

970 AIRCRAFT

971 AIRCRAFT SUPPRESSION EXPENDITURES

Aircraft use that can legitimately be classed as suppression expenditures for supplemental purposes are as follows:

- A. All actions requiring flights from the time of detecting a fire (or false alarm) through the final mop-up and demobilization phase of a fire.
- B. Helicopter detection flights based on known weather and fuels data that indicate a good possibility of the helicopter's immediate use in initial attack.
- C. Patrol duty on an extinguished fire to check for rekindling, etc.

Flying time to meet requirements for airworthiness and to train personnel in the operation of the aircraft so the ship and crew will be available for safe and effective suppression activities and flights for the purpose of refurbishing lookouts, fire planning reconnaissance, familiarization flights for seasonal dispatchers, etc., does not qualify as suppression for supplemental purposes. This type of use will have to be covered in existing budgets and programmed to appropriate budgeted responsibility centers. Aircraft use pertaining to A through C above should be charged to appropriate Fire Responsibility Centers, to include the 999 centers if the flight cannot be tied to a particular fire.

972 AERIAL DELIVERY OF RETARDANT OR FOAM NEAR WATERWAYS

A. DEFINITION

Waterway - Any body of water including lakes, rivers, streams and ponds whether or not they contain aquatic life.

B. GUIDELINES

Avoid aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of waterways.

These guidelines do not require the helicopter or airtanker pilot-in-command to fly in such a way as to endanger his or her aircraft, other aircraft, or structures or compromise ground personnel safety.

Guidance for pilots: To meet the 300-foot buffer zone guideline, implement the following:

1. **Medium/Heavy Airtankers**--When approaching a waterway visible to the pilot, the pilot shall terminate the application of

retardant approximately 300 feet before reaching the waterway. When flying over a waterway, pilots shall wait one second after crossing the far bank or shore of a waterway before applying retardant. Pilots shall make adjustments for airspeed and ambient conditions such as wind to avoid the application of retardant within the 300-foot buffer zone.

2. **Single Engine Airtankers**--When approaching a waterway visible to the pilot, the pilot shall terminate application of retardant or foam approximately 300 feet before reaching the waterway. When flying over a waterway, the pilot shall not begin application of foam or retardant until 300 feet after crossing the far bank or shore. The pilot shall make adjustments for airspeed and ambient conditions such as wind to avoid the application of retardant within the 300-foot buffer zone.

3. **Helicopters**--When approaching a waterway visible to the pilot, the pilot shall terminate the application of retardant or foam 300 feet before reaching the waterway. When flying over a waterway, pilots shall wait five seconds after crossing the far bank or shore before applying the retardant or foam. Pilots shall make adjustments for airspeed and ambient conditions such as wind to avoid the application of retardant or foam within the 300-foot buffer zone.

4. **Exceptions**

a. When alternative line construction tactics are not available due to terrain constraints, congested area, life and property concerns or lack of ground personnel, it is acceptable to anchor the foam or retardant application to the waterway. When anchoring a retardant or foam line to a waterway, use the most accurate method of delivery in order to minimize placement of retardant or foam in the waterway (e.g., a helicopter rather than a heavy airtanker).

b. Deviations from these guidelines are acceptable when life or property is threatened and the use of retardant or foam can be reasonably expected to alleviate the threat.

c. When potential damage to natural resources outweighs possible loss of aquatic life, the unit administrator (line officer) may approve a deviation from these guidelines.

5. **Threatened and Endangered (T & E) Species**

The following provisions are guidance for complying with the emergency section 7 consultation procedures of the Endangered

Species Act (ESA) with respect to aquatic species. These provisions do not alter or diminish an action agency's responsibilities under the ESA.

Where aquatic T & E species or their habitats are potentially affected by aerial application of retardant or foam, the following additional procedures apply:

- a. As soon as practicable after the aerial application of retardant or foam near waterways, determine whether the aerial application has caused any adverse effects to a T & E species or their habitat. This can be accomplished by the following:
 - 1) Aerial application of retardant or foam outside 300 feet of a waterway is presumed to avoid adverse effects to aquatic species and no further consultation for aquatic species is necessary.
 - 2) Aerial application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of a waterway requires that the unit administrator (line officer) determine whether there have been any adverse effects to T & E species within the waterway.

These procedures shall be documented in the initial or subsequent fire reports.

- b. If there were no adverse effects to aquatic T & E species or their habitats, there is no additional requirement to consult on aquatic species with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) or National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS).
- c. If the action agency determines that there were adverse effects on T & E species or their habitats, then the action agency must consult with the USFWS and NMFS, as required by 50 CFR 402.05 (Emergencies). Procedures for emergency consultation are described in the Interagency Consultation Handbook. In the case of a long duration incident, emergency consultation should be initiated as soon as practical during the event. Otherwise, post-event consultation is appropriate. The initiation of the consultation is the responsibility of the unit administrator (line officer).

Note: Reference the 1500 "Fire Air Operations Manual" for further information on DNRC-operated aircraft.