
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



NATIONAL AVIATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

September 2023

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) National Aviation Management Plan (NAMP) is a comprehensive bureauwide aviation plan that provides policies and information to aviation users. The NAMP describes intent, policy, authority, objectives, roles and responsibilities, and procedures for the implementation of the Service aviation management program.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement

Management at all levels of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS or Service) is responsible for the safety of aviation operations under their control. Direct supervision, training, and the provision of safe working conditions are included in management responsibility. Managers, supervisors, and all personnel must monitor programs, identify hazards, and implement controls to mitigate risk at acceptable levels.

Purpose

Policy issued by the Department of the Interior (DOI) Office of Aviation Services (OAS) in Operational Procedures Memorandum-06 (OPM-6), requires all DOI bureaus with aviation programs to develop and publish a National Aviation Management Plan (NAMP) that addresses the minimum elements to improve aviation safety and realize operational efficiencies through broad standardization. This document, in combination with 330 FW 1, which establishes it, supersedes Service Manual chapters 330 FW 1-5 (3/24/2008), and Director's memorandums dated October 2011, and July 2009.

The NAMP provides a comprehensive, bureauwide aviation plan that allows all USFWS aviation users to easily acquire the necessary policies and information to manage aviation operations. The NAMP describes intent, policy, authority, objectives, roles, responsibilities, and procedures for the management and implementation of the USFWS aviation management program.

The NAMP sets guidelines for all USFWS employees who use aviation resources for USFWS missions. All aircraft, manned or uncrewed, owned, rented, leased, chartered, and managed by cooperators are included. The NAMP is consistent with the provisions of DOI aviation policy. It serves as guidance and best practices for fleet/vendor aviation operations, aviation training, aviation safety compliance, and planning of projects that use aviation.

The NAMP does not apply to USFWS personnel traveling via air booked under official Government travel reservations.

Each USFWS Region must have a Regional Aviation Management Plan following the elements outlined in this NAMP that addresses the unique characteristics of the Region's aviation programs. Regional Aviation Compliance Specialists (RACS) / Regional Aviation Managers (RAM) / Program Aviation Managers (PAM) will ensure that program- or unit-level aviation plans are completed when applicable. These plans will be reviewed annually by Project Leaders and the associated RACS/RAM/PAM.

All USFWS aviation users are encouraged to make suggestions to the National Aviation Office (NAO) to improve the NAMP.

The NAMP will be reviewed and updated annually by the National Aviation Manager, NAO staff, and RACS/RAM/PAM. The review period will begin December 1 of each year, and the updated NAMP must be issued no later than January 15.

Chapter 1 Aviation Organization

- 1.1 Roles and Responsibilities
- 1.2 Objectives of the National Aviation Management Program
- 1.3 Authorities
- 1.4 Revision Schedule
- 1.5 USFWS Specific Requirements

1.1. Roles and Responsibilities

A. Department of the Interior

- (1) **Office of Aviation Services (OAS).** OAS is responsible for DOI functions related to aircraft services. These services include

- a. Aviation safety services (mishap investigations, program evaluations, and safety alerts/bulletins);
- b. Aviation technical services, fleet management, fleet property accountability, and aviation user training services; and
- c. Flight scheduling and coordination services.

Note: Consult Department of the Interior Departmental Manual (DM) 350 DM 1 for a complete list of functions and responsibilities.

Note: The OAS organizational structure and responsibilities are in 112 DM 12.

- (2) **Interior Business Center (IBC) Acquisition Services Directorate (AQD).** AQD provides DOI-wide centralized contracting for aviation flight services for DOI and DOI customers.

- a. Responsible for the centralized contracting for aircraft and related services for all DOI bureaus and other Federal and State agencies upon request.
- b. Other acquisition management activities include property accountability and small purchase service in support of OAS and bureau operations, including DOI fleet aircraft.

- (3) **The Executive Aviation Board of Directors (EAB)** provides executive oversight and performance accountability and ensures that DOI-wide strategies and initiatives are developed and implemented consistently throughout DOI.

- a. The EAB is comprised of Deputy Director-level representatives from each DOI bureau and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services (DAS-PRE).

- (4) **The Executive Aviation Committee (EAC)** incorporates a senior line manager at the Assistant (i.e., Associate in some other bureaus) Director level from each bureau and the Office of Aviation Services director for formulating DOI-wide aviation policies and procedures in conjunction with OAS.
- (5) **The Executive Aviation Subcommittee (EAS)** is comprised of bureau Aviation Managers who act as a working group of aviation subject matter experts for the EAC.

B. **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.** The National Aviation Office Task Organization can be found in the NAMP References folder on the [NAO SharePoint](#) site

- (1) **Director.** Ensures all aviation support functions are managed safely and efficiently to accomplish USFWS aviation goals.
 - a. Assigns responsibility for the USFWS aviation program to the appropriate Assistant Director by including the aviation function as one of their performance standards;
 - b. Ensures the USFWS aircraft replacement program is in place and that there is policy for managing the program;
 - c. Supports all aspects of aviation safety and ensures the USFWS aviation program has the resources in place to operate aircraft safely and efficiently to accomplish the bureau mission; and
 - d. Grants flight authority to fleet pilots.
- (2) **Deputy Director.** Represents the USFWS at the EAB.
- (3) **Designated Agency Aviation Executive (DAE).** The USFWS Designated Agency Aviation Executive represents the interests and support of the Director in the management and administration of the USFWS aviation program and represents the USFWS on the EAC. The DAE is responsible for the implementation, execution, and enforcement of DOI aviation policy and the development and execution of USFWS aviation policy and program development and oversight. [Currently this executive level responsibility is assigned to the Assistant Director – Migratory Birds.] These responsibilities are exercised through the National Aviation Manager (NAM).
 - a. Advises the Director on aviation matters;
 - b. Develops, implements, and maintains the aviation management program;
 - c. Ensures the USFWS aviation management program meets Departmental requirements; and
 - d. Represents the Service on the EAC.

- (4) **National Aviation Manager (NAM).** The NAM serves as the principal aviation advisor for USFWS and manages all matters regarding aviation. The NAM's function and responsibility resides with the USFWS National Aviation Office (NAO) located at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. See the NAO organizational chart.
- a. Primarily provides management and oversight of the USFWS aviation program at the national level. This includes aviation safety, training (fleet pilots and aviation users), operations, fleet management, contracted aviation services, and uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS);
 - b. Coordinates all Service requests for Departmental aviation policy exceptions and waivers with the Associate Director – OAS;
 - c. Reviews applications and provides recommendations for granting flight authority to fleet pilots;
 - d. Coordinates with OAS for USFWS aviation program evaluations and safety;
 - e. Performs as the principal USFWS representative for accident investigations and review boards;
 - f. Manages the overall national aviation safety program;
 - g. Analyzes accident and incident trends and monitors aviation mishap information system (AMIS) safety communiqué (SAFECOM) reports and incidental serious safety concerns;
 - h. Serves as USFWS representative to the EAS and reports to the EAC;
 - i. Serves as USFWS wildland fire representative on the National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC), which adopts policy at the interagency and national level;
 - j. Provides instructor/operational mission pilot support to the Regions and programs;
 - k. Coordinates with OAS for USFWS aviation program evaluations;
 - l. Collaborates with other program managers to ensure operational aviation issues are addressed in program and policy decisions at the national level;
 - m. Coordinates fleet aircraft acquisition, replacement, and disposal to support agency program goals and objectives;
 - n. Oversees budget submissions, tracking, and aviation expenditures;
 - o. Provides aviation support and national mission planning to natural disaster relief operations;
 - p. Develops, establishes, and maintains the Service UAS program;

- q. Provides analysis of Service aviation usage (fleet, vendor, UAS, fleet pilot training, aviation user training) and aviation safety trends to the DAE and Director;
 - r. Coordinates with the Chief, Fire Management Branch, on aircraft operations and acquisitions for fire suppression, preparedness, and prescribed fire operations; and
 - s. Serves as the primary contact and coordinator with the AD-OAS for all aviation training requirements.
- (5) **Regional Directors (RD)** are responsible for ensuring that a safe and efficient aviation program exists in their Regions.
- a. Ensure that the Regions meet Service and Departmental requirements; and
 - b. Assign an Assistant Regional Director (ARD) to oversee the Regional aviation program for their Regions. The ARD will act as primary point-of-contact with RACS/RAM for program coordination.
- (6) **Division of Migratory Bird Management (DMBM) Program Aviation Manager (PAM)**
- a. Ensures all aviation activities are assessed for risk;
 - b. Supports and disseminates aviation policy and information;
 - c. Ensures that aviation training complies with requirements and that proper equipment is used;
 - d. Coordinates and collaborates with the NAM and NAO on all aviation activities;
 - e. Develops and establishes a program aviation management plan (PAMP);
 - f. Establishes, reviews, and approves project aviation safety plans (PASP);
 - g. Recommends aviation policy to the NAM;
 - h. Coordinates with the NAM and NAO on budget requirements;
 - i. Coordinates with the NAM and NAO on aviation pilot training (vendor and fleet);
 - j. Promotes and supports SAFECOM reporting and submittals;
 - k. Participates in or assigns aviation training at the user/supervisor level;
 - l. Identifies and submits aviation program requirements to the NAM;

- m. Disseminates aviation policies and information;
- n. Coordinates with AQD and OAS for aviation vendor contracting; and
- o. Coordinates and manages DMBM fleet aircraft working capital fund assets.

(7) ***Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) Program Aviation Manager (PAM).***

- a. Ensures the OLE aviation program meets Service and Departmental requirements;
- b. Assigns an OLE Aviation Manager or Coordinator for Alaska and the lower 48 states to address OLE aviation program issues and provide feedback on the Service aviation program to the NAM;
- c. Coordinates and collaborates with the NAM and NAO on all aviation activities;
- d. Develops and establishes a PAMP;
- e. Establishes, reviews, and approves PASP;
- f. Recommends aviation policy to the NAM;
- g. Coordinates with the NAM and NAO on budget requirements; and
- h. Coordinates with the NAM and NAO on aviation pilot training (vendor and fleet).

(8) ***Regional Aviation Compliance Specialists (RACS)*** provide technical expertise and aviation safety oversight to Regional Directors in the lower 48 States and Hawaii. They observe Regional aviation activities and provide liaison with Regional leadership, NAM, Refuge Managers, aviation users, and other bureaus/agencies, as appropriate. Each RACS position supports defined Regions in either the Eastern or Western contiguous United States and Hawaii.

- a. Ensure all aviation activities are assessed for risk;
- b. Support and disseminate aviation policy and information;
- c. Ensure that aviation training complies with requirements and that proper equipment is used;
- d. Ensure availability of aviation expertise to field managers who are responsible for aircraft operations;
- e. Assign a liaison to aviation accident investigation teams;
- f. Promote and support SAFECOM reporting and submittals;
- g. Participate in or assign aviation training at the user/supervisor level;

- h. Identify and submit aviation program requirements to the NAM;
 - i. Review and, when appropriate, approve PASP;
 - j. Conduct yearly training planning that identifies and requests resources required for Regional aviation training;
 - k. Perform Service Instructor Pilot or Operational Pilot functions as needed;
 - l. Review proposed changes in policy and procedure;
 - m. Coordinate or may instruct aviation training courses as requested;
 - n. Review unit aviation management/station plans;
 - o. Review PASPs; coordinate the planning and completion of project plans and risk assessments;
 - p. Perform as USFWS representative for accident investigations and review boards (as requested/delegated);
 - q. Disseminate aviation policies and information; and
 - r. Coordinate with RDs to develop and review Regional Aviation Management Plans (RAMP).
- (9) ***AK Regional Aviation Manager (RAM)*** provides technical expertise and aviation safety oversight to the Alaska RD. Observes Regional aviation activities and provides liaison with the Regional leadership, NAM, and the Refuge Managers, Program Managers, OAS, and other bureaus and agencies as appropriate.
- a. Ensures all aviation activities are assessed for risk;
 - b. Supports and disseminates aviation policy and information;
 - c. Ensures that aviation training complies with requirements and that proper equipment is used;
 - d. Ensures availability of aviation expertise to field managers who are responsible for aircraft operations;
 - e. Promotes and supports SAFECOM reporting and submittals;
 - f. Participates in or assigns aviation training at the user/supervisor level;
 - g. Identifies and submits aviation program requirements to the NAM;
 - h. Reviews and, when appropriate, approves PASP; coordinates the planning and completion of project plans and risk assessments;

- i. Conducts yearly training planning that identifies and requests resources required for Regional aviation training;
 - j. Coordinates fleet pilot training and evaluations;
 - k. Coordinates with OAS for fleet aircraft maintenance, modifications, replacement, and disposal;
 - l. Performs Service Instructor Pilot or Operational Pilot as needed;
 - m. Reviews proposed changes in policy and procedure;
 - n. Coordinates or may instruct aviation training courses as requested;
 - o. May be delegated authority to perform as the USFWS representative for accident investigations and review boards;
 - p. Coordinates with AQD and OAS for aviation vendor contracting;
 - q. Provides annual Alaska Region aviation use summary to RD and NAM;
 - r. Coordinates and manages AK Region fleet aircraft working capital fund assets; and
 - s. Coordinates with AK RD to develop and review RAMP.
- (10) **National Aviation Safety Specialist (NASS)** manages the national aviation safety plan.
- a. Manages all aspects of the USFWS national aviation safety plan;
 - b. Implements the tenets of SMS within the aviation program;
 - c. Manages SAFECOM for the bureau;
 - d. Represents USFWS during mishap investigation, as assigned;
 - e. Serves as a DOI mission pilot, as qualified;
 - f. Serves as a DOI Instructor Pilot, as qualified;
 - g. Liaises with intra- and interagency aviation programs;
 - h. Ensures aviation mishap plans are in place and current;
 - i. Performs aviation program safety audits; and
 - j. Advises the NAM on all matters of aviation safety.
- (11) **National Aviation Operations Specialist (NAOS)** manages the USFWS aviation operations program and provides aviation expertise to operational units and Regions.

- a. Provides oversight of USFWS aviation operations at the national level;
- b. Reviews and assists in the completion of all Service requests for Departmental aviation policy exceptions and waivers prior to submission to the NAM;
- c. Provides instructor/operational mission pilot support to Regions and programs;
- d. Compiles information and prepares requests for fleet aircraft acquisition, replacement, and disposal to support agency programs goals and objectives;
- e. Coordinates with OAS for fleet aircraft maintenance and modifications;
- f. Reviews Regional and program aviation budget requests;
- g. Tracks and monitors requested budget expenditures throughout each fiscal year;
- h. Provides aviation support and national mission planning to all-hazard response operations;
- i. Assists the National UAS Specialist in developing, establishing, and maintaining the Service UAS program;
- j. Serves as a USFWS representative on interagency and Departmental policy update committees;
- k. Reviews and processes interagency agreements and contracting requests for the NAO;
- l. Reviews PASPs and aviation management plans as required;
- m. Supports and disseminates aviation policy and information;
- n. Coordinates funding for flight following services;
- o. Maintains flight following station at NAO;
- p. Tracks aviation usage and trends and provides feedback for the NAM; and
- q. Participates in aviation program evaluations as required.

(12) ***National Aviation Training Specialist (NATS)***

- a. Develops national aviation training policy and procedures;
- b. Provides oversight of aviation vendors that provide training to fleet pilots;
- c. Provides USFWS representation to the Interagency Aviation Training Subcommittee (IATS);

- d. Provides Instructor Pilot training support to fleet pilots in both service aircraft and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-approved aviation training devices (ATD);
- e. Represents the NAM on DOI and interagency training committees;
- f. Provides mission support as a Pilot-in-Command (PIC) for both Service and interagency aviation operations; and
- g. Develops pilot evaluation standards in coordination with OAS.

(13) **National Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Specialist (NUAS)** provides aviation management expertise in the coordination and implementation of the Service's uncrewed aircraft program.

- a. Serves as the Service's national point-of-contact for UAS operations and as the USFWS National UAS Program Manager (UAS PM), representing the Service on Departmental and interagency committees and working groups;
- b. Supports Service programs in the planning and execution of incident and natural resource UAS projects;
- c. Works with Service and interagency partners to schedule, develop, support, and conduct programs to train, evaluate, and certify UAS operators, observers, and maintenance personnel;
- d. Develops and recommends strategy for procuring, managing, operating, maintaining, and disposing of UAS technology to support Service initiatives;
- e. Maintains current knowledge of small UAS and sensor packages and seeks to apply new technologies to bureau projects;
- f. Observes and monitors field applications of UAS to ensure compliance with Service and Departmental policy; and
- g. Assists Service partners as requested with planning, organizing, and supporting field UAS operations.

