

Aerial Capture, Eradication, and Tagging of Animals (ACETA)

PLANNING PHASE

Following is a standard approach for the planning and conduct of an ACETA project. It is not meant to be a specific operational plan. Use this checklist to assist in preparing and safely executing a viable ACETA Aviation Operations Plan.

Planning Personnel.

- **Project Leader** – Has overall responsibility, including the safety of the operation. The Project Leader must ensure that aircraft and pilots have NBC AM approval for ACETA operations, personnel training has been completed to meet established Department of the Interior (DOI) standards, personal protective equipment (PPE) is available and used, and appropriate funding is available.
- **Project Manager** – Has on-site responsibility and is usually the author of the operational plan. This person may also have other duties such as the gunner, animal handler, or support. In preparing the operational plan, the Project Manager must consider the following:
 1. What are the project objectives?
 2. Is ACETA the most effective method to accomplish the mission?
 3. What method of capture will work best in the available situation, such as darting, net gun, or capture?
 4. Have all personnel involved in the project been trained for ACETA operations, i.e. gunner, net gunner, handlers (muggers), external load handlers, etc.? Have personnel been trained as a team? Contact your RAM or NBC AM aviation trainers for assistance.
 5. What are the handling criteria and project logistics?
 6. What safety measures will ensure the safety of personnel and the humane treatment of animals?

The Project Manager also should prepare an end-of-project evaluation to aid and improve subsequent projects.

- **Cooperators** – Many Service ACETA operations are part of cooperative programs with other Federal and State agencies. Prior to conducting ACETA operations, Project Leaders must assure that the roles and responsibilities of all cooperators are included in the ACETA plan. NBC AM must approve any State aircraft that will be used for ACETA operations.

ACETA Operations Plan.

It is essential that we plan all aviation operations with the utmost consideration given to safety. The Project Leader must develop a plan and send it to the respective RAM. The RAM will review it and send it to the Service Aviation and Operations Specialist, in the National Aviation Manager's Office, for approval. In addition to the items listed in 352 DM 1, the following must be addressed in the plan:

1. **Purpose** – A brief description of your overall objective and what you are going to accomplish. Explain the why, when, and where of your operation.
2. **Participants** – Designate/identify the Project Manager, the Project Leader, and support personnel.

3. Safety considerations – Are all the staff qualified to do their respective tasks? What rules are you going to follow while involved in the project? Identify any known and possible hazards associated with this operation.

4. Required Personal Protective Equipment – Describe what protective equipment both flight and ground crews must wear to perform this project.

5. Communications – Describe:

- How you will keep in contact with the aircraft,
- How often the pilot will check in,
- What type radio you will use, and
- What the primary and secondary frequencies will be.

6. Special considerations or coordination – Each project is different and may require special considerations such as having crash rescue personnel or an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) standing by, or the construction of specific holding facilities for animals.

7. Cooperators. The plan should define the role and responsibilities of all cooperators in the project.

8. Risk Analysis.

- Describe:
 - How you have considered alternative methods for accomplishing your mission,
 - The risks to personnel and equipment, and
 - How you have planned for existing and potential hazards and reduced the probability of the hazards.
- Review 352 DM 1. Refer to the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG), Chapter 3.
- Complete a Risk Analysis checklist and a Risk Assessment matrix. See 330 FW 5, Exhibit 1.

Procurement: There are three types of procurement possibilities:

- **Call When Needed (CWN).** We established a limited use contract with vendors who have ACETA expertise and who have the appropriate NBC AM certifications. If we use CWN, we must have operational control and the vendor must follow Departmental standards. We must contact NBC AM at least 30 days in advance of the operation. We use this type of contract most frequently in ACETA work.
- **Contract.**
 - When aviation needs exceed \$25,000 for a single project, we must send an OAS-13 to NBC AM Contracting Services. First, the Project Leader sends the request to the RAM, who sends it on to NBC AM. In the lower 48 states, the RAM sends this request to the Headquarters NBC AM in Boise, ID. In Alaska or Hawaii, the RAM sends the request to NBC AM in Anchorage, AK.
 - In addition to the OAS-13, the pilot and Project Leader must send an Airplane Questionnaire, OAS-13A or a Helicopter Questionnaire, OAS-13H to help identify the type of services being requested.
 - These requests need to be submitted to NBC AM 120 days prior to the expected start date of the contract.

- **End Product Contract.** There are very few commercial vendors with the experience to conduct ACETA operations. Contact your RAM, the Service Aviation and Operations Specialists, or the [NBC AM Flight Coordination Center](#) for assistance.

CHECKLIST

The following checklist will assist you in providing proper management oversight on an ACETA project.

OPERATIONAL PHASE

□ **ACETA Handbook.** Obtain a copy of the ACETA Handbook. You can find this handbook on the [NBC AM Web site](#). The handbook provides established policies and procedures for this high-risk special use activity.

□ **Operational Personnel.**

1. Pilot – Has the ultimate authority for the safety and operational use of the aircraft.
 - a. Considers terrain, temperature, winds, and aircraft capability.
 - b. Ensures safety in and around the aircraft.
 - c. Determines the procedures to be followed.
 - d. Communicates with the gunner and handlers (muggers).
2. Gunner – Responsible for the safe use of the firearm.
 - a. Must be properly trained.
 - b. Uses safe procedures in the discharge of the firearm.
 - (i) Safe target window.
 - (ii) When safe to shoot or a no-shoot situation.
 - (iii) Animal welfare during the chase.
 - (iv) The gunning operation must not jeopardize the safety of the crew or aircraft.
3. Handler (Mugger) – Responsible for the safe and proper handling of the target animal as outlined in the operations plan.
 - a. Must be properly trained.
 - b. Must know and understand mission objectives after the animal is captured.

□ **Pre-mission Briefing.** This briefing will be conducted by the Project Manager and will consist of but is not limited to the following:

1. What is to be accomplished? What is the game plan?
2. What are the limitations?
3. How will the mission be accomplished?
4. Who are the players in the mission and what are their roles?
 - a. Pilot
 - b. Gunner
 - c. Handler (Mugger)
 - d. Support
5. What are the qualifications of the above players? Check the pilot and aircraft cards.
6. What are the hazards associated with this operation and what is the plan in case of an accident or emergency, either with personnel or equipment?
7. Hazard map completed?

8. Has a Risk Analysis checklist and Risk Assessment matrix been completed? (See 330 FW 5, Exhibit 1.)
 9. Required PPE for both flight and ground crews?
 10. Flight plan and flight following procedures in place?
 11. A manifest must be kept of the crew and passengers on board.
 12. Review with the pilot the required and completed load calculation (form OAS-67).
 13. No toe-in, single-skid, or step-out landings unless written exception granted by NBC AM.
 14. Day flights only; 30 minutes before official sunrise, until 30 minutes after official sunset.
 15. No hot refueling unless approved in writing by NBC AM and requested by the Project Leader.
 16. No round in weapon or cocked unless the weapon is outside and pointed away from the aircraft.
 17. A copy of the Hazardous Material Handbook must be on board the aircraft.
- Pilot Briefing – Will consist of the following but is not limited to:**
1. Passenger briefing for any personnel on board the aircraft.
 - a. Location of the Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT).
 - b. First Aid Kit.
 - c. Personal Protective Equipment.
 2. Hazards to those working around the helicopter and appropriate safety measures.