

Leadplane Training Lesson Plan

Fire Traffic Area

06-01-N9065-HO

Objective:

To familiarize the student with the FTA procedures (Phase 1).

To develop the student's proficiency in FTA procedures (Phase 2).

Content:

Refer to the Fire Traffic Area card in the NWCG SAS.

The airspace surrounding an incident is managed by the aerial supervisor who must implement Fire Traffic Area (FTA) procedures. All wildland incidents, regardless of aircraft on scene, have an FTA. If an incident has an active TFR in place FTA rules apply to the TFR and clearance from the controlling aircraft is required prior to TFR entry. If aerial supervision is not on scene, the first aircraft on scene will establish the FTA protocol.

The FTA is a communication protocol for firefighting agencies. It does not pertain to other aircraft that have legal access within a TFR (Medevac, Law Enforcement, Media, VFR airport traffic, IFR traffic cleared by the FAA).

The fire dispatch or IROC order is not a clearance into a TFR.

ATGS Orbit Altitude

The ATGS orbit altitude is initially established at 2500 feet AGL and is flown in a right-hand pattern. If the fire progresses into higher terrain the ATGS will need to fly at higher altitudes to maintain separation above the inbound tankers and the air tanker orbit altitude. The minimum altitude above the airtanker orbit altitude should be 1000 feet. If tankers need a higher altitude to cross terrain prior to entering the FTA, the ATGS altitude will need to be flown at a higher altitude to accommodate the inbound tankers altitude needs. Clouds or smoke may impact the ATGS orbit altitude.

Airtanker Orbit Altitude

The inbound air tankers will be brought into the FTA at the airtanker orbit altitude. The airtanker orbit altitude is initially established at 1500 feet AGL and is flown in a left-hand pattern. The left-hand pattern will allow for greater visibility for the captain of larger airtankers even when the drop will be flown in a right-hand pattern. The altitude is based on the elevation of the operations area for the tanker.

Airtanker Maneuvering Altitude

Once the airtanker understands the objective/target description of the drop they can be cleared down from the airtanker orbit altitude to the airtanker maneuvering altitude. This will be the pattern altitude that the drop will be flown from. The airtanker will descend to the airtanker maneuvering altitude prior to establishing a right-hand turn if the drop is going to be out of a right-hand pattern. The airtanker maneuvering altitude is initially established at 1000 feet AGL and is usually flown in left-hand pattern. Right-hand patterns are nonstandard and must be briefed before flown. Terrain and smoke sometimes dictate that the pattern be flown in a right hand pattern. Leadplanes operate at the airtanker maneuvering altitude during join ups and prior to a show me.

Three (3) C's of initial contact – Communication requirements and related actions to be undertaken by the pilot of the inbound aircraft:

Communication – Establish communications with the controlling aerial supervision resource over the incident (ATGS, LPIL, ASM, HLCO).

Clearance – Receive clearance from aerial supervision resource to proceed to the incident past the NOCOM ring. Inbound pilot will acknowledge receipt of clearance or (hold) outside the NOCOM ring until the clearance is received and understood.

Comply – Inbound aircraft will comply with clearance from aerial supervision resource. If compliance cannot be accomplished, the inbound aircraft will remain outside the NOCOM ring until an amended clearance is received and understood.

Departing Aircraft – Aircraft departing incident airspace must follow assigned departure route and altitude. Aerial Supervisors must establish/deconflict routes for departing aircraft through or away from other incident aircraft operations.

Holding in the event of no communications by the 7-mile ring.

If communications have not been established prior to 7 miles the aircraft will hold outside 7 miles. Where to hold will be dictated by unique factors associated with each individual environment. Aircraft can hold off to one side of the FTA or on smaller FTA's can orbit outside 7 miles. Smoke and wind may be a factor that makes it impractical to orbit the FTA and may dictate which side of the FTA an aircraft holds. Terrain may also dictate where an aircraft holds due to the terrain's physical location as well as its effects on winds. The route other aircraft take to and from the fire should be avoided.

Note the difference between an FTA and a TFR.

There are not multiple FTA's within a TFR. There may be multiple operations areas.

Completion Standards:

The lesson is complete when the student can demonstrate proper FTA procedures in a training environment for Phase 1 and in a fire environment for Phase 2. The student will adhere to all FTA card content, with minimal deficiencies noted. Safety will never be in question and FTA procedures will be accomplished without the reliance on the evaluator.-