



NATIONAL WILDFIRE COORDINATING GROUP

NWCG Briefing Paper

02/08/2021

FROM: Interagency Fire Unmanned Aircraft Systems Subcommittee (UASSC)

SUBJECT: **Approval to Test and Evaluate Unmanned Aircraft Systems with Payloads**

Background

NIAC-20-01 provides the Interagency Fire UAS Subcommittee (IFUASS) with the approval to use the Ignis UAS aerial ignition payload however specifies only utilizing the DJI M-600, which at the time was the only viable UAS for the operation. IFUASS requests NIAC approval to test and evaluate the Ignis aerial ignition payload (or other future approved aerial ignition payloads) with new (approved or in testing phase) UAS to assure an appropriate level of safety and performance of the UAS with the aerial ignition payload. The testing and evaluation will be conducted by select SMEs, including agency UAS specialists and industry professionals. Other domestically produced UAS have been identified as potential replacements for the current fleet and will soon need to undergo a similar evaluation.

Approval

Credentialed interagency personnel and industry professionals are authorized to utilize new (approved or in testing phase) Unmanned Aircraft Systems for training, fuels management and wildfire management. The utility of systems will continue to be evaluated during operations. As needed, the IFUASS will recommend a course of instruction, position descriptions(s), risk assessment, and operational procedures for NIAC approval. The IFUASS will continue recommending future aerial ignition payloads to NIAC as required in chapter 5 of PMS 501 NWCG Standards for Aerial Ignition.

Operational Constraints

UAS personnel operating these systems will be trained, evaluated and credentialed (carded) by qualified OAS or Forest Service personnel.

Wildland fire operations will be conducted in accordance with the Interagency UAS Operations Guide (PMS 515).

Fuels management and training operations will be conducted under approved prescribed fire burn plans and Project or Mission Aviation Safety Plans (PASP/MASP).

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