(14) **Regional UAS Coordinators** are appointed by their Regional Directors to represent their Regions on the FWS UAS Task Group. Regional Fire Management Coordinators delegate a representative for the FWS National Fire UAS Team. Each Region should have at least one UAS Coordinator, but due to the unique needs and specialized training required for some career fields (fire management, law enforcement, natural resources management, etc.), Regions may decide to appoint more than one UAS Coordinator.

- a. Maintain awareness of all UAS resources in the Regions by coordinating UAS program initiation requests, aircraft acquisition requests, and remote pilot training requests with the USFWS UAS PM;

- b. Assess UAS training needs within the Regions, and report that information to the UAS PM to schedule the appropriate type and number of classes;
- c. Prioritize pilot candidates for training within the Regions and/or programs;
- d. Coordinate shared UAS usage among remote pilots in the Regions;
- e. Coordinate UAS support requests with UAS PM when the request cannot be filled with Regional resources;
- f. Brief Regional leadership on current UAS policies and capabilities; and
- g. Communicate information regarding the UAS program to current and potential users of the technology.

(15) ***Project Leaders***

- a. Develop and establish aviation goals and objectives;
- b. Coordinate and collaborate with the NAM and NAO staff for resources required for their programs;
- c. Write and implement the PAMP or oversee those tasks;
- d. Review and approve PASPs and coordinate the planning and completion of project plans and risk assessments;
- e. Coordinate with RACS/RAM regarding aviation concerns and problems; and
- f. Serve as the Unit Aviation Training Administrators (UATA) for the Interagency Aviation Training (IAT) system.

(16) ***Supervisors.*** Supervisors at all levels are delegated authority and responsibility for the safety of aviation operations under their control. All USFWS supervisors whose employees use aviation resources must:

- a. Comply with DOI and bureau regulations, policies, and guidelines;
- b. Ensure identified personnel receive USFWS-mandated aviation safety training and that aviation safety training records are properly maintained;
- c. Ensure personnel are provided with, and properly wear, appropriate personal protective equipment; and
- d. Ensure employees whose job duties require aviation use are responsible for complying with all requirements specified in the USFWS aviation policy.

- (17) **Pilots-in-Command (PIC)** have the sole authority for the safe operation of the aircraft.
- a. Conduct aviation operations in accordance with applicable policy and directives;
 - b. Maintain proficiency and qualification standards appropriate to the missions performed;
 - c. Ensure the safety of the aircraft and personnel on board, and have the sole authority for operations of the aircraft;
 - d. Ensure airworthiness and operate aircraft for maximum safety and efficiency;
 - e. Provide aircraft briefings;
 - f. Report unsafe operations, conditions, and situations using the SAFECOM system;
 - g. Comply with interagency aviation life support equipment (IALSE) requirements; and
 - h. Complete OAS aircraft use reports (AURs) and OAS-2s.
- (18) **Remote PICs** have the sole authority for the safe operation of UAS.
- a. Conduct aviation operations in accordance with applicable policy and directives;
 - b. Maintain proficiency and qualification standards appropriate to the missions performed;
 - c. Ensure the safety of the aircraft and have the sole authority for operation of the aircraft;
 - d. Ensure airworthiness and operate aircraft for maximum safety and efficiency;
 - e. Provide aircraft briefings;
 - f. Report unsafe operations, conditions, and situations using the SAFECOM system; and
 - g. Complete OAS-2U, UAS use report form.
- (19) **Aircrew Members.** Aircrew members are the personnel/employees (not the pilot or FWS passengers) who are required to be on board the aircraft to perform an active mission function during a flight to ensure the successful outcome of the mission. Aircrew members serve a vital role in mission safety and are required to actively contribute to the safe and effective operation of the aircraft while on mission. Examples of other duties vary, but may include:

- a. Identify and vocalize hazards;
 - b. Communicate any concerns regarding the safety of flight;
 - c. Collect data, as required;
 - d. Perform loadmaster duties; and
 - e. As required, load and unload passengers and/or cargo.
- (20) **Aircraft Dispatcher.** Aircraft dispatchers are the personnel trained in aviation mission operations, policies, and procedures who receive, process, and place orders for aircraft and provide flight following and other aviation support services.
- (21) **Flight Followers.** Flight followers are responsible for monitoring aircraft flight activities in accordance with DOI and USFWS policies. They may work in a dispatch center or as collateral duty at remote or field location where they can monitor a flight by radio and a satellite tracking system and have the means to initiate an aircraft mishap emergency response in accordance with the aviation mishap response plan (AMRP). Flight followers used for official duty flights must meet the requirements established in either the IAT system or National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Aircraft Dispatcher system or approved equivalent.
- (22) **Employees/Personnel.** Other employees/personnel involved with aviation operations are responsible for knowing and following applicable policy, maintaining training by attending required aviation training in accordance with DOI and USFWS policies, using appropriate personal protective and life support equipment, reporting potential and actual problems, and ensuring the safety of themselves and others. Personnel may include:
- a. Individuals working under a volunteer agreement with USFWS;
 - b. Contractors; and
 - c. Permanent and temporary staff.

1.2. Objectives of the National Aviation Management Program

- A. The USFWS uses aviation resources as a tool to support the USFWS mission objectives. Our primary objective is the elimination of unnecessary or unacceptable risks associated with the use of aircraft. Mishap prevention is an inherent function of management since all aircraft mishaps can be prevented. Additional objectives include:
- (1) Promote efficient aviation policy and aviation management processes;
 - (2) Provide guidance for aviation programmatic and operational risk management;
 - (3) Promote an effective aviation training program for management and aviation users;

- (4) Provide aircraft acquisition support as specified by management objectives; and
- (5) Lead aviation safety assurance and promotion programs.

1.3. Authorities

- A. The requirements listed below are adopted and stepped down as policy and must be made available to all USFWS employees involved in aviation activities.
 - (1) **Title 14 CFR Part 1 through 199.** The Federal Aviation Regulations are the basic requirements for piloting, aircraft operations, and airspace within the United States.
 - (2) **Department of the Interior Departmental Manual (DM) 112 DM 12.** This chapter identifies the mission and functions of the Office of Aviation Services (OAS).
 - (3) **DM Parts 350-353.** DM Parts 350-353 establish mandatory responsibilities, policies, and procedures for the overall management and operations of aviation resources within DOI.
 - (4) **Office of Aviation Services Operational Procedures Memoranda (OPM).** Published under the issuing authority of the OAS Director, OPMs are interim directives used to disseminate timely information and procedures.
 - (5) **Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars A-76, A-123, A-126.** Published under the issuing authority of OMB, the circulars provide instructions or information to Federal agencies.
 - (6) **Interagency Aviation Handbooks, Guides, Standards, and Booklets.** These documents describe intent, policy, authority, objectives, roles and responsibilities, and procedures for the management and implementation of specific programs or special missions.

1.4. Revision Schedule

- A. The USFWS Designated Agency Aviation Executive will review and approve this National Aviation Management Plan formally every 3 years, at a minimum. The National Aviation Manager must review the NAMP annually and is authorized to make interim revisions as required. Recommended revisions will be sent to the respective RACS/RAM/PAM for consideration by the NAM.

1.5. USFWS Specific Requirements

- A. **Policy Exceptions and Waivers**
 - (1) Exceptions and/or waivers from DOI aviation policies must be requested through the respective RACS/RAM/PAM to the National Aviation Manager and approved by the OAS Director, as applicable.

- (2) Exceptions and/or waivers from USFWS-specific aviation policies must be requested through the respective RACS/RAM/PAM for approval by the National Aviation Manager.
- B. **Compliance.** USFWS aviation activities must be performed in accordance with DOI aviation policies and this document.
 - (1) **International operations.** This document does not apply to international USFWS operations (except for fleet operations). However, USFWS personnel should attempt to follow this document to the extent possible.
 - (2) **Noncompliance.** Purposeful actions contrary to DOI and USFWS aviation policies may jeopardize safety, void Federal Tort Claims Act protections, or result in adverse administrative actions.
- C. **Employee Prerogative.** USFWS personnel may elect, without fear of reprisal, not to fly under any condition they consider unsafe. These situations must be reported as soon as possible to the employee's supervisor, and, when warranted, to the NASS.
- D. **Research Work Orders/Cooperative Agreements/Support Services Contracts/Grants, etc.** Agreements that involve the use of flight services under the operational control of USFWS must contain language that all personnel onboard aircraft are subject to the requirements in this document.

Chapter 2 Aviation Administration

- 2.1 General
- 2.2 Procurement
- 2.3 Procurement of Flight Services from other DOI Bureaus
- 2.4 Procurement of Flight Services from Non-Federal Public Agencies
- 2.5 Contracted Services
- 2.6 Emergency Aircraft Procurement
- 2.7 Fleet Aircraft Acquisition and Disposition
- 2.8 Vendor Use Reports and Payments Processes
- 2.9 Fleet Use Reports and Payment Process
- 2.10 Recordkeeping Requirements

2.1. General

- A. Aircraft operators providing contract, individual charter, or hourly rental service to DOI bureaus must be approved by OAS. Pilots must meet DOI experience requirements and adhere to flight time and duty limitations.
- B. AQD is responsible for the centralized contracting of aircraft and related aviation services that support the DOI's program.

2.2. Procurement

- A. **Requirements and Exceptions:** All aircraft services required by any USFWS unit must be acquired through the AQD procurement process as outlined below, with the following exceptions:
 - (1) **Seat fare.** Seat fares refer to tickets purchased with a scheduled air carrier; this includes Part 135 operators who are designated as Certified Air Carriers by the U.S. Department of Transportation. A seat fare does not include any charter or on-demand operations when the aircraft is not under the operational control of DOI. Tandem seating aircraft are excluded from use as seat fare. Exemption requests to seat fare criteria will be routed through the NAM by the DAE and OAS. See OPM-15 for additional information.
 - (2) **End-product/service contracts.** End-product contracts are used to acquire a product for the Service (i.e., per-acre, per-unit or per-area, or per head basis). Specifications in the contract must only describe the desired quantity or quality of the service or contracted end result. The intent of this type of procurement is for the contractor to supply all personnel and equipment in order to provide a "service" or "end result." Many contractors use aircraft (including UAS) to meet the performance objectives of end-product contracts for activities such as animal capture, seeding, spraying, survey, photography, etc. Since these are not flight services contracts, these contracts do not have to be run through the flight services contract process. The NAM must review end-product contracts where contractors could conceivably use aircraft to ensure that specifications and language do not unintentionally imply or determine aircraft operational control. It should be noted that if UAS is used as part of an end-product contract, and the UAS takes off or lands on FWS-managed lands or waters, the Refuge Manager

or other Project Leader would need to authorize the UAS to do so (50 CFR 27.34). See OPM-35 for additional information.

B. Procurement and Documentation of Competition

- (1) Any single procurement of flight services less than \$2,500 must use a best value determination of at least three vendors. Cost comparisons must include all anticipated costs including ferry time. Pricing information in the OAS Pilot and Aircraft Source List may be used for this comparison.
- (2) For projects not exceeding \$25,000, managers may obtain services through the lower 48 aircraft rental agreement (ARA), Alaska fixed-wing or helicopter on-call contract, or Hawaii fixed-wing or helicopter on-call contract AQD-91 Order Request Form for Government Flight Services (AQD-91, 10/2021, for the lower 48, and AQD-91, 5/2021, for AK and HI).
- (3) Managers acquire services on an hourly rate basis, which they can use when the cost of services is \$25,000 per transaction or less. AQD and OAS provide an approved list of rental sources based on a standard ARA or AK/HI on-call contracts (OAS source list) from which managers must select all vendors.

C. Other Aviation-Related Procurement

- (1) Other aviation-related services, such as the purchase of aircraft components, parts, accessories, maintenance services, etc., must be procured through OAS. This requirement does not apply to UAS.

D. Aircraft Sources

- (1) Approved sources for flight services include:
 - a. DOI fleet aircraft,
 - b. U.S. Forest Service (USFS) fleet aircraft,
 - c. AQD procured/contracted aircraft,
 - d. Affiliate or cooperator aircraft approved under an OAS agreement, and
 - e. Memoranda of understanding/letters of agreement (MOU/LOA).

E. Unauthorized Procurement

- (1) Unauthorized acquisition of aviation services may result in a ratification process. The unit may incur a penalty payment imposed by OAS through AQD to cover the cost of ratification.

2.3. Procurement of Flight Services from Other DOI Bureaus

- A. Before using fleet aircraft assigned to other DOI bureaus, field units are responsible for contacting the provider of the service to determine the payment rates for the use of the aircraft, pilot services, and per diem. Flight hours are reported on Form OAS-2 or OAS-2U and an interagency agreement (IAA) is needed.

2.4. Procurement of Flight Services from Non-Federal Public Agencies

- A. It is Federal policy not to compete with private industry. USFWS procurement of and reimbursement for flight services from non-Federal public agencies are generally not authorized unless:
 - (1) That agency is providing the service as a commercial operator.
 - (2) The operation is conducted with civil aircraft when no operating certificate is required.
 - (3) The services are necessary to respond to an imminent threat to life or property, and no service by a commercial operator is reasonably available to meet the threat.
- B. The decision not to use a commercial operator must be documented in writing and made part of the permanent incident record. Field units that anticipate using resources belonging to other Government agencies must establish the appropriate approval and agreement documents or cooperator aircraft approval under 351 DM 4 through their RACS/RAM/PAM and OAS.

2.5. Contracted Services

- A. **> than \$25,000:** If the cost for using non-USFWS-owned aircraft will exceed \$25,000, managers must obtain the aircraft service by contract rather than ARA, and submit it on Form AQD-91, Request for Contract Services, which then must be approved by an official who has authority to certify that funds are available. The form must be submitted to AQD.
- B. **Cross-Servicing Agreements**
 - (1) Up-front funding is a requirement of the DOI Financial and Business Management System (FBMS). All AQD contracted aviation services that USFWS procures must be funded either through an IAA or through cross-servicing agreements with AQD.
 - (2) AQD can cross-service USFWS exclusive-use and on-call contracts for non-emergency, project flights only. The cross-servicing process must be done with close assistance from AQD to ensure a purchase request (PR) is completed correctly. The main benefit to using cross-servicing is that the PR commits and obligates the USFWS funds to the project before the flight occurs, and the actual charges post to the USFWS line of accounting. Cross-servicing reduces the workload for USFWS contracting and Budget/Finance personnel. Funds are obligated immediately, vendors are

paid more quickly, and real-time tracking is available for expenditures for USFWS and AQD staff.

C. **Exclusive Use Contracts**

- (1) Exclusive use contracts are awarded for a specific time period (30-day, 90-day, etc.). During this period, the Government has exclusive use of the aircraft. At its option, USFWS may release the aircraft for other work for a specified period.

D. **Aircraft Rental Agreements**

- (1) OAS has established ARAs with air taxi commercial operators throughout the contiguous United States based on user needs. An ARA is not a contract; it is a written instrument of understanding that is negotiated between OAS and a vendor. Current Federal acquisition limitations restrict use of the ARA to procurements that are less than \$25,000.

E. **On-Call Contract**

- (1) On-call contracts are used in Alaska and Hawaii to allow for the procurement of fixed-wing and helicopter flight services in the Alaska Region and Hawaii. These contracts are established for a period of 5 years.

2.6. **Emergency Aircraft Procurement**

- A. The justification for procuring emergency aircraft services must meet the following criteria:

- (1) ***Life threatening:*** A situation or occurrence of a serious nature, developing suddenly and unexpectedly, and demanding immediate action to prevent loss of life.
- (2) ***Operational:*** An unforeseen combination of circumstances that calls for immediate action, but is not life threatening.

- B. Authorized personnel from the requesting USFWS unit can use the ARA or on-call contracts for requests for charter aircraft services to meet emergency needs. The pilot and aircraft will be approved (carded) for the intended mission. If, due to the nature of the emergency, the pilot and/or aircraft are not approved for the intended mission, managers must notify the appropriate RACS/RAM/PAM, who must submit a SAFECOM immediately after the mission.

