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NWCG Incident Position Standards for Aircraft Timekeeper

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The *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Aircraft Timekeeper* establishes national interagency standards for operating as an Aircraft Timekeeper (ATIM) on wildland fires. These standards are meant to ensure safe, efficient, and effective operations in support of interagency goals and objectives and should serve as a guide to promote effective and consistent on-incident training. By definition, NWCG standards encompass guidelines, procedures, processes, best practices, specifications, techniques, and methods.

The Aircraft Timekeeper Position Page, <https://www.nwcg.gov/positions/aircraft-timekeeper>, in the NWCG position catalog, includes the Incident Position Description (IPD) and Position Qualification Requirements, as well as links to standards and references needed to perform the duties of an Aircraft Timekeeper.

Tasks that are identified by a (*) are those tasks included for evaluation in the Position Task Book (PTB). Tasks not identified for evaluation in the PTB still represent standards for successful performance in the position and should be included in a comprehensive training assignment.

Where references are identified by a (**), refer to your home unit, agency, or organization for specific guidance and policy documentation. For example:

***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)*

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) provides national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, Tribal, territorial, and local partners. NWCG operations standards are interagency by design; they are developed with the intent of universal adoption by the member agencies. However, the decision to adopt and utilize them is made independently by the individual member agencies and communicated through their respective directives systems.

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General References

- *NWCG Aircraft Dispatch Form*, PMS 250, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms250>
- *NWCG Incident Response Pocket Guide (IRPG)*, PMS 461, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms461>
- *NWCG Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist*, PMS 503, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms503>
- *NWCG Airtanker Base Directory*, PMS 507, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms507>
- *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms508>
- *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations – Appendices*, PMS 508a, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms508>
 - Appendix A – Airtanker Base Operations Plan (ABOP) (Temporary Base)
 - Appendix E – Hot Loading Plan Template
 - Appendix F – Simultaneous Fueling and Loading Plan Template
- *NWCG Standards for Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials*, PMS 513, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms513>
- *NWCG Standards for Aviation Risk Management*, PMS 530, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms530>
 - General Assessment of Risk (GAR)
- *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms600>
- *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms902>
- *Incident Behavior Form*, PMS 935-1, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms935-1>
- Incident Command System (ICS) Forms, <https://www.nwcg.gov/ics-forms>
 - General Message (ICS 213)
 - Activity Log (ICS 214)
 - Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF)
- Standard (SF) and Optional (OF) Forms, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/pms902>
 - Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261
 - Incident Time Report, OF 288
- Job Aids, <https://www.nwcg.gov/training/job-aids>
 - J-102, *Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*
 - J-301, *Thinking Skills for Risk Management*
- Automated Flight Following (AFF), <https://www.aff.gov/>
- Incident Management Situation Report (IMSR), <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/incident-information/imsr>
- National Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC) Website Portal, <https://gacc.nifc.gov/>
- National Weather Service (NWS) Fire Weather Forecast, <https://www.weather.gov/fire/>
- NWCG 6 Minutes for Safety, <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/6-minutes-for-safety-subcommittee>
- SAFECOM, <https://www.safecom.gov/>
- SAFENET, <https://safenet.nifc.gov/>
- U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Travel Page, <https://www.gsa.gov/travel>
- Wildland Fire Application Information Portal, <https://www.wildfire.gov/>

- Airtanker Base Directory
- FireCode
- FLIGHT
- Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS)
- Interagency Resource Ordering Capability (IROC)

Agency-Specific References

- ***Airtanker Program QR Code Menu*, <https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/fixed-wing-subcommittee>
- ***Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Risk Management Worksheet* (Form 1112-5), <https://www.nifc.gov/sites/default/files/blm/aviation/BLMseat/RiskMgtWksheetRAMP1.pdf>
- ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book), <https://www.nifc.gov/standards/guides/red-book>
- ***National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*, <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/logistics/reference-documents>
- ***U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Standards for Airtanker Operations*, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2023-06/2023-FS-Standards-Airtanker-Ops.pdf>

***Leadership Level 1, Follower (Provide Action)**

Followers have several responsibilities: to become competent in basic job skills, take initiative, learn from others, ask questions, and develop communication skills

<https://www.nwcg.gov/committee/leadership-committee/leadership-levels>.

