



# National Interagency Aviation Committee Committee Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's)

## 1 Identification

The National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC) is an active interagency, NWCG committee, known herein as the Committee.

## 2 Strategic Intent

### 2.1 Vision

Coordination, standardization, and sharing of best practices involving the USDA Forest Service, DOI Office of Aviation Services, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Association of State Foresters, International Association of Fire Chiefs, and other interagency partners to provide interagency guidance for fire aviation and other aviation missions to be adopted by member agencies.

### 2.2 Mission

The National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC) provides national leadership in wildland fire aviation. The NIAC facilitates the development and implementation of interagency fire aviation standards, procedures, and programs to enhance safety, effectiveness, and efficiency in all areas of aviation operations. The NIAC develops interagency guidance for fire aviation for adoption and use by the member agencies. The NIAC also provides interagency aviation guidance for law enforcement, search and rescue, and resource management aviation for the US Forest Service (USFS) and Department of Interior (DOI).

### 2.3 Primary Objectives

- Develop and disseminate standards for national interagency fire aviation operations.
- Identify and resolve conflicting interagency aviation operations issues.
- Facilitate implementation of interagency aviation program standards through training and information publication.
- Ensure prompt concurrence and routing of proposed aviation standards to DOI, USFS, and States for approval and implementation.
- Contribute to the standardization of information technology systems (such as FireNet, IROC, etc.) to collect and distribute data, processes, forms, and other operational elements.

## 2.4 Responsibility

The Committee is primarily responsible for development and implementation of interagency fire aviation standards, procedures, resources, and products. Organization and direction provided to subcommittees and groups help to support this.

Other responsibilities include:

- Develop nationally recognized and accepted standards, processes, and tools for aviation operations that can be adopted by the member agencies.
- Evaluate identified aviation safety issues and provide recommendations to member organizations.
- Support subcommittee efforts providing direction that will support increased knowledge and practical applications related to improvements in aviation management.
- Work with subcommittees to develop interagency standards documents and other products that support safety and best practices in aviation operations.
- Establish project timelines and formal communication to manage associated subcommittee workflows.

## 3 Scope

The scope of the Committee is described as:

Serve as a group of aviation managers that represent their Agency/Bureau requirements specific to aviation operations. The Committee will provide guidance and recommendations to personnel who conduct aviation operations in the interagency environment.

## 4 Authorities

The Committee is established under the following authorities:

- NWCG Executive Board Charter  
[National Wildfire Coordinating Group Charter](#)

The Committee is established by the following documented agreements:

- NWCG National Interagency Aviation Committee SOP's (5-8-2024)

### 4.1 Delegation Authority

Committee retains responsibility for any change to policy or decision that would affect a change to policy (if adopted by member agency). Subcommittees may be delegated decisions of a repetitive nature (this must be granted through request to committee).

Committee will retain authority over any waivers requested by sub-groups. This authority is not to be delegated below the committee level.

NIAC will maintain a list of approved delegations to the subcommittees. This list can change (delegations added or rescinded) by approval of the NIAC members. The approved list of delegations will be maintained within the NIAC SharePoint repository.

## 5 Organization Structure & Relationships

The Committee consists of primary members representing the USDA Forest Service, DOI Office of Aviation Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, National Association of State Foresters, and International Association of Fire Chiefs. One of the primary member's serves as chair and another as vice-chair as agreed to by the Committee. The Chair rotation will follow the established rotation as agreed upon by the primary members (see section 8.7).

NIAC Subcommittees: The chair will serve a minimum one-year term. It is desired the vice chair assume the chair position at the end of the chair's term. Chair will be nominated and elected by the subcommittee primary voting group for the initial chair position. Thereafter the vice-chair will assume the duties of the chair following the chair's term. If the vice-chair is unable to assume the chair position, then a new chair will be selected by the Committee primary voting group.

### 5.1 Committee Structure

NIAC is a subgroup of the NWCG Executive Board. Subcommittees report to NIAC. Subcommittees can be further broken down into units, boards, or task groups. The following describes the function of each subgroup:

- Subcommittee – A long-standing body of subject matter experts representing one of the primary functional areas of the Committee. Develops and maintains NWCG standards and associated support materials. Meets objectives stated in its mission statement. May establish a subcommittee structure as workload requires.  
*Established by and reports to NIAC.*
- Unit – A long-standing body of subject matter experts representing a subset of a subcommittee's functional area. Meets objectives stated in its mission statement.  
*Established by Subcommittee and approved through NIAC. Reports to Subcommittee.*
- Board – A long-standing body of subject matter experts organized to establish performance criteria, evaluation processes, business requirements, and operational standards in specific subcommittee areas.  
*Established by NIAC or Subcommittee and approved through NIAC. Reports to NIAC or Subcommittee established under.*
- Task Team – A limited-term body of subject matter experts formed via a tasking memorandum to accomplish a specific, time-bounded, undertaking for the tasking entity.  
*Established by and report to NIAC or subcommittee through memorandum.*