Note: All such procurements must have a documented risk assessment completed.

2.7. **Fleet Aircraft Acquisition and Disposition**

A. **General**

- (1) USFWS may acquire fleet aircraft (including UAS) when warranted by mission requirements, amount of use, availability of a qualified pilot, and other factors.

B. Fleet Aircraft Acquisition (non-UAS)

- (1) Acquisition of fleet aircraft requires that OMB Circular No. A-76 (revised), Performance of Government Aircraft, must be satisfied and approved by appropriate USFWS and DOI officials, per 353 DM 6. The requesting agency is responsible for funding both initial and replacement aircraft.
- (2) Aircraft on loan from another agency, or aircraft owned or leased by DOI that are intended for purchase are considered fleet aircraft as defined in 350 DM 1, Appendix 2. DOI (OAS) fleet aircraft may be assigned to USFWS by OAS. OAS may acquire fleet aircraft through a variety of sources such as purchase, donation, excess, bailed, or seizure.
- (3) The USFWS must request acquisition of fleet aircraft through the NAM. The relative merits of purchase versus contracting must be evaluated in accordance with OMB Circular A-11, Part 7, OPM-08 Planning, Budgeting and Acquisition of Aircraft Assets.

C. Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Acquisition

- (1) See Chapter 4 for information regarding UAS acquisition and policy for uncrewed aircraft systems.

D. Fleet Aircraft Disposition

- (1) OAS is responsible for disposing of aircraft in accordance with Federal property management regulations. Disposal of aircraft, to include UAS, must be coordinated with the NAM for possible reassignment or transfer of the aircraft reserve funds.

2.8. Vendor Use Reports and Payments Processes

A. Daily Flight Logs

- (1) The USFWS aviation contractor is responsible for completing a daily flight log (AMD-23E) that is accurate and legible. All sections of the daily flight log must be completed. Reasons for delayed flight departure or early return should be noted in the remarks section of the flight log. A USFWS employee, preferably the Project Leader for the flight, should review the flight log for completeness and accuracy and sign it as the approving official.

B. Aircraft Use Reporting

- (1) Vendors must complete aircraft use reports according to contract specifications.

C. Payment Process

- (1) AQD acquisition personnel will review the AUR record for accuracy related to the contract details and compare it to the invoice and invoice attachments.

- (2) If the invoice is approved, they will route it to the USFWS accounts payable technician for payment.
- (3) Once the invoice is paid and the AUR is in a bureau-accepted status, AQD personnel change the status of the AUR to “Completed.”

2.9. Fleet Use Reports and Payment Process

A. Aircraft Use Report (AUR)

- (1) Fleet pilots, or their designees, are responsible for completing an aircraft use report (AUR) through the aircraft use report manager application (AURMA) after each flight. The accumulated flight time for each flight is entered into the AURMA system and includes details about the flight, mission, pilot, and funding codes. Once complete, USFWS Budget/Finance personnel must review and enter the AUR in FBMS for billing by OAS.
- (2) Fleet pilots, or their designees, are also responsible for entering flight time into AURMA as soon as practical. If flight time is not accounted for in AURMA for a specific aircraft, any flight time entered after that missing time cannot be billed until the missing time is accounted for. This can cause significant delays in billing.

B. Mission Codes

- (1) Fleet pilots, or their designees, must accurately record flight mission codes in the AUR. Accurate mission codes allow the program to track usage and allocate resources appropriately. A list of the most commonly used mission codes is available in the [NAMP References](#) folder on the NAO SharePoint site.

C. Flight Rates (Fleet)

- (1) DF: Aircraft hourly use rate without fuel.
- (2) FW: Aircraft hourly use rate with fuel.
- (3) Passback rates (e.g., DF1, FW1) are specified by individual programs and are designed for cost recovery. Fleet pilots, or their designees, are responsible for ensuring the correct flight rate is entered when submitting the AUR.

2.10. Recordkeeping Requirements

A. DOI Aircraft Flight/Use and Aircraft Use Reports

- (1) For each flight on fleet aircraft, the pilot or designee must complete an OAS-2 form (OAS-2U for UAS), Aircraft Flight/Use Report, for recordkeeping purposes and maintenance release. For contract, rental, or charter aircraft, Form AMD-23E, Aircraft Use Report, must be used for billing purposes.

B. Nonrevenue Flights (i.e., Cooperator Aircraft, see section 4.E)

- (1) The Project Leader or a designee must document each nonrevenue flight on approved cooperator aircraft (military or other public agencies) or approved privately owned aircraft used for official Government business, under the operational control of USFWS, on Form OAS-2 or AMD-23E, as appropriate. Refer to 350 DM 1.9. The comment “Not for payment purposes” must be included.

C. Use of Non-Federal Public Aircraft

- (1) The pilot or a designee must document USFWS reimbursement for the use of a State/local government-owned and operated public aircraft as a first responder resource to show that they considered commercial operators and that no commercial operator was available to respond to the incident in the same manner and timeframe as the non-Federal public aircraft. Documentation must be maintained with the incident records.

Note: This section refers to the operation of an aircraft by a government agency that does not meet civil standards or that does not have a commercial operating certificate (if one is required). OAS may approve operations as an affiliate aircraft when a government agency (e.g., State agency) conducts them using civil certificated aircraft that do not require an operating certificate.

Chapter 3 Aviation Safety

- 3.1 Policy
- 3.2 Risk Management
- 3.3 Promotion
- 3.4 Assurance
- 3.5 Aviation Mishap Prevention and Management

3.1. Policy

- A. **Overall Policy.** The safety of USFWS personnel is paramount. Mission accomplishment is important, but it must never overshadow the need to protect human life and equipment from undue risks. The Directorate will support any organizational manager or supervisor who suspends a project based on a subjective analysis that it cannot be accomplished safely, as well as the decision of any PIC to cancel a flight or series of flights for reasons of safety.
- B. **Leadership Responsibility.** Leadership at all levels must foster a USFWS safety culture that encourages employees to communicate unsafe conditions, policies, or acts that could lead to aviation incidents or accidents. Each USFWS employee and contractor involved with aviation has the responsibility to plan missions thoroughly and conduct missions with a conservative attitude and with respect for the aircraft and the environment in which our missions operate.
- C. **Program Elements.** The following elements are essential to USFWS aviation safety programs:
 - (1) Aviation safety education and training;
 - (2) Mishap prevention through continuous flight crew training, currency, and proficiency;
 - (3) Aviation program review and compliance;
 - (4) Aircraft mishap prevention, response, and investigation programs;
 - (5) Aviation safety awards program; and
 - (6) Appropriate levels of funding for training and safety programs.
- D. **USFWS Aviation Safety Management System (SMS).**
 - (1) SMS is not a stand-alone safety program. It is a system for organizing existing safety processes around the concept of systems safety. SMS incorporates a proactive approach of using hazard identification and risk management to achieve accident prevention. The USFWS aviation SMS is compatible with DOI policy and is constantly evolving. The USFWS aviation safety program complies with applicable DMs and OPM-06 and is organized using the SMS pillars of safety policy, safety risk management, safety assurance, and safety promotion.

- E. **Human Factor.** USFWS recognizes that the human factor is the critical element in aviation safety, and that although prescriptive regulations can reduce risks, regulations alone are not enough. Everyone involved in aviation work must adhere to the core value of placing safety above all else.
- F. **Safety Culture.** USFWS defines safety culture as the core values and behaviors of all members of an organization that reflect a commitment to conducting business in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.
- G. **Safety Culture Policy Statement.** This statement establishes the Director's safety expectations, but it does not create any additional regulatory requirements. This non-regulatory statement defines USFWS's approach to lead aviation activities beyond a checklist-inspection approach toward a systemic, comprehensive approach to compliance and risk reduction. The nine characteristics of a robust safety culture are:
- (1) *Leadership Commitment to Safety Values and Actions.* Leaders demonstrate a commitment to safety and environmental stewardship in their decisions.
 - (2) *Hazard Identification and Risk Management.* Issues potentially affecting safety and environmental stewardship are promptly identified, fully evaluated, and addressed commensurate with their significance.
 - (3) *Personal Accountability.* All individuals take personal responsibility for process and personal safety, as well as environmental stewardship.
 - (4) *Work Processes.* The process of planning and controlling work activities is implemented so that safety and environmental stewardship are maintained while ensuring the appropriate equipment for the mission.
 - (5) *Continuous Improvement.* Opportunities to learn about ways to ensure safety and environmental stewardship are sought out and implemented.
 - (6) *Environment for Raising Concerns.* A work environment is maintained where personnel feel free to raise safety and environmental concerns without fear of retaliation, intimidation, harassment, or discrimination.
 - (7) *Effective Safety and Environmental Communication.* Communications maintain a focus on safety and environmental stewardship.
 - (8) *Respectful Work Environment.* Trust and respect permeate the organization with a focus on teamwork and collaboration.
 - (9) *Inquiring Attitude.* Individuals avoid complacency and continuously consider and review existing conditions and activities to identify discrepancies that might result in error or inappropriate action.

H. Employee Prerogative

- (1) Every employee is a safety manager. All individuals must take personal responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. All employees are empowered to pause or stop any situation that they believe to be hazardous, address the concern, and seek appropriate levels of clarity, guidance, and mitigation. While performing their duties, personnel may elect not to fly under any condition they consider unsafe without fear of reprisal and are encouraged to report the concern via SAFECOM.

I. Hazard Identification and Risk Management

- (1) Issues potentially affecting safety and environmental stewardship are promptly identified, fully evaluated, and addressed commensurate with their significance.

J. Staffing and Education

- (1) The USFWS Director provides the resources necessary to ensure adequate staffing and training of personnel necessary for an effective aircraft mishap prevention program. These positions may be classified as full-time equivalent or collateral duty based on USFWS management needs assessment. The NASS is responsible for ensuring execution of the USFWS aviation safety program.

K. Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE)

- (1) Project Leaders must ensure appropriate and adequate ALSE, including personal protective equipment (PPE), is aboard the aircraft or being worn by the individual, based on Departmental requirements, guidelines, project needs, and individual State requirements.
- (2) The Project Leader must ensure that required PPE is inspected and maintained in accordance with manufacturer and Departmental requirements. Detailed information is available in the *Interagency Aviation Life Support Equipment Handbook/Guide*.

L. Weight and Balance

- (1) It is imperative that proper consideration and planning be given to the aircraft weight and balance computation and subsequent loading. The actual weight of personnel and/or cargo must be considered relative to environmental and aircraft performance capabilities. The PIC must accomplish or review weight and balance for each takeoff and landing for all aircraft.

M. Airspace Coordination

- (1) Airspace planning and coordination are becoming more important as airspace is becoming more congested. All users of the airspace system must be aware of special use airspace and what restrictions apply to the use of that airspace. Coordination with other airspace users such as the military

is an important safety issue. Airspace coordination is an important part of mission planning.

N. Hazard Maps

- (1) Local area hazard maps are required, and the PIC must review them prior to the mission. A hazard is any obstacle protruding into the planned flight path. Personnel must review known and possible wire strike locations in the flight path and ensure the pilot is aware of them during flight planning activities.
- (2) Any new hazards found in the area flown must be added to the hazard map. The Aviation Project Manager and pilots participating in mission planning and flight execution are responsible for reviewing hazard maps with pilots prior to each flight. Hazard data and hazard maps may be managed and provided to personnel in hard copy or digital formats.

3.2. Risk Management

A. Managers at all levels are responsible for safe aviation operations under their control. Direct supervision, training, and ensuring safe working conditions are the primary management responsibility. Managers must monitor programs, identify hazards, and implement controls to mitigate risk to acceptable levels.

B. Crew Resource Management (CRM)

- (1) CRM is a method that makes optimum use of all available resources—equipment, procedures, and people—to promote safety and enhance the efficiency of flight operations. Every USFWS aerial mission is a team effort. Therefore, the greatest investment flight and ground crews can make to minimize the possibility of an accident is to maximize the use of all available resources before, during, and after flight operations.
- (2) All flight crews and ground support personnel are responsible for safety and are a voting member of the crew. In short, if anyone recognizes or senses an unsafe condition or potential hazard, they must share this concern with someone who can address it.
- (3) If the concern affects the safety of flight, the PIC must be consulted. Pilots must be attentive and responsive to the inputs of aerial crewmembers, especially when it comes to a safety concern.
- (4) If there is ever a safety concern about a flight, the aircraft must stay on the ground until the concern is addressed and resolved. If a safety concern arises in flight, flight crews must execute the most conservative option, to include terminating the flight and landing the aircraft at an appropriate location, if required.

C. Project Aviation Safety Plan (PASP).

- (1) The pilot or Project Leader must complete a PASP under the following conditions when USFWS has operational control:
 - a. The flight operation is deemed “Special Use” per OPM-29, and

- b. All UAS operations. See chapter 8 of this document for PASP guidance.
- (2) PASP risk assessment matrix:
- a. Operational risk management (ORM) is a methodical, common sense way of accomplishing the mission with the least possible risk. It is a method of performing the task or mission safely by identifying the areas that present the highest risk and taking action to eliminate, reduce, or control that risk.
 - b. ORM should be fully integrated into mission planning and execution. It is a tool used to help make sound, informed decisions and provides the opportunity to step back and evaluate risks before placing people and resources in an unsafe situation.

D. Risk Assessment Tools.

- (1) The second step of risk management is assessment of the threats/hazards. Several tools may be used to document the hazards and to determine the level of risk involved in an operation. Where a PASP identifies and categorizes projected risk, all USFWS pilots must complete a pre-flight risk assessment tool (RAT) on the day of each flight in order to assess real-time hazards and crew human factors.

3.3. Promotion

A. Aviation Safety Training

- (1) Resources must be made available for education and training as specified in the Interagency Aviation Training Guide. All levels of management should encourage attendance at safety training events. See OPM-04 and Chapter 5 of this document for aviation safety training requirements.

- B. The RACS/RAM/PAM** must monitor aviation training within their Region/program to ensure that training requirements are being met and proficiency maintained.

C. Aviation Safety Communiqué — SAFECOM

- (1) The SAFECOM database fulfills the AMIS requirements for aviation mishap reporting for DOI bureaus and the USFS. Categories of reports include airspace, incidents, hazards, maintenance, management, and mishap prevention. The system uses the SAFECOM Form OAS-34 or FS-5700-14 to report any condition, observation, act, maintenance problem, or circumstance with personnel or aircraft that has the potential to cause an aviation-related mishap. SAFECOM may be used to identify good “acts, events, and circumstances” as well as unsafe situations. The SAFECOM system is not intended for initiating punitive actions. Submitting a SAFECOM is not a substitute for an on-the-spot correction to a safety concern. It is a tool used to identify, document, track, and correct safety-related issues. A SAFECOM does not replace the requirement for initiating an accident or incident report. Employees may submit a SAFECOM online.

- (2) SAFECOM is a confidential system with privileged access. Although providing contact information is beneficial to the overall safety goal, anyone may submit a SAFECOM anonymously.
- (3) Personnel who would like assistance with submitting a SAFECOM should contact their RACS/RAM/PAM. If unavailable, contact the National Aviation Safety Specialist. Although a RACS, RAM, PAM, or NASS may assist personnel with submitting the SAFECOM, they must not attempt to censure or write for the submitter. SAFECOM narratives and corrective recommendations must be in the submitter's own words and directly reflect their own observation.
- (4) SAFECOM flow:
 - a. SAFECOM submitted.
 - b. SAFECOM reviewed by USFWS NASS, select USFWS management, as well as the OAS Safety Team.
 - c. USFWS NASS will follow up with submitter if contact information provided.
 - d. If the SAFECOM illustrates a safety concern regarding damage to aircraft or injury to people or indicates an unsafe trend, the SAFECOM may be elevated. Elevated SAFECOMs are further reviewed in depth by an OAS Aviation Safety Inspector.
 - e. Each SAFECOM submission is ultimately "completed" (closed out). Although SAFECOM submissions are confidential, a sanitized (no personally identifiable information) narrative and corrective actions may be made public if there is a definitive benefit to the aviation community.
 - f. SAFECOM, as a program, ultimately leads to sharing lessons learned, which provides for a safer overall aviation program and accident prevention.