Description

- Leadership development starts the first day of the job.
- Followers function as a team member.
- Part of being a leader is exercising good followership and understanding human dynamics.
- Followership begins the journey of becoming a student of fire.

Behaviors

- Performs entry-level incident management tasks, contributing to team mission accomplishment and performance.
- Takes responsibility for personal actions and decisions, demonstrating the core value of integrity.
- Takes initiative to ensure the mission is accomplished and team performance is improved.
- Practices the five communication responsibilities to develop skill and ensure individual contribution to risk management.
- Interacts with team members, in a positive and constructive manner, to build team cohesion.
- Acts with humility and learns from others to improve technical and leadership skills.
- Asks questions to increase individual knowledge and improve the safety of self and team members.

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the wildland fire leadership values, principles, and traits to inform expectations of their behaviors as a team member.
- Knowledge of leadership concepts including courage, compassion, authenticity, humility, and empathy to inform expectations of their behavior as a team member.
- Knowledge of the risk management process to understand their role in accident prevention and decision making.
- Knowledge of the decision-making process to inform their role in an effective decision process.
- Knowledge of the impacts of cumulative and traumatic stress to assist in ensuring resilience and mental and emotional health.
- Knowledge of the elements of human factors and barriers to situational awareness to understand how human elements can contribute to team performance and fireline safety.
- Knowledge of the value differences of thought and perspective bring to team performance to ensure respectful interactions with team members and to contribute to a positive team culture/command climate.



Prepare and Mobilize

Ensure individual readiness.

When to start task: Prior to the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG; NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508; *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and Their Families*, PMS 600; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; J-102, *Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).

How to accomplish task:

- Confirm your availability with your supervisor.
- Verify your data/status is current in resource ordering applications (e.g., Interagency Resource Ordering Capability [IROC]). Ensure your Incident Qualifications Card (Red Card) is current and accessible.
- Prepare for an assignment of 14 to 21 days.
- Prepare to be absent from home and family. Refer to *A Preparedness Guide for Wildland Firefighters and their Families*, PMS 600 and J-102, *Packing List for Wildland Fire Support Staff*.

Gather critical information pertinent to the assignment.

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG; NWCG Airtanker Base Directory*, PMS 507; *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; local ABOP; base-specific briefing materials (if available); resource order; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book).

How to accomplish task:

- Obtain and review the resource order.
 - Ensure the resource order contains the following information as a baseline and request updates from the base manager and/or local aviation manager, if needed:
 - Incident name
 - Incident order number
 - Financial codes
 - Request number
 - Incident phone number
 - Reporting date/time and location
 - Transportation arrangements
 - Contact procedures during travel
 - Special needs (e.g., laptop or tablet, phone, mode of transportation, self-sufficiency)
 - Authorization for use of equipment (e.g., radio, headset, laptop, cell phone, rental vehicle)
- Gain situational awareness about the assignment.
 - Contact the on-site base manager and obtain standard operating procedures (SOPs).
 - Obtain the work location and base access.



- Verify the local dress code policy.
 - Obtain the local ABOP.
- Obtain and provide the home dispatch center with your travel itinerary information, which should include:
 - Mode of travel.
 - Estimated time of departure (ETD) and location of departure.
 - Estimated time of arrival (ETA) and location of destination.
 - Location for remain overnight (RON) if you are unable to make the end destination within that operational shift.
 - Lodging information.

Travel to and check in at assignment.

When to start task: Upon receipt of resource order.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508; *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; *Incident Behavior*, PMS 935-1; agency-specific travel forms; GSA per diem rates; incident information applications; Red Card; resource order; travel maps; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* (Red Book); ***National Interagency Standards for Resource Mobilization*.

