



United States Department of the Interior

National Business Center

Aviation Management

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DOI AM OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM (OPM) NO. 04-53

Subject: Approval and Use of Cooperators – Other Government Agency Supporting Department of the Interior (DOI) Wildland Firefighting

Effective Date: August 13, 2004

Supersedes: Portions of 351 DM 4

Distribution: A, B, & C

Expiration Date: December 31, 2004

.1 Purpose. This OPM establishes policy and procedures for the approval and use of Cooperators – Other Government Agency (Cooperators) by DOI Bureaus in support of wildland firefighting activities. Refer to 350 DM 1, Appendix 5 for definition of ‘Other Government Agency Aircraft.’

.2 Authority. This policy is established by the Associate Director, DOI Aviation Management (DOI AM) in accordance with provisions of the Departmental Manual 350 DM 1 and Secretarial Order 3250 dated September 30, 2003.

.3 General. A variety of factors drive the necessity for increased coordination and cooperation among government agencies at various levels. This is particularly true for those organizations involved in the suppression of wildfires; particularly those incidents that may potentially threaten lives or structures. This OPM establishes DOI policy specific only to Cooperators involved in wildland firefighting.

.4 Policy. DOI AM is responsible for determining if Cooperator aircraft, pilots, and support equipment meet applicable DOI technical and safety standards. DOI bureaus are responsible for determining if approved Cooperator aircraft can meet mission objectives and desired levels of operational efficiency.

Flight operations standards, procedures, and references found in 351 DM 4.1, 351 DM 4.4, and OPMs or portions of OPMs dealing with aircraft, flight crewmembers, and related equipment engaged in interagency firefighting are applicable.

Any reimbursement of Cooperators must be in accordance with Public Law 106-181 including sections dealing with the ordering and replacement of uncertificated aircraft and retention of associated records, as appropriate.

.5 Responsibilities. The identification, approval, use, and oversight of Cooperators requires an effective, collaborative working relationship between DOI AM and the bureaus.

A. Bureau Responsibilities.

Field Offices:

- (1) Meet with prospective Cooperators to explain approval and use procedures. Gather information identified in number three below.
- (2) Send a request for Cooperator inspection and use to the bureau National Aviation Manager for approval.
- (3) Included with the request should be the following information:
 - (a) Name of Cooperator agency and point of contact to include phone numbers and e-mail address.
 - (b) Requested aircraft, pilot(s), and support equipment.
 - (c) Intended use.
 - (d) If reimbursement through AMD is contemplated, a copy of the document(s) authorizing the working relationship (i.e. multi agency agreement).
 - (e) The requesting bureau point of contact to include phone numbers and e- mail address.
 - (f) Period of need – single year/repetitive multiyear.

National Office:

- (1) Consider field request and determine if aircraft can meet mission objectives and desired levels of operational efficiency.
- (2) Assure the controlling bureau unit understands and can properly manage the use of the cooperator resource within applicable public law.
- (3) Forward approved field requests and supporting information to the DOI AM servicing field office.

B. DOI Aviation Management Responsibilities.

DOI Aviation Management Area/Regional Offices:

- (1) Receive and review bureau request for required information and bureau National Office concurrence.
- (2) Establish contact with requested Cooperator to discuss scope of work and associated timeframes.
- (3) Acknowledge receipt of request and discuss scope of work and estimated timeframes with requesting bureau office.
- (4) Coordinate with other DOI AM offices as appropriate.
- (5) Draft and establish MOUs /MOAs as required for activity in a single DOI AM geographic region. If activity involves multiple DOI AM Regions, forward to DOI AM Headquarters for processing.
- (6) Issue letters of approval for aircraft, pilots, and support equipment meeting applicable DOI technical and safety standards.

- (7) Provide ongoing support to bureau/Cooperator field activities when requested.

DOI Aviation Management Headquarters:

Coordinate the Cooperator approval process for requests encompassing more than one DOI AM geographic region and sign supporting Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandums of Agreement (MOA) as required.

/s/ Michael A. Martin

Associate Director