D. Aviation Safety and Aircraft Mishap Information Dissemination

- (1) The OAS Aviation Safety Office publishes the following:
 - a. **Safety Alert.** Safety alerts are red-bordered and are used to disseminate information of a significant nature regarding aviation safety within DOI. The three areas addressed are operations, maintenance, and publications. These safety alerts will be published on an unscheduled basis.
 - b. **Aircraft Mishap Prevention Bulletin.** These bulletins are green-bordered and used to disseminate information of a general nature regarding aircraft mishap prevention concepts, methods, procedures, and efforts. Bulletins will be published on an unscheduled basis as pertinent information/subject materials become available.

- c. **Aviation Safety Review.** This is an annual review of aircraft mishaps-associated statistical data and trend analysis that will be published and distributed following the mishap-reporting year in the form of A-200, Mishap Review.

(2) To subscribe to these safety distribution lists, contact the NASS.

E. **Aviation Awards.** Aviation awards are an integral component of the USFWS aviation program and support our safety culture by recognizing exceptional acts or service in support of aviation safety and aircraft accident prevention.

(1) General guidelines and procedures (processing and approval) for the submission of DOI-level aviation awards are described in 352 DM 4.

(2) USFWS-specific awards available to personnel, organizational units, and our aviation service providers include:

- a. On-the-spot airwards
- b. Awards for in-flight actions
- c. Consecutive years of accident-free flying awards

(3) Aviation award recommendations within USFWS should be submitted to the NAM via the RACS/RAM/PAM and through the NASS.

(4) The RACS/RAM/PAM:

- a. Reviews SAFECOMs and other sources of information against the criteria of 352 DM 4 or USFWS NAMP to identify events and actions worthy of recognition using an aviation award.
- b. Coordinates with the local supervisor and the aviation service provider to validate the actions of the recipient.
- c. Submits award recommendations through the NASS for consideration by the NAM.
- d. Upon approval, coordinates the presentation of the award.

(5) The NASS:

- a. Reviews the award recommendation against the criteria of 352 DM 4 or USFWS NAMP.
- b. Reviews the associated SAFECOM (if applicable).
- c. Coordinates with the RACS/RAM/PAM to validate the actions of the recipient.
- d. Briefs the NAM on the request for award.

- e. Complies with the requirements for OAS Aviation Safety Manager and OAS Regional Director review/approval (for DOI-level awards).
- f. Provides award nominations and citations to the NAM for review/approval.
- g. Upon approval, the NAM coordinates with the RACS/RAM/PAM for presentation of awards.

Note: Every effort should be made to have aviation awards presented by a USFWS Directorate member (e.g., Regional Director, Assistant Director in Headquarters).

3.4. Assurance

A. Evaluation and Monitoring

- (1) *Internal Review.* Periodic internal reviews of USFWS aviation operating procedures are necessary to enhance safety, identify program strengths and weaknesses, help identify fiscal and personnel needs, and ensure the efficient use of aircraft under USFWS control. These reviews may be supplemental to those that DOI conducts.
- (2) *Regional Aviation Program Review.* OAS must evaluate each Region's overall aviation program at least once every 5 years. The DOI OAS program evaluations are conducted in accordance with DOI policy at 352 DM 2, Aviation Program Evaluations.

B. Program Evaluations

- (1) In addition to the 5-year DOI program reviews, the USFWS must conduct internal program reviews at the national level 2 years prior to the 5-year OAS evaluation to facilitate the sharing of information and standardization within the bureau. The NAO staff and RACS perform these reviews.

3.5. Aviation Mishap Prevention and Management

A. Mishap Terminology

- (1) **Accidents.** Accidents involve death or serious injury or substantial damage to the aircraft. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is responsible for the investigation of aircraft accidents. USFWS must report all aviation accidents immediately to the National Aviation Manager, Regional Director, and OAS in accordance with 352 DM 3, Aircraft Mishap Notification, Investigation, and Reporting.

B. Definitions

- (1) **Aviation mishap.** Aviation mishaps may include:
 - a. Aircraft accidents,

- b. Incidents that narrowly escape becoming accidents (incident with potential),
 - c. Incidents that affect or could affect the safety of operations,
 - d. Aviation hazards, and
 - e. Aviation maintenance deficiencies.
- (2) **Incident.** An incident is an event that is not an accident but can affect the safety of operations.
 - (3) **Incidents with potential (IWP).** IWPs are those incidents in which the circumstances indicate significant potential for substantial damage or serious injury. Final classification will be determined by the OAS Chief, Aviation Safety, Training, Program Evaluations, and Quality Management.
 - (4) **Substantial damage.** Substantial damage is defined by NTSB 830. The USFWS NASS and OAS will provide interpretation as necessary.

C. **Aviation Mishap Response Planning**

- (1) The Aviation Mishap Response Plan (AMRP) must detail the actions that need to be accomplished if there is an aviation accident. An AMRP tells you what actions you must take and whom you must notify if an aviation mishap occurs in your area.
- (2) Each USFWS Region, refuge, office, or program using flight services must maintain a current and complete AMRP in a readily accessible location. The NAM and respective RACS/RAM/PAM have the responsibility to have current/signed AMRPs in place in case of a mishap. For further information, see Chapter 8.

D. **Aviation Mishap Reporting**

- (1) If there is a mishap, the aircraft operator, flight manager, pilot, or person with flight following responsibilities must immediately:
 - a. Initiate the AMRP (as appropriate)
 - b. Notify RACS/RAM/PAM (who will notify the NAM), and OAS Safety Division, (24/7) at 1-888-4-MISHAP (1-888-464-7427). The OAS Safety Division has the Departmental responsibility to coordinate with the nearest office of the NTSB.

Note: Contacting OAS activates the phone tree that allows for maintenance, investigations, and other functions to be initiated in the proper sequence.
- (2) The OAS Safety Division is required to notify the NTSB when an aircraft accident or NTSB reportable incident occurs (49 CFR 830). DOI prefers that OAS be notified first and that they handle initial communication with the NTSB. USFWS personnel must not initiate contact with NTSB or FAA.

E. Mishap Investigation

- (1) The USFWS notification, classification, investigation, and documentation of NTSB reportable aircraft mishaps involving USFWS aviation activities will be accomplished in accordance with the procedures established in 352 DM 3, Aircraft Mishap Notification, Investigation, and Reporting. Investigations are conducted for the purpose of aircraft mishap prevention only.
- (2) All DOI accidents are the domain of the NTSB, whether they participate in the field investigation or not. NTSB may engage OAS to investigate accidents on NTSB's behalf. In these cases, OAS works in conjunction with NTSB and is bound by rules at 49 CFR 830-831.
- (3) USFWS will offer a qualified individual to assist the investigating agency and may independently review the mishap internally. The respective USFWS Regional Director, in conjunction with the NAM, will assign the appropriate individuals.
- (4) The NAM or designee is the primary focal point of contact within USFWS, between OAS and USFWS, and with the other bureaus for notification of significant aviation-related events and policy-related matters.

F. Vendor Responsibilities

- (1) The vendor of an aircraft involved in a mishap or selected IWP that occurs in support of USFWS aviation activities must secure all appropriate operator records, reports, internal documents, and memoranda dealing with the aircraft and employee(s) involved in the mishap. Such support must be addressed in the appropriate contract, agreements, or other appropriate documents.

G. Limited Use of Mishap File

- (1) **General.** When requested by the head of a parallel Interior investigation group, the OAS Chief, Aviation Safety, Training, Program Evaluations, and Quality Management may release facts relating to the mishap after coordination with the NTSB.
- (2) **Authorized Use.** Aircraft mishap files may be used for any lawful purpose, including, but not limited to, the revocation process in accordance with 351 DM 3.6G(2).
- (3) **Release of Information.** The OAS Chief, Aviation Safety, Training, Program Evaluations, and Quality Management is the custodian of record for Interior mishap information. Information received as a result of participation in an NTSB investigation must be handled in accordance with 49 CFR 831.13 and is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as amended, and the Privacy Act of 1974. Specifically, items such as photographs, factual data, or any documentation directly related to the investigation must not be released until the OAS Investigator-in-Charge (IIC) complies with NTSB 830. Air Safety Investigators (ASI) or other investigators, including all parties to the

investigation, must not make public their own opinions, conclusions, or recommendations in their capacity as members of the investigation team.

- (4) For more detailed information regarding aircraft mishap notification, investigations, and reporting, see 352 DM 3.

Chapter 4 Aviation Operations

- 4.1 General
- 4.2 Special Use
- 4.3 Fixed Wing
- 4.4 Rotary Wing
- 4.5 Fleet Operations
- 4.6 Cooperator Operations
- 4.7 Passenger Transport (Travel, Not Mission Work)
- 4.8 Hazardous Materials Transport
- 4.9 Flight Plan: Filing and Communication
- 4.10 Flight Following
- 4.11 Uncrewed Aircraft Systems
- 4.12 Documentation Requirements
- 4.13 Bureau-Specific Operational Requirements

4.1. General

- A. The operations chapter outlines the parameters in which the USFWS aviation program accomplishes its mission. Flights are conducted in fleet, contractor, cooperator, and affiliate aircraft, to include UAS.

4.2. Special Use

- A. Special use flights as referred to in 350 DM and defined by OPM-29 as flight operations that require special considerations due to additional equipment and/or the increased complexity inherent in such operations.
- B. Special pilot qualifications and techniques, special aircraft equipment, and/or PPE are required to ensure safe transportation of personnel and property. Specific OAS authorization for both pilot and aircraft is required for special use operations.
- C. Special use flight operations require RACS/RAM/PAM review of a PASP, including a risk assessment that includes the minimum elements in OPM-06 and Chapter 8 of this document.
- D. The following special use activities require PASP review and approval by the National Aviation Operations Specialist and National Aviation Safety Specialist:
 - (1) Offshore platform landings – helicopter;
 - (2) Vessel landings – helicopter;
 - (3) Water landings – floats or hull – helicopter;
 - (4) Night vision goggle (NVG) flight – airplane and helicopter;
 - (5) Aerial capture, eradication, and tagging of animals (ACETA);

- (6) Single-skid, toe-in, hover exit/entry procedures (STEP) – helicopter; and
 - (7) Aerial ignition – helicopter and UAS
- E. DOI aviation activities include both “civil” and “public aircraft” operations (FAA AC 00-1.1A). USFWS missions are considered public (Government) aircraft operations; however, they must comply with 14 CFR unless otherwise authorized. USFWS aircraft contractors are bound by their contracts to conduct operations in accordance with their FAA-approved commercial operator or airline certificate specifications, unless otherwise authorized by the IBC/AQD contracting officer.

4.3. Fixed Wing

- A. Wheel-, float-, and ski-equipped fixed-wing airplanes are used for a variety of USFWS flight missions, including aerial wildlife surveys, remote sensing, transportation of people and cargo to remote locations, law enforcement patrols, wildland fire support, disaster relief, and more. Both fleet and contracted aircraft are used.

4.4. Rotary Wing

- A. The USFWS uses helicopters, when appropriate, for personnel transportation, aerial observation, ACETA, law enforcement, and wildland fire missions. These flights are conducted in fleet- and vendor-operated helicopters.
- B. NWCG standards for helicopter operations (NSHO) establish the standards by which helicopter operations must be conducted under the exclusive direction and operational control of Federal, State, and local agencies to accomplish interagency fire suppression and natural resource aviation management. All wildland fire helicopter operations under USFWS operational control must follow the NSHO for guidance.

4.5. Fleet Operations

A. Aircraft Maintenance and Inspection

- (1) USFWS must maintain and inspect fleet aircraft in accordance with 351 DM 2 and OPM-03 (AK). Pilots are responsible for noting any maintenance deficiencies in the OAS-2 and coordinating any aircraft maintenance actions through appropriate OAS Fleet Managers.
- (2) Pilots must record all aircraft maintenance and inspections in the aircraft maintenance logs and the OAS-2, and they or their designees must provide copies to the appropriate OAS Fleet Manager.

B. Fuel

- (1) The pilot must supervise the type, quantity, and quality of fuel used in the aircraft and comply with the *DOI Aviation Fuel Handling Handbook* and the following OPMs (as applicable):
 - a. OPM-20, Drum Fuel Management;

- b. OPM-13, Fuel Quality Control/Fuel Site Inspection; and
- c. OPM-09, Fuel Procurement Procedures.

C. Government Pilots

- (1) USFWS uses dual-function, incidental, and professional pilots on a dedicated full-time basis.
- (2) Pilots must meet the minimum requirements in 351 DM 3, OPM-22, and undergo a successful review by designated OAS Inspector Pilots in accordance with OPM-16, Flight Evaluations for Manned Fleet Pilots, OAS-5400-205, and the interagency practical test standards.

D. Letter of Flight Authority

- (1) USFWS flight authority is required for all USFWS pilots to fly fleet aircraft and missions. The NAM issues this letter, with concurrence from the DAE and Director, and adds it to the pilot's record, which OAS maintains. The NAM has discretion to suspend this authority as necessary.

E. DOI Pilot Qualification Card

- (1) Pilots employed by USFWS who are authorized to perform official flight duties must possess a current DOI Pilot Qualification Card (OAS-30) with appropriate authorizations, per 351 DM 3.5 and OPM-16.

F. Pilot Qualification Card Suspension/Revocation

- (1) Procedures for suspension and revocation of a DOI Pilot Qualification Card are in 351 DM 3.6(G) and 351 DM 3, Appendix 1.

G. Pilot Flight Currency

- (1) Pilots must comply with OPM-22, Appendix 3 flight currency requirements.

H. Failure to Meet Pilot Flight Currency Requirements

- (1) Pilots who do not meet the flight currency requirements in OPM-22 can regain flight currency as stipulated in OPM-22.
- (2) If a pilot fails to meet minimum annual flight requirements, they must send written justification through their supervisor to the NAM explaining why they should be allowed continued flight status. Only with written approval from the NAM may the pilot continue to fly for USFWS.

I. Pilot Flight Evaluations

- (1) Initial and annual VFR flight checks, and, if needed, semiannual IFR flight checks must be successfully completed per 351 DM 3.4(D) and OPM-16.

- (2) Flight checks and/or additional training may be given after an aircraft mishap where pilot proficiency and/or judgment was found to be a contributing factor.
 - (3) It is the pilot's responsibility to coordinate any required flight evaluations with OAS Inspector Pilots.
 - (4) For quality and standardization assurance, USFWS retains the right to administer interim flight evaluations on any USFWS pilot when deemed appropriate. A USFWS IP must conduct and document these evaluations.
- J. **Pre-employment screening** must be conducted for all new hire and developmental pilots. Only those personnel authorized in accordance with OPM-22, Appendix 1 are authorized to conduct the screening.

4.6. Cooperator Operations

A. General Cooperator Aircraft

- (1) A cooperator or affiliated aircraft can be from: (1) any branch of the military, (2) another public agency, or (3) a private entity. Aircraft and pilots must meet DOI standards for general or special use flights, and USFWS employees may not use such aircraft and pilots without prior OAS approval. Any costs incurred by OAS in approving cooperator aircraft, including an onsite inspection and pilot check-ride for special use flights, may be charged to the requesting unit.
- (2) Proper planning is critical for the proper development and execution of a cooperator or affiliate agreement. All USFWS requests for cooperator or affiliated aircraft must be routed through the appropriate RACS/RAM/PAM and approved by the NAO Operations Specialist prior to submission to the appropriate OAS Regional Director. Additional information may be found in 351 DM 4.

B. Cooperative Agreements/Support Services Contracts

- (1) Cooperative agreements or support services contracts that contain provisions for aviation services must include language stating that aircraft under the operational control of USFWS are subject to the policies of this document and all other applicable DOI policies.

C. Carding, Letters of Approval, or Memoranda of Understanding

- (1) OAS must issue Interagency Aircraft Data Cards, DOI Pilot Qualification Cards, or letters of approval for aircraft and pilots to cooperator aircraft and pilots. In situations involving numerous aircraft and pilots (military facilities, State fish and game agencies, etc.), a formal agreement by OAS may negate the need for individual aircraft and pilot cards.