How to accomplish task:

- Confirm travel arrangements and expected time of arrival with the ordering dispatch center.
- Follow agency-specific air and ground travel guidelines.
 - Air travel considerations:
 - Follow agency policy for commercial air travel.
 - Comply with weight limitations. Additional fees may apply to baggage that exceeds airline limitations.
 - Ground travel considerations:
 - Follow agency policy to book a rental car, etc.
 - Follow time limitations/driver duty day limitations.
 - Ensure your rental, National Emergency Rental Vehicle (NERV), agency-owned vehicle (AOV), or privately owned vehicle (POV) is on the resource order, if applicable.
 - Refer to GSA for per diem and lodging rates. Follow agency policy if the rate exceeds per diem allowances.
- Model professional behavior and attitude.
 - Wear attire that reflects positively on the agency you represent.
 - Consider normal daily working uniform.
- Notify the resource order point of contact upon arrival. Be prepared with:
 - Resource order.
 - Red Card (digital or hard copy).
 - Agency-specific agreement sheet.
- Follow required agency-specific check-in procedures.



***Review local Airtanker Base Operations Plan (ABOP) and obtain briefing from base manager.**

When to start task: Upon arrival at the incident.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508; local ABOP; local Emergency Response Plan; Hot Loading Plan; Simultaneous Fueling and Loading Plan; local agency SOPs; local Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

How to accomplish task:

- Obtain an initial briefing from the base manager (e.g., Airtanker Base Manager [ATBM], Single Engine Airtanker Manager [SEMG], Fixed Wing Base Manager [FWBM]) to include:
 - Local administrative guidelines.
 - Resources assigned and ordered to support ongoing operations.
 - Performance expectations.
 - Unit-specific information.
 - Base familiarization tour.
- Review the local base supplements and relevant plans.
 - Local ABOP
 - Hot Loading Plan
 - Simultaneous Fueling and Loading Plan
 - Local Emergency Response Plan
 - Smokejumper Operations Plan
 - SWPPP
 - Other plans pertinent to the base



Build the Team

***Establish and maintain positive interpersonal and interagency working relationships.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; local ABOP.

How to accomplish task:

- Be punctual.
- Follow the dress code/uniform policy for base personnel.
- Establish relationships with the following:
 - Agency and contract personnel
 - Fixed-base operator (FBO)
 - Airport management
- Demonstrate professionalism on and off duty.
 - Integrate within a diverse work environment.
 - Maintain readiness.
 - Be respectful and courteous.
 - Be respectful of federal equipment and others' personal property.



Perform Aircraft Timekeeper-Specific Duties

***Communicate updates regarding changing conditions to relevant personnel and implement further instructions provided by the base manager.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; local ABOP.

How to accomplish task:

- Receive instruction from the base manager to:
 - Adjust actions based on changing information and evolving situational awareness.
 - Implement contingency plans.
- Communicate changing conditions to assigned resources.
- Demonstrate sound decision making in complex or stressful situations.

***Ensure daily operational objectives and performance standards are met.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508; local ABOP; ***Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book)*.

How to accomplish task:

- Attend daily briefings.
- Obtain objectives, priorities, work assignments, and performance expectations from the supervisor or base manager.
- Perform tasks with accuracy and attention to detail.
- Adhere to agency-specific policies and procedures.
- Follow the chain of command.

***Maintain and manage real-time communications using multiple devices and platforms.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: Aircraft Identification section of *NWCG Airtanker Base Directory*, PMS 507; Activity Log (ICS 214); local ABOP; AFF; base-specific frequency plan; local contact list.

How to accomplish task:

- Check assigned equipment prior to daily operations. Perform radio checks with dispatch, ramp personnel, and air crews.
- Maintain communication with the following:
 - Base manager
 - Airtankers
 - Scoopers
 - Helicopters
 - Leadplanes
 - Air Attack
 - Smokejumper personnel



- Retardant vendor
 - Crew transport
 - Dispatch
- Monitor all communication channels (e.g., local frequencies, base victor frequency, telephone, intercom).
 - Answer the telephone and radio.
 - Document communications in Activity Log (ICS 214).
- Monitor and use multiple internal communication platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams, base email, mobile phone applications).

