

# **Charter & Standard Operating Procedures**

For the

**Airtanker Base Operations Unit (ABOU)**

January 2025

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## Overview

The Airtanker Base Operations Unit (ABOU) was formed as a Unit below the Interagency Airtanker and Scooper Operations Subcommittee (IASOS), which falls under the Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC). NIAC is a purview of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

The 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 ABOU has been established to provide national leadership in all areas of interagency airtanker base operations. The ABOU develops and disseminates operational standards that promote safe, secure, effective, and efficient airtanker base operations. These standards include facility and equipment requirements, operational and administrative procedures, and personnel qualifications and training.

Primary objectives of the ABOU include:

- Provide technical assistance regarding airtanker base operations.
- Promote cooperation and standardization in interagency airtanker base operations.
- Identify airtanker base issues, develop solutions, and recommend corrective actions to the IASOS.
- Develop and support standardized training for airtanker base operations and provide leadership in training course development, implementation, evaluation, and revision for all participating agencies.
- Serve as a central source of information, guidance, and support for national and geographic area airtanker base decisions and operations.
- Provide contracting technical assistance and support as requested.

The ABOU receives official taskings only from the IASOS.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to document routine or repetitive activities, membership roles and responsibilities and information for incoming members.

## Membership

### Chair and Vice-Chair

Responsible for accomplishing and managing the Airtanker Base Operations Unit mission. Distributes workload within the subcommittee.

The National Airtanker Program Manager or agency delegate of the Forest Service and the BLM will serve as the Chair and Vice-Chair.

### Primary Members

Participates in decision-making.

(3) Forest Service

(1) Bureau of Land Management

(1) State Agency (National Association of State Foresters)

Primary members are in addition to the Chair and Vice-Chair and will be approved by the IASOS and will serve a three-year term. The term may be extended by the Chair with approval by IASOS.

The ABOU has a comment form on the [NWCG website](#) to ensure that bases throughout the nation have a voice.

Associate Members may participate in discussions but not decision making. Provides subject matter expertise, often from a separate functional area or multidisciplinary perspective.

WO Airtanker Program Manager

SEAT Program Manager-BLM

NASF Representative

### **Subject Matter Experts**

Individuals from outside the committee, having needed expertise, will be asked to participate when appropriate.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Chair**

The Chair and Vice-Chair are authorized to:

- Make specific work assignments to team members or appoint task units from outside membership to work on specific projects.
- Represent the ABOU in presenting recommendations to the IASOS, and as appropriate, in contact with outside individuals and groups.
- Recommend to the IASOS the need for further resources and authorities as they become evident.
- Recommend other committee members to the IASOS.
- The Chair and Vice-Chair are responsible to:
  - Ensure meeting logistics are complete.
  - Formally accept the IASOS taskings and coordinate activities with the rest of the Unit.
  - Approve meeting notes and ensure they are posted to the web.
  - Convene meetings.
  - Approve meeting and conference call agendas.

### **Primary Members**

Primary Members are responsible to:

- Actively attend and participate in all unit meetings and Teams calls.
- Participate and represent their agency or program area.
- Serve as a conduit for transferring information to and from the unit.

- Be responsive to the field.
- Represent the agencies best practices.
- Serve as direct link to respective director/agency/program.

Mentor current and potential future committee members.

### **Facilitator**

The Facilitator is the Chair or Vice-Chair of the ABOU and is responsible to:

- Facilitate meetings and Teams calls.
- Coordinate with committee members.

### **Executive Secretary**

The Executive Secretary is responsible to:

- Take notes at meetings and Teams calls.
- Prepare meeting agenda.
- Ensure notes are prepared and sent to the Chair/Vice-Chair for finalization.
- Request for final notes to be posted to the ABOU webpage.
- Maintain the Website and Briefing Paper and Taskings Tracker.
- Provide Logistical Support.
- Complete tasks as assigned by the Chair/Vice-Chair.
- Maintain the rosters for the ABOU and Units.

### **IASOS Chair**

The IASOS Chair is responsible to:

- Provide the NIAC overview.
- Task ABOU with projects, tasks, and assignments.
- Serve as a conduit for the ABOU for transferring information to and from the NIAC.
- Coordinate with other groups to reduce duplication, overlap, and possible conflict and to ensure interaction when needed with other NIAC Committees.

## **Subcommittee Business**

### **Meetings**

The ABOU will, at a minimum, conduct meetings annually at a location agreed upon by the majority of the committee. Costs of the meetings will be absorbed by the agencies that sponsor the members. The meetings will be scheduled six to eight months in advance to minimize scheduling conflicts.

Once the meeting location is determined, the Chair/Vice-Chair may task another committee member with coordinating meeting logistics then ensure they are complete.

### **Conference Calls**

The ABOU will normally conduct bi-monthly calls on Microsoft Teams. The meetings are scheduled for the first and third Wednesday of the month at 12 PM (MT) except during those months when an in-person meeting is planned. The Chair/Vice-Chair has the discretion to set up additional meetings as needed.