4.7. Passenger Transport (Travel, Not Mission Work)

- A. **General.** Travel on Government aircraft is restricted to official travel or travel on a space-available basis subject to the policies and definitions prescribed in 14 CFR Part 101-37 and OPM-07.
- B. **Administrative Travel**
- (1) **Government aircraft** may be used for administrative travel purposes if (1) the cost is not more than commercial sources, or (2) commercial aircraft are not reasonably available to meet the traveler's departure/arrival requirements within a 24-hour period, unless it can be demonstrated there are extraordinary circumstances that require a shorter period to fulfill the agency mission requirement. This policy includes the Use of Government Aircraft under the DOI TDY Travel Policy, chapter 4.11.
 - (2) **Required-use travel** is travel that necessitates the use of Government aircraft for an executive agency officer or employee because of bona fide communication or security needs of the agency or exceptional scheduling requirements. With certain exceptions, advance trip-by-trip authorization by the DOI Solicitor or designee is required. Reimbursement at the full coach rate may be necessary. Requests must be processed through the OAS flight coordination team 10 days prior to planned travel.
 - (3) **To assure compliance** with OMB Circular No. A-76, OMB Circular A-126, 14 CFR 101-37.4, and OPM-07, the traveler or a designee must prepare Form OAS-110 or a like document for administrative flights. Approval for the flight is necessary from a designated official. Unless there are security, communication, or time constraints involved, a cost comparison with commercial sources is required. All requests must be routed through the respective RACS/RAM/PAM to the NAOS for review prior to sending the request to OAS authorization.
- C. **Official Passengers.** The following categories of personnel are official passengers:
- (1) **Officers and personnel** of the Federal Government traveling on official business.
 - (2) **Members of Congress** and their staffs whose work relates to DOI or USFWS programs.
 - (3) **Non-Federal passengers** when engaged in missions that enhance accomplishment of a USFWS program such as personnel of cooperating State, county, Tribal, or local agencies; representatives of foreign governments; and contractors' representatives, including those employed by such agencies and private citizens.
 - (4) **Space-available passengers** authorized and approved in accordance with OMB Circular A-126.
 - (5) **Space-available travelers approved by the Secretary of the Interior** on a trip-by-trip basis.

D. **Unauthorized Passengers**

- (1) All personnel who are not flight crew or aircrew, and do not meet the definition of official passengers listed above, are considered unauthorized passengers and are not authorized to be transported in any aircraft owned or operated by or on behalf of DOI or USFWS.

E. **Emergency Use**

- (1) USFWS supervisors may authorize the use of Government aircraft to assist in life-threatening circumstances, disaster relief efforts, etc.

F. **Privately Owned Aircraft**

- (1) USFWS employees may use personal aircraft for administrative travel if:
 - a. The aircraft FAA registration shows the employee as the owner or as a member of a flying club that owns the aircraft;
 - b. The employee is a qualified DOI pilot;
 - c. The aircraft meets all DOI aircraft maintenance and inspection requirements; and
 - d. The respective RACS/RAM/PAM approves.
- (2) The transportation of passengers on a privately owned aircraft is prohibited unless the aircraft and pilot are properly approved and documented for DOI operations.

- G. **USFWS employees on non-USFWS flights** must comply with DOI and USFWS policies when flying for the purposes of employment-related duties on board any organization's aircraft and/or under any other organization's operational control. This includes ensuring DOI carding, flight following requirements, and PASP review and approval as required.

4.8. **Hazardous Materials Transport**

- A. Hazardous materials must be transported in accordance with 351 DM 1.6(B) and the *Interagency Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials Handbook*. A copy of the DOI Exemption to Transport Hazardous Materials from the Department of Transportation and the most current *Emergency Response Guidebook* must be on board the aircraft when hazardous materials are transported. Pilot and crew must have completed the appropriate hazardous materials transport training (see Chapter 5).
- B. **Pilot notification.** The pilot must be notified in writing that hazardous materials are being transported.

4.9. Flight Plan: Filing and Communication

- A. For each daily mission, pilots must file a flight plan with the designated flight follower prior to departure in accordance with 351 DM 1.4(A). USFWS flight plans must specify the number of people on board and describe the detailed route of flight, estimated time of arrival, and amount of fuel on board. Regardless of the flight following method, the pilot must close the flight plan upon conclusion of the flight with the designated flight follower within 10 minutes of landing. The pilot must report any deviation in the initial flight plan to the designated flight follower.
- B. USFWS pilots must file and operate on an FAA flight plan, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) flight plan, or in accordance with the USFWS flight plan, approved by the RACS/RAM/PAM. Pilots should file flight plans before departure when possible.

4.10. Flight Following

- A. **Required Notifications.** Flight following for flights under USFWS operational control (fleet or vendor) must be accomplished by qualified flight followers or dispatchers using positive two-way communication (agency radio systems, satellite telephones, satellite texting), and satellite tracking via the internet-based automated flight following (AFF) system. Flight following requirements must comply with 351 DM 1.4(B). When flight following with a designated dispatch center, the flight follower must notify the center when:
 - (1) Opening a flight plan,
 - (2) Following engine startup and prior to takeoff,
 - (3) Following a landing with an associated engine shutdown (touch and go not required),
 - (4) Deviating from a scheduled flight plan, and
 - (5) Closing a flight plan/flight following.
- B. **Non-Standard or Local Flight Following.** These types of flight following may be used for applicable projects or incidents and must meet the following conditions:
 - (1) Procedures are pre-identified in an approved PASP;
 - (2) Must be coordinated with designated flight followers or dispatch center;
 - (3) Responsibilities must be addressed in a pre-flight briefing;
 - (4) Mandatory two-way communication must be tested and working properly;
 - (5) Communication ability will be maintained with primary flight followers/dispatch center for the duration of operations;
 - (6) Positive hand-offs are made between the designated flight followers/dispatch center and the project site or local flight followers;

- (7) Backup two-way communication devices between the field and flight followers and dispatch have been identified;
- (8) Mishap response plan is in place and has been discussed with all flight followers involved;
- (9) The designated flight follower will initiate the actions listed in their respective AMRP for the following conditions; and
- (10) Designated flight followers, outside of centralized dispatch centers, will be trained in accordance with IAT requirements, and approved by the respective RACS/RAM/PAM. RACS/RAM/PAMs will notify the NAO of all approved flight followers.

C. Lost Communications

- (1) The pilot or Project Leader must specify procedures for the flight crew and flight follower in case of lost communication. If AFF ceases to function during flight, the designated flight follower must notify the pilot. The flight can continue if two-way contact with flight following can be made every 30 minutes or as otherwise approved. If two-way communication cannot be maintained, the pilot must discontinue the mission at least until two-way communication is restored.

D. Mishap Response Plan

- (1) AMRPs detail necessary actions if there is a missing or downed aircraft, per 352 DM 6 and in the *Interagency Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist*. A copy must be on file with the designated flight follower and dispatch center.
- (2) RACS/RAM/PAM must ensure that their units' AMRP plans:
 - a. Outline appropriate response(s) to a loss of flight following an aircraft incident or accident;
 - b. Address initiation of search and rescue, fire, and medical response;
 - c. Provide procedures for the notification of USFWS and OAS personnel within the chain of responsibility;
 - d. Are reviewed and updated annually at a minimum; and
 - e. Are tested at least annually by conducting a notification drill over the telephone.
- (3) AMRPs must be modeled after and incorporated into the approved dispatch center format, or follow the *NWCG the Interagency Aviation Mishap Response Guide*.
 - a. A key component to any AMRP is an updated communication tree for the respective chain of command. Unit leaders, in conjunction with their

respective RACS/RAM/PAM, must audit and update AMRPs annually or if the phone tree changes (whichever occurs first).

- b. The *NWCG Interagency Aviation Mishap Response Guide* is typically used when working with USFS dispatch centers during firefighting operations. All other guides should follow the DOI dispatch center format.

E. **Phone Tree.** All USFWS AMRPs must include the following NAO phone tree, NASS, NAM, NAOS. Contacts are listed in order of precedence. Once contact is made with at least one of the following, you can consider the NAO contacted. The National Aviation Office must only be notified after all life-saving measures have been initiated and OAS has been notified via 1-888-4-MISHAP. The priority in any mishap is to locate the downed flight crew or injured parties and provide medical attention as necessary.

- (1) National Aviation Safety Specialist
- (2) National Aviation Manager
- (3) National Aviation Operations Specialist

F. **Overdue or Missing Aircraft**

- (1) **AMRP procedures.** If an aircraft is overdue or missing, comply with the procedures in your project or unit AMRP. It is critical that the response plan is implemented, followed, and documented throughout the duration of the event.
- (2) **Overdue aircraft.** Any aircraft that has not checked in as scheduled according to its flight following plan is overdue. For flight following purposes, the FAA considers an aircraft overdue when it fails to arrive within 30 minutes past the estimated time of arrival and cannot be located.
- (3) **Missing aircraft.** At 1 hour after the aircraft is overdue for check-in, or the fuel duration of the aircraft has been exceeded, the aircraft will be declared missing.
 - a. The dispatcher on shift will follow the notification procedures and required actions that are outlined in the AMRP. All actions will be documented following established procedures. Provide the information on the aircraft accident checklist. Do not delay notification if you do not have all the blocks filled. Provide as much information as you can and follow up when additional information is available.
 - b. Early establishment of communications with the mishap site is critical. Supply the action office with that information immediately as available; however, do not delay initiating lifesaving actions. Document all actions, activities, contacts, conversations, and times on the aircraft accident checklist.

4.11. Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS)

A. UAS, commonly referred to as “drones,” are legally defined as aircraft (14 CFR 1.1). All USFWS UAS operations must be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal Aviation Regulations and DOI DMs, 14 CFR Part 91, *FAA Small Uncrewed Aircraft Rule (14 CFR 107)*, and *DOI Use of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (OPM-11)*. UAS operations on wildfire incidents must be conducted in accordance with PMS 515, *NWCG Standards for Fire Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Operations*.

B. **Minimum UAS Operational Requirements.** The following requirements must be met prior to any operational use of UAS in the furtherance of the USFWS mission:

(1) **Aircraft.** UAS must meet one of the conditions below to be authorized:

a. DOI-owned UAS that have a current OAS-36U aircraft data card are authorized for use. The Department allows the procurement of appropriate “non-covered” UAS to meet mission requirements. Procurement of OAS-approved, non-covered UAS must follow the procedures in OPM-11.

b. The term “covered UAS” as defined in Executive Order 13981 means any UAS that:

1 Is manufactured, in whole or in part, by an entity domiciled in an adversary country;

2 Uses critical electronic components installed in flight controllers, ground control system processors, radios, digital transmission devices, cameras, or gimbals manufactured, in whole or in part, in an adversary country (as defined by the Department of Commerce and referenced in OPM-11);

3 Uses operating software (including cell phone or tablet applications, but not cell phone or tablet operating systems) developed, in whole or in part, by an entity domiciled in an adversary country;

4 Uses network connectivity or data storage located outside the United States or administered by any entity domiciled in an adversary country; or

5 Contains hardware and software components used for transmitting photographs, videos, location information, flight paths, or any other data collected by the UAS manufactured by an entity domiciled in an adversary country.

The term “critical electronic component” means any electronic device that stores, manipulates, or transfers digital data. The term does not include, for example, passive electronics such as resistors and non-data transmitting motors, batteries, and wiring.

c. Requests for approval of cooperator/affiliate UAS under the operational control of DOI must follow the process outlined in 351 DM 4. The OAS UAS Division Chief issues UAS cooperator approval letters.

Cooperator/affiliate UAS operations not under the operational control of DOI require the project manager to obtain permission from the landowner to conduct the mission. All parties' operations pursuant to a Departmental contract, grant or cooperative agreement must be conditioned on the requirement that covered UAS will not be operated on Department-managed lands.

- d. A USFWS contractor may acquire UAS to provide UAS flight service, but they must follow the processes in 353 DM 1, OPM-11, and OPM-35. All contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements relying on UAS for achieving approved objectives must be conditioned on the requirement that funds will not be expended on covered UAS, as defined in (b) above.
- e. Personal UAS are prohibited. Personally owned UAS may not to be used for agency purposes.

(2) **Pilot.** USFWS employees and contractors/cooperators/partners operating UAS under USFWS operational control must possess:

- a. A valid, current FAA remote pilot certification; or
- b. A valid, current interagency remote pilot card with an endorsement for the UAS to be flown (OAS-30U).

Other qualifications may be required dependent on the mission.

(3) **Approved Project Aviation Safety Plan (PASP).** The PASP must meet the requirements as listed in OPM-06.

- a. All PASPs must be reviewed by the RACS/RAM/PAM or other authority as designated by the NAM.
- b. Final approval of the plan is determined by the assessed risk of the operation. The risk assessment matrix provided in the NAMP References folder on the [NAO SharePoint](#) site designates the appropriate approval authority for each risk level.
- c. For UAS missions occurring on a routine basis, the required PASP can be made effective for a period of no more than 1 year, or it can be included as part of a station/unit aviation plan that is reviewed at least annually (OPM-06).

(4) **Airspace Authorization.** See OPM-11 section 22, DOI UAS Operations in the National Airspace System, for a full list of authorizations available to DOI remote pilots.

C. Starting a UAS Program

- (1) If a refuge, office, Service program, or Regional office wants to conduct UAS operations by acquiring their own aircraft and training remote pilots, they must submit a [UAS Program Registration form](#) for review by their UAS

coordinator and the UAS PM. Upon approval, the requester may move forward with aircraft acquisition and pilot training.

D. Fleet Aircraft Acquisition

- (1) All USFWS acquisition requests for commercially available systems must be routed through UAS PM to DOI OAS and the Interior Business Center, Acquisitions Services Directorate (IBC- AQD).
 - a. For UAS acquisitions under the capital asset threshold of \$25,000, the requestor must complete the DOI Small UAS Acquisition Request Form (OAS-13U).
 - b. The OAS-13U must be signed by the requester and first level line officer before submitting it to the Regional UAS coordinator for review. The UAS coordinator then sends it to the UAS PM.
 - c. The requesting office must also complete and submit a Fleet Information Document (FID) OAS-93 that establishes a working capital fund fleet aircraft account for the eventual aircraft purchase.
 - d. UAS purchases above the capital asset threshold require an Aviation Business Case as described in OPM-08.
 - e. Agency employees are not authorized to use Government charge cards to purchase UAS or any other means than the process described above.

E. UAS Remote Pilot Training. Prior to any USFWS employee operating a UAS, they must have their supervisor's approval and complete a series of training courses.

- (1) **Remote pilot nomination.** The process to become a UAS remote pilot is an investment of funds for initial and recurring training, as well as time spent on proficiency flights and actual missions. If the supervisor understands this and accepts the responsibilities and educational requirements as defined in 350 DM 1, OPM-04, and OPM-11, the supervisor should submit the candidate's name through the [Remote Pilot Nomination Form](#).
- (2) **Initial remote pilot training.** The remote pilot candidate must complete the following prerequisites prior to attending A-450 UAS Basic Remote Pilot Course:
 - a. Candidates must have an FAA Part 107 remote pilot certification or have an sUAS rating on the FAA Part 61 certificate.
 - b. Candidates should read and understand *DOI Use of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems* (OPM-11) policy.
 - c. Candidates will need to create an account on the [Interagency Aviation Training website](#). Once an account is created, candidates can log in and click on the "Compliance" tab, then select "DOI Remote Pilot (UAS)" from the Training Plan drop-down list. Candidates may complete the following courses online or in a classroom:

- 1 A-100, Basic Aviation Safety
 - 2 A-110, Aviation Transportation of Hazardous Material
 - 3 A-200. Mishap Review
 - 4 A-203, Basic Airspace
- (3) **Supervisor training.** The candidate’s supervisor must also create an account on the website, click on the “Compliance” tab, then select “FWS Supervisor” from the Training Plan drop-down list. They must complete the following courses:
- a. A-200, Mishap Review
 - b. M-3. DOI Aviation Management Training for Supervisors
- (4) **Nomination and selection process for A-450.** The demand for UAS training currently exceeds the number of classroom seats available; therefore, a competitive selection process has been established to become a qualified remote pilot.
- a. Once the requirements above are completed, the candidate is eligible to attend the A-450, Small Uncrewed Aircraft System (sUAS) Basic Remote Pilot Course to earn a DOI UAS remote pilot certificate (card). This is a 32-hour class held at various locations several times a year.
 - b. UAS coordinators will prioritize all candidates within their program or Region and submit those individuals for consideration to the UAS PM.
 - c. The UAS PM will prioritize all pilot candidates for the Service and coordinate enrollment in A-450 course offerings.
 - d. Upon completion of A-450, the candidate should notify the UAS PM, who will prepare a letter from the USFWS NAM to grant flight authority.
- (5) **Additional UAS training courses.** Supervisors and the UAS PM must use the same nomination and selection process described above for all additional UAS courses hosted by USFWS or the Interagency UAS Training Group (S-373, Advanced UAS Workshop, A-454 Add-on Training, etc.).