***Provide daily administrative support for base operations.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: General Message (ICS 213); AFF; FLIGHT application accessed via the Wildland Fire Application Information Portal; National GACC Website Portal; IMSR; NWS Fire Weather Forecast; NWCG 6 Minutes for Safety; aviation bulletins; local weather; aircraft availability.

How to accomplish task:

- Update Activity Log (ICS 214) with:
 - Staffing.
 - Pertinent communications (e.g., radio, telephone, in-person).
 - Events (e.g., maintenance, aircraft/retardant unavailability).
- Check the daily aircraft availability and retardant status.
 - Refer to the geographical area tactical aviation page accessed via the National GACC Website Portal for aircraft availability.
 - Confirm retardant status with the retardant base manager.
 - Refer to agency-specific documents for task orders, contract numbers, Contracting Officer's Representative (COR), and vendor information (e.g., USFS Airtanker Schedule of Items [SOI]).
- Operate computer applications determined by the agency and base management.
 - Utilize common aircraft base electronic applications.
 - Utilize programs (e.g., AFF, FLIGHT application accessed via the Wildland Fire Application Information Portal, agency-specific programs).
- Assist the base manager with operational briefing materials (e.g., NWCG 6 Minutes for Safety, aviation bulletins, weather, aircraft availability) as requested.
- Update briefing and aircraft status boards.
- Complete other forms or documentation as directed (e.g., General Message [ICS 213]).

***Record, compile, and distribute relevant contract and cost data.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Aircraft Dispatch Form*, PMS 250; General Message (ICS 213), AFF; Wildland Fire Application Information Portal.

How to accomplish task:

- Maintain an awareness of contract standards. Document and communicate discrepancies through the proper chain of command channels.
- Acquire incident information for appropriate cost coding from *NWCG Aircraft Dispatch Form*, PMS 250, FireCode, or dispatch.



- Record contract activity using agency-specific tracking software.
 - Aircraft activity using agency-specific tracking software (e.g., roll and stop time, availability, unavailability).
 - Retardant activity (e.g., number of gallons per aircraft load, duty day hours, extended standby). Perform a retardant test print before operations.
 - Additional costs related to airtanker/fixed-wing base operations (e.g., landing fees, tie-down fees).
- Compile daily aircraft/retardant contract documentation and cost accrual and disperse it to relevant personnel (e.g., Contracting Officer [CO] or COR, dispatch centers, incident command teams, aviation managers, flight crews).



Communicate and Coordinate

***Demonstrate strong verbal communication skills.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*.

How to accomplish task:

- Utilize clear dialogue and open communication with personnel/resources.
- Use active listening skills.
- Confirm understanding of information provided and received.
- Effectively manage the exchange of information and communication flow.
- Ensure radio transmissions are disciplined and concise.

***Gather and disseminate operational information with resources.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Aircraft Dispatch Form*, PMS 250; Tactical Aircraft Resource Order (TARO); local ABOP; contracts; FireCode; local contact list; local dispatch.

How to accomplish task:

- Receive orders for aircraft dispatches.
 - Review the accuracy of information for the aircraft dispatch (e.g., *NWCG Aircraft Dispatch Form*, PMS 250, TARO, knee board) with the base manager.
 - Relay orders for aircraft dispatches via telephone and/or radio.
- Obtain briefings from the base manager or aviation manager (e.g., daily briefings, more often than daily as necessary).
 - These briefings should include proper procedures for accurately recording incident aircraft use and cost.
- Obtain and document operational information from aircraft assigned to the base and distribute it to base personnel. Operational information should include:
 - Flight times (e.g., roll and stop times).
 - Retardant loads.
 - Overfill/offload.
 - Fuel.
 - Maintenance.
 - Aircraft status.
 - Load and return
 - Hold
- Communicate with air crews using the base radio for on and off times, frequency changes, or other pertinent information.
- Maintain ongoing communication and coordination with the base manager throughout the duration of the operational period.
 - Relay immediate issues to the air base manager (e.g., overfills, safety issues, time discrepancies, vendor/contractor concerns).



***Participate in After Action Reviews (AARs).**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG*; Activity Log (ICS 214); local ABOP.

