



National Wildfire Coordinating Group National Interagency Aviation Committee

NIAC-21-01

Date: 26 February 2021
To: DOI NIAC National Aviation Managers
USFS Branch Chief, Aviation Operations
From: John Buehler, Chair, National Interagency Aviation Committee
Subject: Approval to Test and Evaluate Unmanned Aircraft Systems with Payloads

Purpose: The purpose of this memo is to provide the Interagency Fire UAS Subcommittee (IFUASS) with the approval to use the Ignis UAS aerial ignition payload or other future approved UAS payloads with currently approved, new, or testing-phase UAS. This memo supersedes NIAC memo 21-01 which has been rescinded and can be found on the NWCG website at <https://www.nwcg.gov/committees/national-interagency-aviation-committee/correspondence>.

Background: A UAS aerial ignition payload was developed in the private sector by Drone Amplified and tested by OAS (on wildland fires) during the 2018 fire season with favorable results. Multiple new UAS platforms are available for testing with the Ignis system and it's anticipated that additional UAS aerial ignition payloads will be approved in the future.

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 NWCG Standards for Fire Unmanned Aircraft Systems Operations (PMS 515) and approved firing plans.

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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