F. UAS Support Requests

- (1) **General information on obtaining support.** Offices and programs that do not have a UAS program have several options if they require UAS services. They are listed in order of ease of use considering logistics, funding transfers, and policy restrictions. All requests should begin with the respective UAS coordinator, and work through the UAS PM as needed. (See Guidance Flowchart for USFWS sUAS Missions for further considerations regarding requirements for UAS missions.)
- (2) **USFWS UAS programs within the Region.** If available, this is the best option. Logistics for travel and shipping of equipment will be easier and cost

less than working with remote pilots outside the Region, and costs between offices can be expensed in the normal manner.

- (3) **USFWS UAS programs outside the Region.** This option may offer additional challenges in logistics (equipment shipping), but they can be overcome with advance planning. If resources are not available within the Region, contact the UAS PM to locate the next closest, available source of support.
- (4) **Other DOI UAS programs.** The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, and U.S. Geographical Survey all have UAS programs and follow OPM-11, so they are all authorized to operate UAS in the furtherance of the USFWS mission. USFWS will need to establish an IAA if funds are transferred between bureaus.
- (5) **U.S. Forest Service (USFS) UAS programs.** The USFS has an MOU with DOI that authorizes each agency's UAS remote pilots to fly projects/missions for the other. While USFS does have their own UAS policy, they have structured their program to be compatible with DOI's UAS program. An IAA will need to be established if funds are transferred between agencies.
- (6) **Cooperator UAS programs.** There are many other agencies and entities currently using UAS (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, The Nature Conservancy, universities, etc.). The ability to use a cooperator for UAS projects/missions depends on several factors, the most critical element being the issue of operational control (OPCON). See Guidance Flowchart for USFWS sUAS Missions for further information.
 - a. If USFWS has OPCON, the UAS and pilots must meet applicable DOI standards, and USFWS employees may not use such aircraft and pilots without prior OAS approval.
 - b. Any costs incurred by OAS in approving cooperator aircraft, including an onsite inspection and pilot check-ride for special use flights, may be charged to the requesting unit.
- (7) **End-product contracts.** End-product contracts are used to acquire services (i.e., per acre, per unit, per area, or per head basis).
 - a. Specifications in the contract must only describe the desired quantity or quality of the service or contracted end result.
 - b. The intent of this type of procurement is for the contractor to supply all personnel and equipment to provide a service or end result.
 - c. Many contractors use aircraft (including UAS) to meet the performance objectives of end-product contracts for activities such as animal capture, seeding, spraying, survey, photography, etc.

- d. Since these are not flight services contracts, these contracts do not have to go through the flight services contract process.
 - e. The USFWS NAO must review end-product contracts where contractors could conceivably use UAS aircraft to ensure that specifications and language do not imply or determine aircraft operational control.
 - f. End-product contracts should follow the guidance provided in OPM-11 and include language in the specifications to ensure that no covered UAS are used in the performance of the contract.
 - g. It should be noted that if a UAS is used as part of an end-product contract, and the UAS takes off or lands on National Wildlife Refuge System-managed lands or waters, the Refuge Manager would need to authorize the UAS to do so (50 CFR 27.34).
- (8) **Contracted UAS services.** This option is likely to require the greatest amount of advanced planning, as all contracted aviation services must follow the processes outlined in 353 DM 1 and OPM-35. The contract must be processed through IBC-AQD, and the contracted remote pilots and aircraft must meet all applicable DOI UAS standards.

G. Recreational or Commercial Use of UAS

- (1) **General.** USFWS does not have a policy or memorandum that specifically addresses recreational or commercial use of UAS, and this management plan only provides guidance on administrative use of UAS by USFWS to further our mission. We encourage each Region, refuge, or other office to develop policies for recreational or commercial UAS use that are appropriate for their needs.
- (2) **Compatibility determination.** Refuge Managers should review compatibility findings, and if uncrewed aircraft use is not compatible, clarify and prohibit it.
 - a. If a Refuge Manager determines that UAS use is compatible, they may issue special use permits (SUP) for UAS use for commercial filming, still photography, and research projects, as appropriate. Other uses may also be appropriate.
 - b. All aircraft are required to receive authorization before taking off or landing on a refuge, and the SUP serves as authorization.
- (3) **Prohibiting UAS.** Unauthorized use of aircraft (which includes UAS) at altitudes resulting in harassment of wildlife, and unauthorized takeoffs or landings on a refuge are prohibited by 50 CFR 27.34 and 27.51, and individuals may be cited for violations of these regulations. Official USFWS “Drones Prohibited” signage is available and should be posted where appropriate. Signage can be ordered using the USFWS catalog from [Voss Signs](#).
- (4) **National airspace.** If a drone launches from off-refuge and flies into refuge airspace; does not cause any wildlife disturbance such as violating the

Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, or other statutes; and ultimately lands off the refuge, then the action is legal. Federal aviation regulations allow UAS to travel through the national airspace directly over a refuge, just as helicopters or airplanes fly over a refuge. USFWS establishes regulations for the lands and waters within refuge boundaries, but the FAA establishes regulations for the NAS above refuges.

H. **UAS Mishaps and SAFECOMS**

- (1) **Mishaps.** The pilot or a designee must report all mishaps as per DOI OPM-11, Section 23. Serious injuries or significant property damage are reported by calling the 24-hour Aircraft Accident Reporting Hotline at 1-888-4MISHAP (1-888-464-7427). After this initial notification, the pilot should begin notifying their chain of command and include the UAS PM.
- (2) **SAFECOM.** Any person that witnesses any condition, observation, act, maintenance problem, or circumstance with personnel or the aircraft that has the potential to cause an aviation-related mishap is encouraged to report it via the SAFECOM system.

I. **UAS, Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.**

- (1) **Managers** at all levels in the USFWS are responsible for the public safety, civil rights, civil liberties, and privacy protection of UAS operations under their control. Managers and supervisors must monitor UAS programs and implement privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties controls to acceptable levels. Managers of UAS activities ensure that oversight and accountability procedures for USFWS UAS use, including audits or assessments, comply with existing policies and regulations, and that personnel receive training regarding privacy civil rights and civil liberties policies.
- (2) **Existing USFWS policies and procedures** relating to the collection, use, retention, and dissemination of information (including data obtained by UAS) ensure that the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of all people are protected. The USFWS uses UAS for scientific research, monitoring environmental conditions, analyzing the effects of climate change, responding to natural disasters, understanding rates and consequences of landscape change and related land and resource management, and wildland fire operations. The USFWS does not use UAS or any other platform for gathering PII or information that infringes on anyone's civil rights or civil liberties. The DOI [privacy policies](#) have additional information on this topic.
- (3) **The USFWS Privacy Officer** must be consulted if any USFWS personnel are uncertain about whether UAS data might contain PII. Any PII that a third party could glean from USFWS data is unintentional. UAS data containing PII must not be retained for more than 180 days unless retention of the data is necessary for an authorized mission, in which case managers must ensure that it is stored in a system of records. All UAS missions must be in full compliance with Federal laws, Presidential memorandums (including the memorandum dated February 15, 2015), regulations, and DOI policies and

procedures. Images collected with UAS sensors are handled and retained according to industry standards, consistent with images collected with any of the USFWS remote sensing assets. The UAS missions are subject to professional standards, codes of conduct, case law, and with the public's trust in mind. The USFWS Diversity Officer must be consulted if any USFWS personnel are uncertain about whether UAS data might infringe on any individual's civil rights and civil liberties.

- (4) The USFWS also takes the following actions to protect individuals' civil rights, civil liberties, and privacy:
 - a. UAS missions operate primarily over public lands.
 - b. All operations must be in support of mandated missions of DOI-USFWS (i.e., proper use).
 - c. Permission must be obtained from landowners if UAS missions target specific scientific observations over their lands.
 - d. Standard FAA-approved procedures are followed for aircraft operations (such as SUPs, range approval letters, and SMS).
 - e. All UAS operations are reported, using form OAS-2U, to OAS for compilation in the Department's annual report.

J. **UAS Data FOIA Requests**

- (1) Anyone seeking information gathered from a USFWS UAS should contact the USFWS Freedom of Information Act Office at (303) 236-4473.

4.12. **Documentation Requirements**

- A. USFWS requires the following documentation for all flight operations (when applicable):
 - (1) NAMP
 - (2) PASP
 - (3) Cooperator approval documents
 - (4) Risk assessments (project and daily pre-flight)
 - (5) Hazard map
 - (6) Mishap response plan
 - (7) Flight following procedure
 - (8) Use report documents
 - (9) Passenger and cargo manifest

- (10) Load calculation, weight and balance, and aircraft performance
- (11) Pilot card
- (12) Aircraft data card
- (13) Any other documents applicable to the flight operation (waivers, FAA documents, international operations documents, etc.).

4.13. Bureau-Specific Operational Requirements

A. International Operations

- (1) DOI aviation policy does not apply to international flight operations, per 350 DM 1.2. However, USFWS personnel should attempt to follow DOI aviation policies to the extent practical and use good judgment and common sense in all cases. Prior to international operations, contact the respective RACS/RAM/PAM for guidance.

B. Flights Over Public Lands

- (1) Any time aircraft under the operational control of USFWS needs to operate over public lands, the pilot will coordinate with the facility regarding the intended flight profile. All flights will keep aircraft noise pollution to a minimum and comply with applicable wildlife statutes.

C. Exception to ALSE requirements

- (1) For special use aviation operations in extreme snow/cold/wet conditions, the use of synthetic or synthetic-natural fiber blends is authorized in lieu of fire-resistant clothing (inner- and outerwear). Likewise, footwear made of rubber (waders) or rubber combined with cotton, canvas, or leather with felt liners (snow boots) is authorized. Where operating environmental conditions justify PPE substitution, supervisors must inform anyone involved in such operations of the increased personal hazard associated with wearing other than fire-resistant clothing, gloves, and footwear in the event of a post-mishap fire.

D. Recommended ALSE

- (1) ***Personal emergency locator transmitters/emergency position indicator radio beacon (EPIRB).*** Use of personal emergency locator transmitters (designed for use on land) or EPIRBs (designed for use over water) is recommended. Personnel should not operate personal transmitters and EPIRBs if the aircraft-installed unit is operational and transmitting. Two signals from the same location may prevent the satellite or search aircraft homing radio from accurately pinpointing the mishap site.
- (2) ***Emergency breathing apparatus.*** Use of emergency breathing apparatus is recommended for all overwater flights and water operations. Additional training is required beyond A-312 for use. Contact RACS/RAM/PAM for additional information.

E. ***STEP/ACETA mission guidance.***

- (1) ***STEP.*** Single skid, toe-in, hover exit/entry procedure (STEP) operations must be conducted in accordance with OPM-40 to include training, currency, and approvals. All STEP operations must be coordinated through the respective RACS/RAM/PAM and approved by the NAO.
- (2) ***ACETA.*** Aerial capture, eradication, and tagging of animals (ACETA) operations must be conducted in accordance with OPM-33. Additional information is in the USFWS *ACETA Operations Guide (in development)*. All ACETA operations must be coordinated through the respective RACS/RAM/PAM and approved by the NAO.

Chapter 5 Aviation Training

- 5.1 Management Responsibilities
- 5.2 Required Aviation Training
- 5.3 General Helicopter Training and Qualification Requirements
- 5.4 Specialty Training and Recommended Training
- 5.5 Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) Requirements
- 5.6 Training Documentation Requirements
- 5.7 USFWS-Specific Training Requirements

5.1. Management Responsibilities

- A. The aviation education, training, and qualification of DOI personnel at all organizational levels are the responsibility of management. Managers and supervisors must be aware of DOI policy as it relates to aviation programs supporting USFWS missions for which they are responsible. The minimum level of education and training specified in the 350-354 DM series, OPM-04, OPM-22, and this document must be provided to appropriate USFWS personnel.
- B. Supervisors and Project Leaders must ensure that employees under their authority receive the level of aviation safety training required by DOI policy before participating in aviation operations.
- C. The education and training requirements listed in this document are the minimum that DOI requires for promoting aircraft accident prevention awareness and developing operational and management skills. USFWS, at the national or lower organizational levels, may increase—but not decrease—the requirements in this document.
- D. USFWS managers must provide time and resources for education and training as specified in this document.

5.2. Required Aviation Training

- A. **General**
 - (1) Required aviation training is provided by the OAS-Training Division and DOI qualified instructors. Training requirements are in OPM-4 and are outlined by position in the *IAT Training Guide* found on the [IAT website](#) for aviation users and in OPM-22 for fleet pilots.
- B. **Aviation User Training**
 - (1) USFWS-required user training and required periods for renewal are in Table 1.

Table 1

<p>The <i>Interagency Aviation Training (IAT)</i> that is required by USFWS are listed below by position. Information on course descriptions can be found in the <i>IAT Guide</i>. If a position requires the person to take a course more than once, the frequency of retaking the course is listed in parenthesis by years. Course re-currency requirements are noted in parentheses. Compliance with the requirements for these positions is tracked in the IAT system. Employees and supervisors must ensure that the appropriate IAT role is selected commensurate with their duties.</p>	
<p>FWS Passenger</p>	
<p><i>Definition:</i> FWS personnel aboard an aircraft under FWS operational control in the performance of their official duties who do not function as an identified aircrew member or flight crew member or do not perform any other mission-critical functions.</p> <p><i>Responsibilities:</i> Follow all applicable aviation policy and directives, ensure compliance of required aviation training, use appropriate PPE, and attend pre-flight briefings.</p>	
<p>Required Training:</p>	
<p>A-100 (every 3 years)</p>	<p>Basic Aviation Safety (online or classroom)</p>
<p>FWS Passenger with water ditching and survival Employees involved in flights in float-equipped aircraft (including amphibious floats), flights over water beyond glide distance from shore, and extended overwater flights must comply with the following USFWS aviation training requirements.</p>	
<p>A-100 (every 3 years)</p>	<p>Basic Aviation Safety (online or classroom)</p>
<p>A-312</p>	<p>Water-ditching and Survival (classroom)</p>
<p>A-325R (every 3 years)</p>	<p>Water-ditching and Survival Refresher (webinar)</p>
<p>Note: If a passenger must fly on short notice or flies on a Service aircraft infrequently (not more than twice within a 12-month period), they may fly without taking A-100 training. The USFWS pilot or other employee who has aviation training must give such passengers a briefing on aviation safety prior to the flight, and their flight must be approved by RACS/RAM/PAM prior to flight.</p>	

Table 1 (Continued)

FWS Aircrew Member	
<p><i>Definition:</i> Personnel (not pilot/passenger) having an active function during a flight to ensure the successful outcome of the mission.</p> <p><i>Responsibilities:</i> Attend to the loading and unloading of passengers and cargo and ensure that passengers have received a safety briefing prior to all missions.</p>	
Required Training:	
A-100 (every 3 years)	Basic Aviation Safety (online or classroom)
A-200 (every 3 years)	Mishap Review (online or classroom)
A-110 (every 3 years)	Aviation Transportation of Hazardous Materials (online)
FWS Aircrew Member performing helicopter external loads	
A-100 (every 3 years)	Basic Aviation Safety (online or classroom)
A-200 (every 3 years)	Mishap Review (online or classroom)
A-110 (every 3 years)	Aviation Transportation of Hazardous Materials (online)
A-219	Helicopter Transport of External Cargo (required if performing helicopter external loads will be used to include long lines/sling loads)
FWS Aircrew Member with water ditching and survival	
<p>Employees involved in flights in float-equipped aircraft, flights over water beyond glide distance from shore, and extended overwater flights must comply with the following USFWS aviation training requirements. Note that this includes flight in amphibious aircraft if water operations will be conducted or the flight will be over water beyond gliding distance, or extended overwater operations will occur.</p>	
A-100 (every 3 years)	Basic Aviation Safety (online or classroom)
A-200 (every 3 years)	Mishap Review (online or classroom)
A-110 (every 3 years)	Aviation Transportation of Hazardous Materials (online)
A-312	Water-ditching and Survival (classroom)
A-325R (every 3 years)	Water-ditching and Survival Refresher (webinar)

Table 1 (Continued)