### 5.1.1 Committee Subgroups

The following subgroups are organized under the Committee:

- Aviation Risk Management Subcommittee
- Interagency Aerial Supervision Subcommittee
  - Air Tactical Group Supervisor Working Group
  - Air Tactical Supervisor Working Group
  - Leadplane Pilot Working Group
  - Helicopter Coordinator Working Group
- Interagency Airspace Subcommittee
- Interagency Airtanker Base Subcommittee
  - Airtanker Base Directory Unit
  - Airtanker Base Operational Risk Management Unit
  - Airtanker Base Training and Qualifications Unit
  - Single Engine Airtanker Unit
  - Standards for Airtanker Base Operations Unit
- Interagency Airtanker Board
- Interagency Aviation Training Subcommittee
- Interagency Cooperator Aircraft and Pilot Standards Subcommittee
- Interagency Fire Unmanned Aircraft Systems Subcommittee
  - IFUASS Qualification and Curriculum Board
- Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee
  - Helicopter Short Haul Unit
  - Interagency Aerial Ignition Unit
  - Standards for Helicopter Operations Unit
- Interagency Helicopter Screening and Evaluation Subcommittee
- Single Engine Airtanker Board
- Smokejumper Aircraft Screening and Evaluation Subcommittee

### 5.2 Stakeholders & Partners

Other aviation management agencies and partners may be consulted on an as needed basis.

## 6 Membership

### 6.1 General

The Chair is assigned from within the committee from the Primary Members. Each agency listed in section 6.2 has one voting member. Primary members are considered voting members. Where multiple primary members are identified for an agency, only one vote will be shared by those representatives.

### 6.2 Primary

The NIAC primary membership will be composed of representatives as follows:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs, BIA (1)
- Bureau of Land Management, BLM (1)
- Fish and Wildlife Service, FWS (1)
- International Association of Fire Chiefs (1)
- National Association of State Foresters (2)
- National Park Service, NPS (1)
- Office of Aviation Service, OAS (1)
- US Forest Service, USFS (2)

### 6.3 Associate (Advisor)

The Committee membership will be composed of representatives at the discretion of the Primary members. Any non-fire organization not currently represented in NWCG membership could request to be an associate or advisor member to NIAC. Technical subject matter experts may also be added as advisor members.

### 6.4 Additional Membership

Additional members include NWCG Liaison and executive secretary. NWCG Liaison is assigned by NWCG. Executive Secretary (admin) is provided on a voluntary basis by the primary membership of the committee. For more information on their roles see section 8 – Roles & Responsibilities.

## 7 Meeting Management

### 7.1 Monthly Meetings

NIAC meetings will follow NWCG Meeting Standards (<https://www.nwcg.gov/committeeroles-membership-information#MS>).

NIAC monthly meetings are generally scheduled on the second Thursday of each month and are typically held via TEAMS. Meeting dates/locations may be changed with the consensus by the primary members. Primary members should attend all monthly meetings. Those unable to attend a meeting should arrange for an alternate to represent their agency/organization. The alternate should be fully briefed and must have the authority to make decisions on the primary member's behalf. Alternates will be announced to the Chair and the executive secretary prior to the meeting. If the need arises, for example during summer when fire activity is high, additional meetings may be scheduled. Subcommittee chairs will be provided a copy of the agenda so they are aware of the topics under discussion and can attend the NIAC meeting, if necessary. There will be times when NIAC meetings are closed to all but the NIAC membership.

Meetings may be held in-person or virtually. When a meeting is held in-person, a virtual option will be established for members that cannot attend in-person. If an in-person meeting is planned away from Boise, additional time will be required for the executive secretary and facilitator to make the arrangements. Active and full participation is critical to meeting success. For members participating remotely, turning on cameras is expected during the meeting.

## 7.2 Annual Offsite Meetings

To build team cohesion, NIAC members will strive to meet once per year at an off-site location. The location will be determined by the primary members. This meeting can be combined with a staff ride, training, or other function of interest. Members will pay for their own travel and the associated travel of any subcommittee members that will be attending.

## 7.3 Decision Making

Issues requiring discussion/decision may be brought to NIAC by the Chair, Vice-Chair, Primary Member, NWCG Liaison, or a NIAC Subcommittee (through the Subcommittee's respective Chair). The Chair and executive secretary are responsible for compiling the associated reference and background materials in advance of the NIAC meeting and sending to the NIAC membership.

Members are expected to come to the meetings having reviewed the material, fully vetted issues with their agencies/organizations, as appropriate, and be prepared to make a decision. Members are responsible for participating in active dialogue and constructive debate leading up to a decision. At the completion of the discussion, the Chair will assist the group in determining if a decision can be reached or if more time is needed to gather additional information or conduct additional briefing up the chain of command. If a decision is deferred, a deadline will be set by the Chair for revisiting the decision topic and captured in the meeting notes.