### **Quorum**

With the membership consisting of seven, four committee members will constitute a quorum. The committee may meet for non-decision-making purposes with fewer members at the discretion of the Chair/Vice-Chair. The use of alternates to make a quorum is not allowed.

### **Decisions**

The committee will make decisions by consensus. In the event of a tie, the Chair will be the tiebreaker.

## **IASOS Taskings**

The IASOS is the only group that can task the ABOU to complete work. Taskings will come from the IASOS through the NIAC Chair. Once a tasking is received the ABOU will review and determine the appropriate approach to respond to the tasking. The ABOU can self-assign tasks if it falls within the purview of these SOPs. When the ABOU begins work on a task, they will send a memo to IASOS informing them of the nature, predicted workload and if there are additional approvals needed by the IASOS.

## **Working Group Roles and Responsibilities**

If a Working Group is formed, the ABOU will assign a Chair, select a liaison from the ABOU to work with and mentor the Working Group Chair, provide the Chair with ABOU expectations and due dates, and approve or deny any requested additional members for the Working Group.

Taskings and projects will be evaluated by the ABOU and may be delegated as appropriate. Any products produced by the Working Groups will be approved by the ABOU prior to submittal.

### **NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations Working Group (SABOWG)**

The ABOU is responsible for maintaining the SABO. The SABO will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. This responsibility has been delegated to the SABOWG.

The SABOWG has been established and assigned a Chair, ABOU Liaison and primary members.

- Current SABO is validated for currency and relevance.
- Field comments are reviewed and addressed by the SABOWG.
- Final SABOWG draft is sent to the ABOU.
- ABOU sends final draft to the IASOS for review, approvals, and signatures.
- The IASOS sends the final draft to NIAC for review and approval.
- ABOU works with IASOS who coordinates with the NWCG to finalize the document for publication.

### **NWCG Airtanker Base Applications Working Group (ABAWG)**

The ABOU is responsible for maintaining and supporting applications in EGP.

- The Directory is an application within EGP and updated regularly.
- Provide support to the FLIGHT program, an application within EGP.

The ABAWG has been established and assigned a Chair, ABOU Liaison and primary members.

### **Airtanker Base Training and Qualifications Working Group (ABTQWG)**

The ABOU is responsible for creating and maintaining the training and qualifications for airtanker base positions. The responsibility for this has been delegated to the ABTQWG.

The ABTQWG has been established and assigned a Chair, ABOU Liaison and primary members.

Roles and responsibilities include:

- ABOU issues tasks to the ABTQWG having to do with training and qualifications.
- ABOU will send training materials and curriculum out for field review.
- ABTQWG will evaluate field comments for inclusion.
- Final draft is sent to the field for final evaluation.
- ABOU works with the IASOS and NWCG to finalize the curriculum for publication.

The ABOU is responsible for coordinating the National Airtanker Base Manager Workshop every other year and delegates the logistical planning and coordination to the ABTQWG.

### **Single Engine Airtanker Working Group (SEATWG)**

The SEAT base specific training and operations have been added to the ABOU purview. The NWCG Standards for Airtanker Operations and NWCG Standard for SEAT Operations have been combined into one document and labeled the SABO. All airtanker operations regardless of size has been incorporated into the SABO. To ensure the SEAT specific requirements are captured, the SEATWG will focus solely on SEAT training, standards, and operations.

The SEATWG has been established and assigned a Chair, ABOU Liaison and primary members.

Roles and responsibilities include:

- Ensure the SEAT community is represented with regards to training, standards, and operations in collaboration with the other ABOU units.

### **Airtanker Base Operational Risk Management Working Group (ABORMWG)**

The ABOU has established the ABORMWG to develop and maintain risk assessments and other risk assessment tools for the airtanker base community. The ABORMWG has been established and assigned a Chair, ABOU Liaison and primary members to help assess operational risk.

Roles and responsibilities include:

- Edit and maintain existing airtanker and airtanker base risk assessments.
- Develop and maintain new risk assessments when there is an identified need from ABOU.
- Develop and maintain other risk assessment tools such as a Green Amber Red standard form for use by all airtanker bases.

## **Website Management**

The Chair/Vice-Chair, or if appointed, the Executive Secretary, will be assigned to review and provide updates to the [ABOU webpage](#) to ensure current and valid information is posted.

**Forms Management**

Forms will be reviewed by ABOU and updated as needed.

**Charter & SOP Review and Amendments**

This Charter & Standard Operating Procedure should be reviewed annually to ensure currency.

**Approval**

This Charter & SOP is effective as of the date of signature by the ABOU Chair and Vice-Chair.

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**Chair, Justin Bohannon, National Asst. Airtanker Program Manager  
& USFS MAFFS Program Manager**

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**Date**

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**Vice-Chair, Angie Forbes BLM, National SEAT Coordinator**

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**Date**