FWS Supervisor	
<p><i>Definition:</i> Those who supervise employees who use aviation resources to support agency programs. Knowledge required includes aviation safety, policy, risk management, and supervisory responsibilities.</p> <p><i>Responsibilities:</i> Oversee employees and ensure all safety, policy, and risk management requirements are met. Review project aviation safety plans. Assist Unit Aviation Training Administrators (UATA) to ensure employee compliance with IAT training requirements.</p>	
Required Training:	
M-3 (every 3 years)	Aviation Management for Supervisors (classroom recommended or online)
A-200 (every 3 years)	Mishap Review (online or classroom)

Flight Follower	
<p><i>Definition:</i> Personnel trained in aviation mission operations, policies, and procedures that provide flight following and mishap response activation for aircraft mishaps and overdue and missing aircraft.</p> <p><i>Responsibilities:</i> Monitor aircraft flight activities and maintain currency by attending required aviation training in accordance with DOI and USFWS policies.</p>	
Required Training: Must meet the minimum requirements for flight follower in the IAT system.	
A-100	Basic Aviation Safety
A-107	Aviation Policy and Regulations
A-109	Aviation Radio Use
A-115	Automated Flight Following (AFF)
A-200	Mishap Review
A-204	Manned Aircraft Capabilities and Limitations
A-207	Mission Scheduling and Coordination

Table 1 (Concluded)

DOI Remote Pilot (sUAS) – Reference OPM-11	
<i>Definition:</i> DOI personnel who fly sUAS on behalf of DOI.	
<i>Responsibilities:</i> Must follow OPM-11 and applicable sections of Title 14 CFR.	
Required Training: FAA Part 107 Certificate	
A-100 (every 3 years)	Basic Aviation Safety (online or classroom)
A-110	Aviation Transportation of Hazardous Materials (online)
A-200 (every 3 years)	Mishap Review (online or classroom)
A-203	Basic Airspace (online)
A-450	Small Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Basic Remote Pilot Course (classroom)
A-452R (every 2 years)	Small Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (sUAS) Remote Pilot Refresher Course (webinar)

Line Manager/Senior Executive	
<i>Definition:</i> Those who are responsible and accountable for using aviation resources to support bureau programs.	
<i>Responsibilities:</i> Familiarization with the DOI aviation management program, policies, and related requirements and responsibilities.	
Required Training:	
M-2 (every 3 years) or	Aviation Management Line Manager’s Briefing (classroom), OR
M-3 (every 3 years)	Aviation Management for Supervisors (classroom recommended or online)

FWS Cooperator Participants	
<i>Definition:</i> Personnel from cooperator agencies participating in flights under USFWS operational control.	
<u>Federal Cooperators:</u> Must abide by their agency's requirements.	
<u>Non-Federal Cooperators:</u> Must comply with all applicable IAT requirements.	

DOI Pilots
Must follow OPM-22 requirements. Must ensure that all applicable and required training is completed and entered in the IAT system.

Information regarding other IAT courses and positions can be found in the *IAT Guide* and on the IAT website.

C. Fleet Pilot Training

- (1) Pilots must receive pilot training in accordance with 351 DM 3, OPM-22, and the USFWS National Aviation Training Plan. A USFWS pilot not in compliance with these documents is not authorized to operate DOI aircraft.

D. Vendor-Provided Flight Training

- (1) All vendor-provided flight training must be requested through the respective RACS/RAM/PAM and approved by the National Aviation Training Specialist.

E. USFWS Instructor Pilots

- (1) All USFWS Instructor Pilots must comply with OPM-22, Appendix 5 requirements and be authorized by the NAM in writing. A copy of this authorization must be placed in the instructor pilot's pilot and employee records.
- (2) The NAM has the authority to revoke USFWS instructor pilot privileges.

F. Flight Simulation Program.

- (1) USFWS uses three FAA-approved advanced aviation training device (AATD) flight simulators. USFWS aviation conducts the following priority simulator training:
 - a. Inadvertent Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IIMC) Recovery Procedures
 - b. 10-hour Kodiak turbine transition
 - c. Instrument and emergency procedures
 - d. Scenario-based training
 - e. Instrument proficiency
 - f. Other training as requested
- (2) All simulator operators/instructors must complete user training with Precision Flight Controls (PFC).

G. Special Flight Simulator Course Instructor Requirements

- (1) IIMC instructor – current FAA CFI-I and DOI instrument card.
- (2) 10-hour Kodiak turbine transition – DOI Kodiak carded instructor pilot.
- (3) Instrument training – current FAA CFI-I.
- (4) Non-USFWS entities – other bureaus may, per MOU, qualify designated operators/instructors to operate USFWS simulators.
- (5) Non-USFWS operators/instructors must complete user training with PFC.
- (6) USFWS pilots/instructors must not provide training for non-USFWS pilots without approval from the National Aviation Training Specialist.
- (7) USFWS pilots/instructors are not expected to provide building access or simulator operator services for non-USFWS entities.
- (8) USFWS has priority for simulator availability at all times.
- (9) Non-USFWS entities must schedule simulator usage with either the NAO or AK Regional Aviation Trainer a minimum of 14 days prior to desired date of use.
- (10) USFWS may, at any time and for any reason, terminate the MOU with non-USFWS entities.

5.3. General Helicopter Training and Qualification Requirements

- A. Helicopter missions include, but are not limited to, point-to-point transportation (off airport), interagency fire, external loads including longline, aerial ignition, low altitude animal surveys, reconnaissance, and air tactical supervision. The USFWS will direct aircraft to support its missions and objectives.
- B. The USFWS and its contractors must establish an effective working relationship to successfully complete a contract. The contractor’s cooperation, professionalism, and positive attitude toward accomplishment of the mission and aviation safety are an integral element of this relationship.
 - (1) The contractor must ensure that contract pilots are trained, current, and in compliance with the following certificates at all times:
 - a. A Title 14 CFR “Air Carrier Certificate” or operating certificate that authorizes the contractor to operate in the category and class of aircraft and under flight conditions required by their contract (e.g., rotorcraft-helicopter (VFR), day and night, passengers, and cargo); and
 - b. A 14 CFR 133 “Rotorcraft External Load Operations” certificate that authorizes Class B loads, at a minimum.
 - (2) The pilot must have the authority to represent the contractor in all matters except changes in price and time, unless the contracting officer (CO) is notified otherwise, in writing, prior to performance.

- (3) The contractor must provide at least two pilots that meet the minimum qualifications (see section C below) and who possess the required certificates and evidence of having satisfactorily passed the evaluations for the required tasks.

Note: Only one pilot will be required on duty at a time.

C. Helicopter Pilot Qualifications

- (1) An FAA commercial pilot certificate with a rotorcraft-helicopter rating.
- (2) For task orders requiring flight over open ocean (e.g., Florida to Puerto Rico), the pilot must hold an instrument rating in category and class.
- (3) A minimum of a current second-class medical certificate.
- (4) An FAA competency check completed in accordance with 14 CFR 135.293 in an AS350 series aircraft and a current 14 CFR 135.299 line check.
- (5) An initial OAS flight evaluation is required in the Government helicopter operated (AS-350B2).
- (6) OAS will require pilots to demonstrate proficient operation of all aircraft equipment (e.g., water retardant bucket, GPS, longline vertical reference) during an evaluation flight.

Note: More than one evaluation flight may be required.

- (7) The following special use activities require a specific flight evaluation. Pilots with current DOI special use qualifications may not need to be re-evaluated.
 - a. Low-level flight.
 - b. Reconnaissance.
 - c. Precise placement of externally carried cargo where requested, with a 150-foot cable length while operating within the helicopter's capability. It is a contractor's responsibility to verify a pilot's vertical reference external load experience and proficiency. The contracting officer's representative (COR) will provide the contractor a form to document this experience and proficiency. This will be required prior to pilot inspection by DOI OAS. Pilots must provide written evidence of their qualifications for transporting external loads appropriate to the contractor's 14 CFR 133 certification.
 - d. Aerial ignition with a plastic sphere dispenser (PSD). OAS may require pilots to demonstrate this proficiency during a flight evaluation in DOI aircraft. If a contractor pilot cannot provide written evidence of previous PSD qualification during the evaluation, the COR may withhold PSD approval until the pilot is trained by a qualified Government PSD trainer and re-evaluated by a COR representative. In the interim, a contractor will not be approved to use the pilot for aerial ignition missions.

- e. Water landing on fixed floats (if requested by the Government.)

Note: A contractor may be required to provide a fixed float qualified pilot, approved by OAS, for missions with fixed flotation landing gear installed. A float-qualified pilot is only required when requested by the USFWS. The USFWS will provide a minimum of 90 days' notice for any task order requiring a fixed float-qualified pilot.

- f. A contractor must ensure that each pilot proposed for use has completed DOI's on-line training modules for helicopter fire operations. The training is located on the Government's [IAT website](#) under "Helicopter Pilot Training-Fire Fighting," Modules H1, Basic Fire Behavior and Tactics; H2, Organization, Communication, and Airspace; and H3, Helicopter Operations. The training in these modules is required at least every 36 months. Pilots must sign up, create a profile, and, after completion of the modules, print a copy of the certificates. A copy of the certificate must be presented to the helicopter inspector pilot before an Interagency Helicopter Pilot Qualification card will be issued. Pilots involved in the transportation of hazardous materials must have completed the Interagency Aviation Training Module A-110, Aviation Transportation of Hazardous Materials.
- g. Minimum pilot-in-command time is accumulated as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2

Minimum	Time required in...
1. 500 hours	Helicopters.
2. 100 hours	Helicopters in the last 12 months.
3. 100 hours	The weight class of the helicopter offered. Defined as aircraft having a gross weight of "12,500 pounds or less" and "more than 12,500 pounds."
4. 100 hours	Turbine engine helicopters.
5. 50 hours	The same make and model as the helicopter. Pilot flight hour requirements in make and model may be reduced by 50 percent if the pilot shows evidence of having satisfactorily completed the manufacturer's approved ground school and flight check in the same make and model as the helicopter. (See the Helicopter Like Makes and Models Exhibit [Section C].)
6. 10 hours	The same make, model, and series as the helicopter in the last 12 months.
7. Last 90 days	Compliance with 14 CFR 61.57 or 135.247 as appropriate.

Minimum	Time required in...
8. 10 hours	Designated mountainous areas in the same make and model as the helicopter. (See the Helicopter Like Makes and Models Exhibit [Section C].)
9. 200 hours	Total mountain flight hours. Defined as experience in operating helicopters in mountainous terrain as identified in 14 CFR 95, Subpart B, Designated Mountainous Area. Operating includes maneuvering and numerous takeoffs and landings to ridgelines, pinnacles, and confined areas. Note: Required when flight is conducted in mountainous areas as identified above.
10. 10 hours	Total longline vertical reference (VTR) flight hours to include a minimum of 2 hours of VTR training within the last 12 months.

- (8) A contractor may request that the pilot flight hour requirement be waived for a pilot under special circumstances; however, the waiver may or may not be granted. The contractor should contact the CO in advance of this need for additional information on this process. No other pilot qualification exceptions will be considered by OAS.
- (9) For pilots meeting the requirements in subsection 5.3.C(1) in a series of AS350 other than an AS350B2 (e.g., AS350BA, AS350B3, AS350B3e, etc.), a contractor must provide differences training for the AS350B2. The differences training must be given by a pilot meeting the requirements of subsection 5.3.D.
- (10) *Pilot training/currency option:* A contractor may submit a written request to the OAS Technical Services, COR, and CO justifying the need to exercise the option to train an additional pilot during natural resource operations. If authorized by the CO or COR, the OAS Fleet Manager will arrange for the installation/removal of the dual controls.
- (11) When OAS authorization has been received and dual controls installed, a contractor may designate an OAS-approved AS350B2 pilot as a “Pilot Trainer” for the purposes of training a second pilot who does not currently meet the contract pilot requirements in Table 2 or in the fixed float landing gear configuration. The second pilot will be designated as a “trainee” pilot. This option allows for training of the second pilot in flight techniques for which the Pilot Trainer is approved. The designated “Pilot Trainer” and “trainee” pilot must be specifically approved as such by the COR prior to conducting any training operation. The Pilot Trainer must remain pilot-in-command (PIC) at all times. However, the flight time accumulated by the “trainee” while sole manipulator of the controls may be used to meet the contract pilot PIC experience requirements in subsection 5.3.C(7)g.6. or in the fixed float landing gear configuration.

- (12) No mission may be extended for the purpose of training. Pilot training conducted under the provisions of subsection 5.3.C(11) will be at no additional cost to the Government.

D. Pilot Trainer Minimum Qualifications

- (1) Qualified (carded) as DOI-approved pilot in the AS350B2.
- (2) 100 hours PIC in AS350B2 operations.
- (3) 25 hours PIC in the AS350B2 landing gear configuration for which training is to be conducted.
- (4) Hold a current Flight Instructor Certificate with a rotorcraft-helicopter rating.
- (5) The AS350B2 “trainee” pilot must meet all the minimum qualifications set forth in section 5.3.C with the exception of 5.3.C(7)g.6. requirements in the make, model, and series of helicopter, including various landing gear configurations.

5.4. Specialty Training and Recommended Training. Specialized training is required for the following, due to the risks involved in conducting these mission sets:

A. Aerial Capture Eradication or Tagging of Animals (ACETA)

- (1) USFWS personnel conducting ACETA missions must comply with training and currency requirements in the *USFWS ACETA Operations Guide (under development; estimated time of completion is the end of the 2023 calendar year)*.

B. Single Skid, Toe-In, Hover Exit/Entry Procedure (STEP)

- (1) All STEP training must be conducted in accordance with OPM-40.

5.5. Contracting Officer’s Representative (COR) Requirements

- A. For all USFWS aviation contracts the CO, in consultation with the program office, determines the level of COR certification required for a contract. CORs will be developed and appointed as prescribed in 302 FW 2.
- B. USFWS generally does not have aviation contract CORs. Should one be needed, refer to the Federal Acquisition Institute (FAI) website for additional information.

5.6. Training Documentation Requirements

A. Interagency Aviation Training Compliance

- (1) IAT course completions and position compliance are tracked and documented within the IAT system.

B. Unit Aviation Training Administrator (UATA)

- (1) Each Region or unit must assign a UATA to track IAT compliance for employees involved in aviation operations within their associated Region or unit.

C. Aviation Training Equivalencies

- (1) The NAM, working with the OAS Training Division, is authorized to determine IAT equivalencies for training acquired from sources other than IAT. This authorization may be delegated. See OPM-04.
- (2) All aviation training equivalency requests must contain supporting documents. Documentation should include a course description, course objectives, and course length as stated by the course provider.

D. Aviation Training Exemptions

- (1) All exemption requests to required aviation training must be routed through associated RACS/RAM/PAM to the NAM for consideration. The NAM will route any aviation training exemption requests to the OAS Director.

E. Fleet Pilot Training

- (1) All fleet pilot training, which includes flight instruction, ground instruction, vendor provided training, and any other training outside of IAT, must be uploaded to the IAT system. It is the training recipient's responsibility to ensure training records are uploaded within 14 days of training completion.
- (2) DOI instructor pilots providing training to fleet pilots must complete appropriate training forms and provide them to the trainee within 5 business days.

5.7. USFWS-Specific Training Requirements

A. USFWS-Authorized DOI Instructor Pilots

- (1) The NAM must authorize DOI flight instruction duties by a letter of authorization that will be included in the pilot's DOI pilot file and employee records. USFWS pilots designated as DOI instructor pilots (IP) must meet pilot qualifications and adhere to privileges, limitations, and currency requirements defined in OPM-22, Appendix 5.
- (2) The NAM has the authority to suspend or revoke IP privileges if necessary. The NAM will inform the IP in writing with a notification to the OAS Regional Director within the Region the pilot is assigned. Suspension or revocation of IP authority prohibits the IP from providing instruction in DOI aircraft. Reinstatement of IP authority must be authorized by the NAM.

B. Developmental Pilots

- (1) **General.** The intent of the developmental pilot training program is to provide training to FWS employees who do not meet the requirements of 351 DM 3 for dual-function pilot in accordance with OPM-22, Appendix 4, with a

reasonable expectation that the employee will be assigned duties as a dual-function DOI pilot at the completion of training.