Typically, NIAC decisions must be implemented by each member agency/organization to be effective; therefore, time should be allowed during the decision making for due deliberation by the agencies/organizations through the appropriate chain of command. When possible, it is best to bring a topic forward one month as informational, and follow-up the next month with a decision. However, this is not always possible.

Decision making by NIAC, and subcommittees is by consensus of the primary membership. Decisions will be based on a consensus of those members present. A quorum of two-thirds of the primary members is required to carry a decision. At the beginning of the meeting, the Chair will announce if there are enough members present to form a quorum. All decisions will be recorded in the meeting notes. The Chair will facilitate the consensus process.

Consensus decision making does not require unanimous agreement by members but does require participation by all primary members. Consensus requires every member be willing to support the decision. During the decision-making process, each member takes responsibility to share their opinions for group consideration and deliberation, and to provide an alternative solution where there is disagreement. Rather than abstaining, a participant can express a neutral position yet must still be involved and able to support the decision.

A decision is considered final when agreed upon at the meeting. Once approved, the meeting minutes will document the decision. Not receiving a reply from a primary member to edit the notes by the meeting minute review deadline implies agreement and support of the minutes by members. Once a decision has been made, all members agree to actively support the decision.

In the rare case of NIAC not reaching consensus, the Chair will issue a briefing paper for the NWCG Executive Board. The NWCG Executive Board will then follow their process to determine a final decision.

#### 7.4 Executive Session

Primary members may request an executive session through the Chair. Additional time will be added to the agenda for an executive session if requested or a separate meeting may be scheduled as appropriate. The sessions are typically for controversial, sensitive, or time sensitive topics. An ad hoc executive session may be added the day of meeting with Primary Member consensus.

Executive session participation will be based on the topic, as determined by the Chair. Subject matter experts and invited guests may be included in executive sessions upon request by the Chair. However, all non-essential participants will be excused from participating.

**Notes will NOT be taken for executive sessions.**

## 8 Roles & Responsibilities

### 8.1 Chair

- Is designated by rotation schedule and serves at minimum one-year term that begins in January (see rotation schedule)
- Directs NIAC actions and activities in support of the NWCG mission, in coordination with the NIAC Primary Members.
- Negotiates consensus when possible.
- Resolves differences (when appropriate) and maintains open communication with NWCG Executive Board.
- Schedules meetings as necessary to carry out NIAC responsibilities.
- Disseminates information as needed to NIAC members.
- Signs NIAC correspondence.
- Approves meeting agendas and final meeting minutes.
- Represents NIAC at meetings and events as appropriate.
- Review this document, with the NIAC primary members, annually to annotate any changes.
- Brief NWCG Executive Board, when necessary.
- Coordinates with other NWCG committees on issues that overlap and require coordination.

### 8.2 Vice-Chair

- Is designated by rotation schedule and serves a one-year term that begins in January.
- In addition to the member duties listed below, performs the duties of the Chair when the Chair is not available or as requested by the Chair

### 8.3 Primary Member

- Responsible for representing their agency/organization during NIAC decision-making processes and for ensuring that proposed NWCG standards are reviewed by pertinent agency/organization personnel prior to release by NWCG.
- Establishes the vision and sets priorities for NIAC.
- Contribute to the development of meeting agendas and review of meeting minutes and correspondence.
- Attend all meetings or designate a representative to attend meetings on their behalf; representative will be fully briefed and have authority to make decisions.
- Communicate with committee representatives to understand context of decisions prior to the meetings.
- Actively participate in discussions.
- Attempt to reach consensus.
- Communicate the activities of NIAC to their agencies/organizations.
- Brief agency Fire Management Board and National Multi-Agency Coordination representatives on relevant issues.



- Cognizant of the functions and activities of NIAC.

#### 8.4 Associate (Advisor) Member

- Participates in discussions prior to consensus votes (is not a primary voting member).
- Contribute to the development of meeting agendas and review of meeting minutes and correspondence.
- Actively participate in discussions.

#### 8.5 NWCG Liaison

- Works in partnership with the Chair
- Keeps Chair apprised of any issues that arise at the Executive Board level.
- In coordination with the Chair, represents NWCG at meetings and events as appropriate.
- Provides updates to the NWCG Executive Board on large efforts of the Committee.
- Advises Committee members on process and procedures of NWCG.

