensure the paying office receives notification whenever a fleet charge card is lost or stolen; and
- (3) Issue a replacement card if a fleet charge card is lost, stolen, or damaged.

**B. The AO must:**

- (1) Review fleet charge card purchases to ensure they are for official use. Fleet charge cards may only be used to purchase fuel and supplies for the equipment on the fleet charge card. The property number or license plate is embossed on the card.
- (2) Establish administrative controls, such as training and periodic reviews of charge card invoices, to prevent unauthorized use of the cards.

**2.10 What are the parking and storage requirements for heavy duty motor equipment? Heavy duty motor equipment operators:**

- A.** Must park or store the equipment in an area that offers reasonable protection from theft or damage whenever possible;
- B.** Place all hydraulically raised components on the ground and disengage power takeoff before leaving the operator's seat;
- C.** Remove keys and lock equipment to guard against theft or damage; and
- D.** When refueling, turn off the engine first and, where appropriate, ground the nozzle, funnel, or container when filling the fuel tank. To avoid static electricity buildup and fire potential, remove all portable gasoline containers from the equipment or ground them with a grounding cable before filling them with fuel. You must place such containers on the ground or on a concrete surface before filling them.

**2.11 What happens if there is a manufacturer's recall on heavy duty motor equipment?**

- A.** The individual at the duty station who received the equipment gets recall notifications by mail and gives them to the AO. AOs should make arrangements to take the heavy duty motor equipment to the servicing dealer for recall repairs and notify the Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinator about the recall.
- B.** AOs should not depend entirely on manufacturers' and State registration records for recall notifications. When recalls are announced in the news media, AOs should review their heavy duty motor equipment fleet for the subject makes, types, and identification numbers. If they are reasonably certain that some pieces of equipment are involved and the notices do not arrive within a reasonable time, AOs must contact the appropriate manufacturer's service office.
- C.** You can get the latest recall information on heavy duty motor equipment by visiting the manufacturer's Web site.

**2.12 What are the requirements for fuel, oil, lubricants, and tires?**

- A. Fuel, motor oil, and lubricants.** We must use alternative fuels and refined oils that meet standards from the manufacturer's operating manual whenever possible. We may only use re-refined oils if it does

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not void the warranty and is approved by the equipment manufacturer. Heavy duty motor equipment operators:

- (1) Must follow fuel, motor oil, and lubricant requirements specified in the owner's manual; and
- (2) May only use a lower grade fuel, oil, or other fluid if the one specified is not reasonably available. Operators must plan for such factors as the distance between areas of operation and the supply sources, compatibility between hours of equipment operation and the supplier's hours of operation, and the ability or willingness of a supplier to furnish supplies.

**B. Tires.**

**(1) Tire Replacement.** The AO must ensure that tires are replaced according to the equipment manufacturers' specified load rating and classification and follow State guidance.

**(2) Tire Recall.** Tire manufacturers and retreaders maintain the name and address of customers and the identification number of every tire sold. For a tire recall, the General Services Administration (GSA), the tire manufacturer, the tire retreader, the tire dealers, or the vehicle manufacturer gives instructions to the AO.

**2.13 What are the requirements for preventive maintenance other than fuel, oil, lubricants, and tires?**

**A.** The AO must establish procedures for and monitor preventive maintenance to ensure that duty station staff perform maintenance at least as frequently as the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule requires. We must follow maintenance schedules to ensure warranty protection. Maintenance expenses must be recorded in the heavy duty motor equipment system of record as outlined in the *Heavy Equipment Utilization and Replacement Handbook*

**B.** In the following circumstances, staff should inspect and perform preventive maintenance more frequently than those the manufacturer specifies:

- (1) In severe operating conditions that include, but are not limited to, environments that are abnormally:
  - (a) Hot,
  - (b) Dusty,
  - (c) Wet,
  - (d) Corrosive (e.g., operation in coastal environments or on heavily salted roads), and
  - (e) Muddy;
- (2) When heavy duty motor equipment is driven on unimproved roads or in mountainous terrain; and
- (3) When the equipment has several different operators.

**C.** Failing to schedule preventive maintenance and to notify the heavy duty motor equipment operator of the maintenance requirements is negligence and may be cause for disciplinary action. Project Leaders, supervisors, or AOs may make an exception to preventive maintenance only when complying with

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maintenance schedules may imperil the life or safety of heavy duty motor equipment operators or other people near the equipment.

**D.** AOs must ensure that the employees or commercial providers of preventive maintenance are:

**(1)** Technically competent; and

**(2)** Familiar with State, county, and local requirements for heavy duty motor equipment systems, maintenance, and emission control.