- (2) **Minimum requirements.** Applicants must meet the minimum requirements defined in OPM-22, Appendix 4 prior to entry into the developmental pilot training program.
- (3) **Trainee needs designation.** Project Leaders interested in expanding their aviation program with an additional pilot will work with their RACS/RAM/PAM to define pilot needs and justification. The Project Leader must develop a justification document (request for developmental pilot) to the RACS/RAM/PAM for review. The developmental pilot request must include the following information:
 - a. Type of aircraft and missions that a pilot will be expected to fly;
 - b. Estimated number of flight hours a pilot is expected to accrue annually;
 - c. How the pilot duties will be allocated among other staff pilots;
 - d. Expectation of how long it will take for a pilot to reach full performance;
 - e. Amount of time an applicant will be allowed to devote to pilot training annually and how this will affect their current workload;
 - f. Amount of funding available annually to devote to pilot training;
 - g. Current pilot credentials (ratings, hours, etc.);
 - h. Employee job series and brief description of current work assignments and how long they have been in current position; and
 - i. Other priorities as defined by program.
- (4) **Applicant selection process.** The request will be reviewed by the RACS/RAM/PAM and sent to the NAM for consideration. Applicants will be rated based on their pilot/aviation experience and commitment, station/program/Regional aviation needs, and the degree to which the applicant's current position will be affected by the addition of pilot duties. The applicant will fly with a DOI instructor pilot designated by the NAM in a DOI aircraft to evaluate current piloting skills prior to selection.
- (5) **Training.** Once a trainee is selected, a 3-year training plan will be developed by the RACS/RAM/PAM and approved by the National Aviation Training Specialist. The training plan must explicitly outline detailed training activities, timelines, estimated costs, and specify pilot missions appropriate for the trainee. This plan ensures the trainee flies a minimum 250 hours annually during the training period, and that they reach full performance by the end of the 3-year period.
- (6) **Funding.** The NAM may provide funding for developmental pilot training. The RACS/RAM/PAM will submit funding requests for developmental pilot training to the National Aviation Training Specialist for consideration. If NAO

funding is not approved or available, the station or program will need to provide training funds.

- (7) **Continued service agreement.** Employees must sign and agree to a continued service agreement effective during the developmental pilot training period. After completion of the developmental pilot training program, the employee will sign a 2-year continued service agreement. If the employee voluntarily leaves the USFWS before completing the agreed period of service, the employee must reimburse the USFWS for any costs associated with flight training.

C. IAT Instructors

- (1) Certified instructors must be approved to teach interagency aviation training courses based on the process defined in OPM-04, Aviation User Training Program and the *Interagency Aviation Training Guide*.
 - a. Requests to become a certified instructor must be routed through the RACS/RAM/PAM. Because of the complexity and/or technicality of aviation skills needed to perform aviation missions, instructors need to possess certain knowledge, skills, and abilities to ensure information is being presented in an effective manner.
 - b. The DOI OAS Training Branch will approve individuals who meet these standards as an IAT instructor, authorized to instruct specific IAT courses, and provide them instructor access to the IAT website.

Chapter 6 Aviation Security

- 6.1 Aviation Facilities
- 6.2 Aircraft Security
- 6.3 Aviation Fuel

6.1. Aviation Facilities

- A. USFWS-owned, leased, occupied, or operationally controlled facilities that are improved for aircraft takeoff and landing must have a current written security plan in accordance with 352 DM 5. The NAM, with the RACS/RAM/PAM, must ensure that a facility inspection is conducted every 3 years.

6.2. Aircraft Security

- A. The PIC is responsible for the security and tying down of USFWS-controlled aircraft. We recommend that aircraft be stored in hangars whenever practical. Aircraft must be dual locked whenever they are not under the direct control of a USFWS employee. At any time DOI-owned or controlled aircraft are not directly attended by DOI-authorized flight or ground personnel, the aircraft must be physically secured and disabled via the dual-lock method. Examples of acceptable dual-lock devices and their conditions of use are in 352 DM 5, Appendix 2.

Note: Locking aircraft doors and fenced or gated tie-down areas are NOT acceptable methods of dual locking.

6.3. Aviation Fuel

- A. The PIC must verify security, type, and quantity of USFWS-controlled fuel and take reasonable actions to secure fuel from criminal misuse or tampering when fueling or storing aircraft.
- B. **Fuel Tanks owned by the USFWS**
 - (1) Maintenance of fuel tanks, fuel storage, and fuel testing requirements must comply with OPM-13, OPM-9, and the *DOI Aviation Fuels Handling Handbook*. Fuel tanks must be locked, and fuel usage documented appropriately. Owners or managers of fuel tanks, in coordination with the RACS/RAM/PAM, must ensure compliance with all applicable security, handling, and hazmat policy requirements.
- C. **Unsecure or Remote Fuel Sites/Caches**
 - (1) Pilots and other personnel involved with aviation must comply with remote fuel and fuel testing requirements, per OPM-20, OPM-13, OPM-9, and the *DOI Aviation Fuels Handling Handbook*.

Chapter 7 Airspace Coordination

- 7.1 Introduction to the Interagency Process
- 7.2 Definitions
- 7.3 De-Confliction Procedures
- 7.4 Emergency Security Control of Air Traffic (ESCAT) Procedures

7.1. Introduction to the Interagency Process

- A. Airspace planning and coordination are becoming more important as airspace becomes more congested. All users of the airspace system need to be aware of special use airspace and its restrictions. Coordination with other airspace users, such as the military, is an important safety issue. Airspace coordination is an important part of mission planning.
- B. Depending on location and altitude, flights may operate within airspace of instrument flight rules/visual flight rules (IFR/VFR) routes, temporary flight restrictions, wilderness areas, national wildlife refuges, international borders, special use airspace, or other sensitive and high traffic areas. Pilots and Project Leaders must plan flights to avoid these areas or to comply with the controlling agency's requirements and restrictions. The USFWS mission may involve flights that operate within the Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) of the United States. All flights that penetrate the ADIZ must comply with the requirements of 14 CFR 99. Mission flights near other sensitive areas, such as military facilities, nuclear power plants, and major metropolitan areas, may require special coordination. Airspace coordination and guidance for DOI is provided through the [National Wildfire Coordinating Group \(NWCG\) Standards for Airspace Coordination](#).

7.2. Definitions

- A. **Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)**
 - (1) An ADIZ is the area of airspace over land or water, extending upward from the surface, within which the ready identification, the location, and the control of aircraft are required in the interest of national security. ADIZ locations and operating and flight plan requirements for civil aircraft operations are specified in 14 CFR 99. Any aircraft that plans to fly in or through the boundary must file either a Defense Visual Flight Rules (DVFR) flight plan or an IFR flight plan before crossing the ADIZ (14 CFR 99.11). While approaching and crossing the ADIZ, aircraft must have an operational transponder and maintain two-way radio contact.
- B. **Defense Visual Flight Rules**
 - (1) These are rules applicable to flights within an ADIZ conducted under the visual flight rules in 14 CFR 91.

C. Fire Traffic Area (FTA)

- (1) An FTA is a communication protocol for firefighting agencies. It does not pertain to other aircraft that have legal access granted by the FAA within a specific Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) area. The FTA should not be confused with a TFR, which is a legal restriction established by the FAA to restrict aviation traffic, while the FTA is a communication tool establishing protocol within firefighting agencies.

D. Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)

- (1) The NOTAM is a notice containing information (not known sufficiently in advance to publicize by other means) concerning the establishment, condition, or change in any component (facility, service, or procedure of or hazard in the national airspace system), the timely knowledge of which is essential to personnel concerned with flight operations.

E. Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR)

- (1) A TFR is a geographically limited, short-term airspace restriction. TFRs often encompass major sporting events, natural disaster areas, air shows, space launches, and Presidential movements. Pilots must check with flight service for ALL applicable NOTAMS immediately prior to flight to identify applicable TFRs. Some TFRs can be very complex in shape, movement, and duration.

7.3. De-Confliction Procedures

- A. The PIC is responsible for the de-confliction procedures appropriate to the airspace for USFWS mission flights. All flights that enter an ADIZ must be on either an IFR or DVFR flight plan, must flight follow with the FAA, and must comply with the requirements of 14 CFR 99.

7.4. Emergency Security Control of Air Traffic (ESCAT) Procedures

- A. **General.** ESCAT provides direction for the security control of civil and military air traffic during an air defense emergency.

B. The ESCAT Plan

- (1) The ESCAT plan provides policy, assigns responsibilities, and prescribes procedures to be taken in the interest of national security. The ESCAT plan supersedes the plan for the security control of air traffic and air navigations aids. See FAA advisory circular 99-1D.

Chapter 8 Aviation Project Planning Requirements

- 8.1 Project Planning Introduction and Importance
- 8.2 Review and Approval Process

8.1. Project Planning Introduction and Importance

- A. **Project Aviation Safety Plans (PASP)** are required for all special use missions (outlined in OPM-29, Special Use Activities) by OPM-06, Aviation Management Plans. A template and instructions for completing a PASP that meets all required items in OPM-06 is provided in the [NAMP References](#) folder on the NAO SharePoint site.
- B. **Risk Assessment Matrix**
 - (1) All PASPs must include an aviation risk assessment approved by Regional, program, or national aviation management.
- C. **UAS PASPs**
 - (1) **Recurrent Project Aviation Safety Plans**
 - a. For those Regions or programs that perform similar special use aviation missions on a recurring or routine basis, the required PASP can be included as part of the Regional/program aviation plan or other step-down plan as identified by the RACS/RAM/PAM. It must be reviewed at least annually.
 - b. In place of a PASP, the Region/program must have a documented process to capture the unique and special circumstances (i.e., dispatch log, passenger manifest, PPE requirements, and supervisor approval) that may change between publication and mission execution. This information must be sent to the appropriate flight following entity as it is available.

8.2. Review and Approval Process

- A. **PASP Review**
 - (1) Prior to mission execution, PASPs must be reviewed by the respective RACS/RAM/PAM or other authority as designated by the NAM.
 - (2) The following special use activities require PASP review and approval by the National Aviation Operations Specialist and National Aviation Safety Specialist:
 - a. Offshore platform landings – helicopter
 - b. Vessel landings – helicopter
 - c. Water landings – floats or hull – helicopter
 - d. Night vision goggle (NVG) flight – airplane and helicopter
 - e. Aerial capture, eradication, and tagging of animals (ACETA) – helicopter

- f. Single-skid, toe-in, hover exit/entry procedures (STEP) – helicopter
- g. All-hazard response (review only)

B. PASP Approval

- (1) Final approval for the PASP depends on the associated risk level calculated through the risk assessment matrix. The risk assessment matrix provided in the [NAMP References](#) folder on the NAO SharePoint site designates the appropriate approval authority for each risk level.

Appendix 1 Acronyms

AATD	Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Approved Advanced Aviation Training Device
ACETA	Aerial Capture, Eradication, and Tagging of Animals
AD	Assistant Director
AFF	Automated Flight Following
ALSE	Aviation Life Support Equipment
AMC	Aviation Management Council
AMD	Aviation Management Directorate
AMRB	Aircraft Mishap Review Board
AMRP	Aviation Mishap Response Plan
AMIS	Aviation Mishap Information System
AMS	Aviation Management System
AQD	Acquisition Services Directorate – Boise Branch of the Interior Business Center (IBC)
ARA	Aircraft Rental Agreement
ARD	Assistant Regional Director
ATD	FAA Approved Aviation Training Device
AUR	Aircraft Use Report
AURMA	Aircraft Use Report Manager Application
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
COA	Certificate of Authorization
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CRM	Crew Resource Management
DAE	Designated Agency Aviation Executive
DASHO	Designated Agency Safety and Health Official
DAS-PRE	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services
DM	Departmental Manual
DMBM	Division of Migratory Bird Management
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
EAB	Executive Aviation Board
EAC	Executive Aviation Committee
EAS	Executive Aviation Subcommittee
EPIRB	Emergency Position Indicator Radio Beacon
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FAITAS	Federal Acquisition Institute Training Application System

FBMS	Financial and Business Management System (within DOI)
HAZMAT	Hazardous Materials
IAA	Interagency Agreement
IAT	Interagency Aviation Training
IATS	Interagency Aviation Training Subcommittee
IAT-SC	Interagency Aviation Training – Steering Committee
IBC	Interior Business Center
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
IIMC	Inadvertent Instrument Meteorological Conditions
IP	Instructor Pilot
IPAC	Intra-Governmental Payment and Collection
IWP	Incident With Potential
LiDAR	Light Direction and Range
LOA	Letter of Agreement
NAM	Bureau National Aviation Manager
NAMP	National Aviation Management Plan
NAO	National Aviation Office
NAOS	National Aviation Operations Specialist
NASS	National Aviation Safety Specialist
NATS	National Aviation Training Specialist
NIAC	National Interagency Aviation Committee, Wildland Fire
NSHO	National Wildlife Coordinating Group's Standards for Helicopter Operations
NTSB	National Transportation Safety Board
NUAS	National Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Specialist
NVG	Night Vision Goggles
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
OAS	Office of Aviation Services
OLE	Office of Law Enforcement
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OMS	Office of Management Services
OPCON	Operational Control
OPM	Operational Procedures Memoranda
ORM	Operational Risk Management
PAM	Program Aviation Manager

PAMP	Program Aviation Management Plan
PASP	Project Aviation Safety Plan
PFD	Personal Flotation Device
PI	Pilot Inspector
PIC	Pilot-in-Command
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PLB	Personal Emergency Locator Transmitter Beacon
PR	Purchase Request
PRAT	Pre-flight Risk Assessment Tool
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RACS	Regional Aviation Compliance Specialist
RAM	Regional Aviation Manager
RAMP	Regional Aviation Management Plan
RD	Regional Director
RSM	Regional Safety Manager
SAFECOM	Safety Communiqué
SM	Survey Manual
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SMS	Safety Management System
STEP	Single Skid, Toe-In, Hover Exit/Entry Procedure
SO	Secretary's Order
SOL	Solicitor of the U.S. Department of the Interior
sUAS	Small Uncrewed Aircraft System
SUP	Special Use Permit
TDY	Temporary Duty travel
UAS	Uncrewed Aircraft Systems
UAS PM	Uncrewed Aircraft Systems Project Manager
UATA	Unit Aviation Training Administrator for Interagency Aviation Training system
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Additional acronyms and abbreviations can be found in 350 DM 1, Appendix 1 and 14 CFR 1.1 to 1.3.

Appendix 2 Definitions

Aircraft: A machine or device that is used or intended to be used to carry people or objects in flight through the air, including, but not limited to airplanes, helicopters, gliders, and uncrewed aircraft systems (UAS).

Best practices: Practices designed and implemented to ensure operational and organizational success. These practices typically include additional safety and service margins and are often adopted as industry or Federal agency standards. They tend to be cost beneficial. These practices are dynamic because they are perpetually evolving with changes in customer expectations, as well as advances in the general knowledge base.

Complex aviation program: A program with three or more of the following components: exclusive use aircraft contracts, assigned fleet aircraft, high-risk missions (e.g., helicopter external loads), single pilot, and cooperator aircraft. The USFWS aviation program is complex because it involves exclusive use contracts, high-risk missions, cooperator aircraft, dual function and incidental pilots, and fleet aircraft operations, including UAS. The USFWS maintains the largest manned and uncrewed aircraft fleet in DOI.

Fleet aircraft: Aircraft, including uncrewed aircraft, loaned by DOI, registered to DOI, or leased to DOI with the intent of purchase. The Office of Aviation Services (OAS) acquires DOI fleet aircraft for the USFWS.

Operational control: With respect to a flight, operational control means the exercise of authority over initiating, conducting, or terminating a flight. An aircraft is under the exclusive direction and control of the Government when the Government exercises responsibility for:

- Approving crew members and determining that they are qualified to operate the aircraft;
- Determining the airworthiness and directing maintenance of the aircraft; and
- Dispatching the aircraft, including times of departure, airports to be used, and type and amount of cargo to be carried.

Special use activities: Operations involving the use of airplanes and helicopters in support of DOI programs that are not point-to-point flight activities and that require special considerations due to their functional use. This may require deviation from normal operating practices where authorized by OAS. Special pilot qualifications and techniques, special aircraft equipment, and personal protective equipment are required to enhance the safe transportation of personnel and property.

USFWS employee: In this plan, we use the term to mean personnel employed by the USFWS on a full-time, part-time, or seasonal basis; volunteers; people supervised by USFWS personnel; and Service support contractors.

Additional aviation management definitions can be found in 350 DM 1, Appendix 2, and 14 CFR Part 1.