#### 8.6 Executive Secretary (Admin)

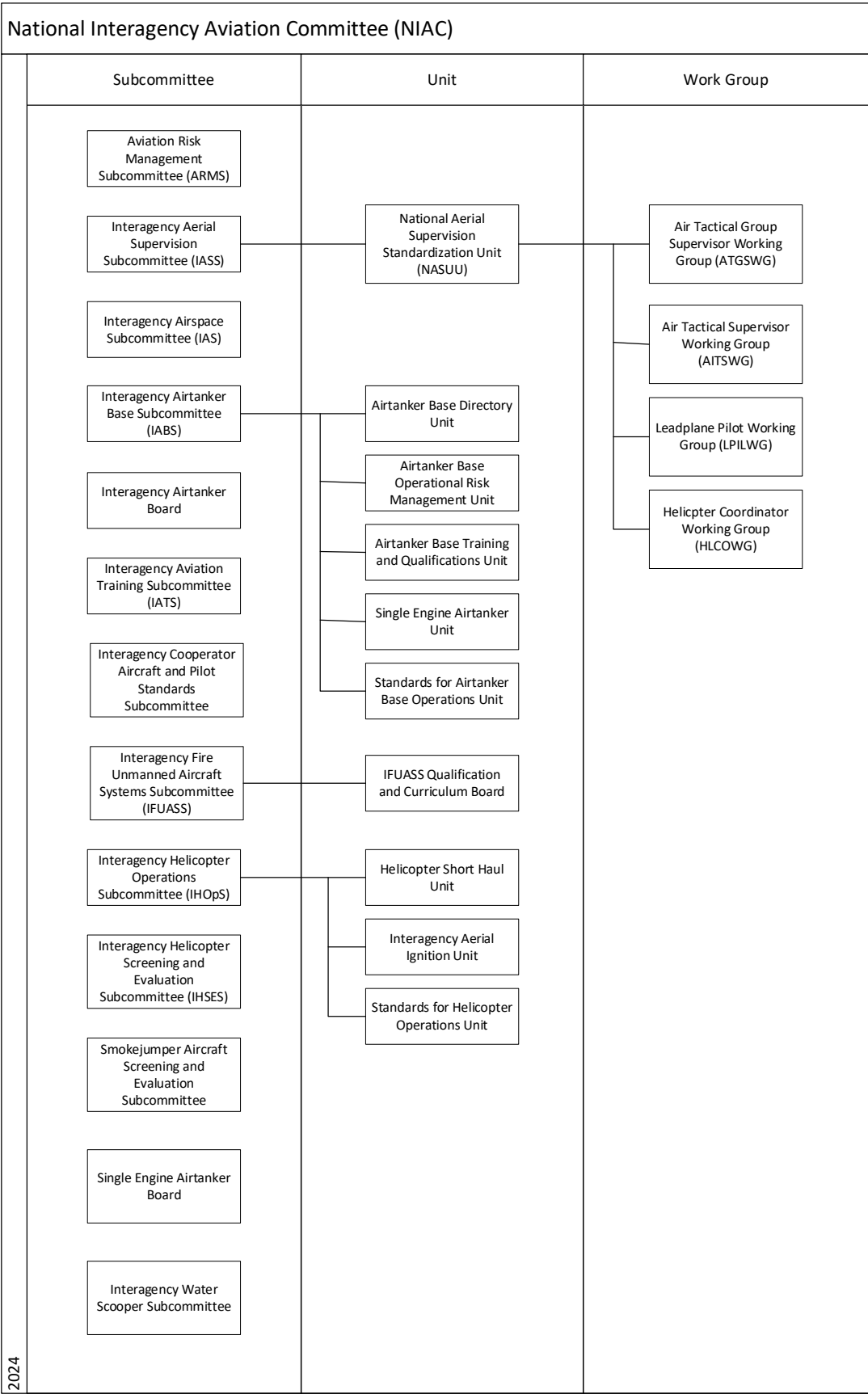
- Develops meeting agendas in coordination with Chair.
- Responsible for meeting notes/minutes.
- Responsible for recording attendance at meetings.
- Attends all meetings, to include off-site meetings, when able.
- Distributes and communicates agendas, minutes, memos, taskings, and other relevant information.

#### 8.7 Chair Rotation

Chair rotation will be 1-2 years as decided by membership and availability of current chair to remain longer than the minimum of a year. Vice chair will transition to the Chair.

Rotation is based on the following schedule:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FWS - 2023</li> <li>• BLM - 2024</li> <li>• NASF (eastern)</li> <li>• USFS</li> <li>• OAS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BIA</li> <li>• NASF (western)</li> <li>• NPS</li> <li>• IAFC</li> </ul>
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Bureau of Indian Affairs Member Date

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Bureau of Land Management Member Date

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Department of Interior, Office of Aviation Services Member Date

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Fish and Wildlife Service Member Date

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Forest Service Member Date

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International Association of Fire Chiefs Member Date

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National Association of State Foresters Member (Eastern Zone) Date

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National Association of State Foresters Member (Western Zone) Date

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National Park Service Member Date