How to accomplish task:

- Participate in AARs or debriefs at the end of an operational period with all relevant personnel.
 - Review ramp, retardant, and aviation operations for efficiency, effectiveness, and safety.
 - Discuss areas of sustainment and improvement opportunities with appropriate personnel.
 - Follow up on any items that need attention based on the AAR.

Manage Risk

***Apply the Risk Management Process.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *IRPG; NWCG Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist, PMS 503; NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations, PMS 508; NWCG Standards for Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials, PMS 513; NWCG Standards for Aviation Risk Management, PMS 530; GAR; J-301, Thinking Skills for Risk Management; SAFECOM; SAFENET; local Safety Management System (SMS); local ABOP; local hazard maps; local weather alerts; local Emergency Response Plan; local Aviation Mishap Response Plan; local Crash Rescue Plan; local contingency plans; **BLM Risk Management Worksheet (Form 1112-5); **Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (Red Book).*

How to accomplish task:

- Review local Emergency Response Plans.
 - Understand the ATIM's role as outlined in the local Emergency Response Plans and implement when directed.
 - Notify the base manager of any issues affecting airport or base operations.
- Notify the base manager immediately of any overdue or missing aircraft.
- Follow safety guidelines.
 - Become familiar with local safety supplements, procedures, and protocols, known hazards, etc.
 - Identify and correct unsafe actions or conditions.
 - Mitigate or correct hazards and safety concerns at the lowest level.

Document

***Complete all administrative tasks and documentation in an accurate and timely manner.**

When to start task: Throughout the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Standards for Airtanker Base Operations*, PMS 508; General Message (ICS 213); Activity Log (ICS 214); Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF); Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261; SAFECOM; FLIGHT application accessed via the Wildland Fire Application Information Portal; local ABOP; Single Engine Airtanker (SEAT) Daily Operations Worksheet; Flight Time/Duty Day Cumulative Log; SEAT Support/Service Vehicle Driver Duty Day Cumulative Log; SEAT Cost Summary; Aircraft Contract Daily Diary; agency-specific forms; other documents as assigned; flight crew information files; ****Airtanker Program QR Code Menu**.

How to accomplish task:

- Update Activity Log (ICS 214) daily.
- Document all timekeeping in accordance with each aircraft contract specification. Record on/off times for tactical aircraft.
- Document daily retardant contract activity.
- Check for retardant density and report any discrepancies to the base manager. Ensure each load is within contract specifications.
- Respond to requests for incident- or aircraft-specific information from the COR, incident personnel, aviation officers, etc.
- Complete required agency reports and Aircraft Contract Daily Diary information after each operational period. Include the following information:
 - Landing/airport use fees
 - Flight times (e.g., roll times)
 - Wildland fire chemical use (e.g., retardant gallons used, number of retardant loads, refract/density calculations)
 - Overfill/offload
 - Aircraft availability and unavailability
 - Maintenance
- Ensure all submitted records are accurate, complete, and timely as required.
- Access the ****Airtanker Program QR Code Menu** and complete forms, as needed.

Demobilize

***Prepare for and implement demobilization.**

When to start task: Upon notification of demobilization from the assignment.

Resources to complete task: *NWCG Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management*, PMS 902; Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF); Crew Time Report (CTR), SF 261; Incident Time Report, OF 288; agency-specific travel system and policy.

How to accomplish task:

- Notify relevant contacts of your departure.
- Request an Incident Personnel Performance Rating (ICS 225 or ICS 225 WF) from the base manager or qualified ATIM.
- Transition with replacement personnel (e.g., ATIM, base manager) to ensure the continuity of operations.
- Complete demobilization procedures with the appropriate agency or incident personnel prior to departure and complete closeout/debriefing.
- Arrange and document travel to your home unit or reassignment.
- Complete agency finance and time records for approval (e.g., Crew Time Report [CTR], SF 261; Incident Time Report, OF 288).
- Check in with your home dispatch center and supervisor upon arrival.
- Confirm you are released from the assignment by the ordering unit dispatch.

An entity of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG), the Aviation Management Committee (AMC) oversees the development and maintenance of the *NWCG Incident Position Standards for Aircraft Timekeeper*.

Previous editions: first.

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