**2.14 How do warranties impact heavy duty motor equipment maintenance?**

**A.** Most heavy duty motor equipment manufacturers offer some type of warranty. Within the limitations of the warranties, manufacturers, through dealers, will repair or replace defective parts or systems without charge to the customer. The periods of coverage and types of covered repairs vary in warranties. AOs should consult the warranties for specific details.

**B.** The AO must ensure that all repairs and corrections covered under warranties are performed under the warranty. Although warranty work should take place at the manufacturer's facility or manufacturer's authorized representative (dealer), in some situations it may have to be performed in the field.

**2.15 What type of maintenance facilities does the Service use?**

**A.** Many Service installations have heavy duty motor equipment maintenance facilities that are staffed and equipped to handle most routine maintenance. Employees should use these facilities before using a commercial facility.

**B.** There are also GSA maintenance facilities available for leased equipment in certain areas of the country.

**C.** Employees may also use commercial maintenance and repair facilities:

**(1)** When Government heavy duty motor equipment maintenance facilities are not available, or

**(2)** When the in-house or other agency facilities are not capable of completing the work due to:

**(a)** The volume, or

**(b)** Complexity.

**D.** If Project Leaders/supervisors anticipate continuing maintenance or repair requirements that can't be met in-house, they should work with their Regional contracting office to determine if a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) or other type of contract should be put in place

**(2)** The AO must:

**(a)** Approve any additional work not on the purchase order before the work begins,

**(b)** Inspect the work and record that it is complete as specified on the order, and

**(c)** Sign and date the order to accept the work and verify the accuracy of the costs of repairs and supplies.

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**2.16 What are the minimum standards that determine replacement of heavy equipment?** Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinators work with field stations to monitor utilization reporting and recommend whether to retain, dispose of, or relocate heavy duty motor equipment. See 322 FW 1, Table 1-2, to determine minimum replacement cycles for equipment.

**2.17 Do inspections and maintenance activities sometimes reveal operator abuse and misuse?**

Yes, heavy duty motor equipment maintenance specialists can identify suspected operator abuse and misuse during the maintenance and repair process. An operator's supervisor may take appropriate action, including suspension of operating authority, for any employee who abuses or misuses a Government-owned or leased piece of heavy duty motor equipment.

**A.** Following are some situations that may indicate operator abuse. Because operating conditions and inherent structural or mechanical deficiencies can often explain the kinds of situations listed, one occurrence of one of these situations does not mean that the vehicle was abused.

- (1) Oil is excessively low;
- (2) Excessive clutch wear or frequent clutch repairs;
- (3) Coolant or other fluid levels abnormally low;
- (4) Excessive brake wear or replacement;
- (5) Excessive tire wear;
- (6) Physical damage (dents, punctures, etc.) to oil pan, suspension components, gas tank, or other parts of the undercarriage; and
- (7) Repetitive body repairs required.

**B.** Regional Property Managers must ensure that there are procedures for Government or contract maintenance personnel to report instances of suspected heavy duty motor equipment abuse to the operator's supervisor. The supervisor must investigate the incident(s) and report the findings, in writing, to the Regional Property Manager.

**2.18 Who conducts scheduled heavy duty motor equipment inspections?** The AO at each duty station ensures that the following inspections are performed and that corrections are made for any safety or operational deficiencies found during the inspections:

**A. Operator Inspections.** Heavy duty motor equipment operators must inspect equipment daily before using it and report any noted deficiencies for corrective action. The operator checks for obvious equipment malfunctions that may make it unsafe or unserviceable, such as, but not limited to:

- (1) Fuel and oil leaks,
- (2) Chaffed or worn belts and pulleys,
- (3) Broken or chaffed electrical wires,
- (4) Excessively worn tires,

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(5) Missing guards, and

(6) Low fuel.

**B. Annual Safety Inspections.**

(1) The AO must ensure that qualified, competent personnel inspect each individual piece of heavy duty motor equipment for safety at least every 12 months. Safety inspections must comply with national standards and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

(2) Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinators conduct field station inspections for heavy duty motor equipment on a 3 to 5-year rotation to determine the condition of equipment and ensure the amount of equipment is in sync with its utilization.

**2.19 How is equipment in the equipment sharing program requested and maintained?** Contact the Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinator for guidance if you'd like to loan equipment to or borrow it from the program.

**A.** When a piece of equipment is part of the program, it's typically the responsibility of the duty station that is using the equipment to report its utilization and expenditures to the Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinator.

**B.** The duty station using the equipment also is responsible for daily maintenance, including oil and filter changes and any damage that may occur while it's in their possession. The Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinator manages the fleet and is responsible for the major preventive maintenance or catastrophic failure due to normal operational wear. Contact your Regional Heavy Equipment Coordinator for Regional policy and procedures.

/sgd/ Stephen Guertin  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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