

# NWCG Standards for Airtanker Operations, PMS 514

DRAFT 2024

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# Appendix C – Flight Procedures and Briefing Requirements

## Required Training Overview:

Prior to operating as a flight on firefighting missions, pilots will receive ground and flight training, provided by the vendor with oversight by the agency, covering every topic in this attachment. Some topics may be applicable only to retardant dropping aircraft and other only to water scooping aircraft as annotated by (Retardant) or (Scooper).

## Required Briefing Items:

Prior to operating as a flight pilots will brief every subject in this attachment.

## Required Briefing Topics:

### Flight Position Roles and Responsibilities

- Flight lead Roles & Responsibilities
- Wingman Roles & Responsibilities

### Communication Procedures

- Check-in Procedures
- Tactical Interflight Frequency
- Frequency Change Procedures
- “Push” vs “Go”
- Transponder and TCAS Usage
- Lost Comm Procedures

### Ground Operations

- Flight Coordination Prior to Mission
- Engine Start
- Radio Check-in
- Taxi

### Takeoff Procedures

- Runway Lineup
- Rolling vs Static
- Takeoff Spacing
- Recommend change to “takeoff interval (spacing)”
- Emergency on Runway

- Aborted Takeoff
- Canceled Mission RTB

### Rejoin/Join Up

- Planned Rejoin Airspeed/Bank Angle
- Formation Position to Rejoin to
- Straight Ahead Rejoin
  - Straight Ahead Overshoot
- Turning Rejoin
  - Turning Overshoot

### En Route

- Formation Position
- Formation Spacing
- Station Keeping
- Frequency monitoring
- Responsibility for Tasks
  - Flight Following
  - Divert Communication
  - Fuel Request/ Load Return/ Hold
- FAA Flight Following
  - Standard vs Non-Standard Formation

### Fire Traffic Areas (FTA) Procedures

- FTA Check-in, Clearance, & Readback (PMS 505 Standard)
- Formation Position & Spacing in the Orbit
- Flight Split for separate drops
- Maneuvering and dropping as a flight
  - Spacing to ensure retardant on ground and time for a correction (Retardant)
  - Go Around Procedures
    - Flight Go Around
    - Single Go Around
      - ❖ Considerations for flight of more than 2
- Overrun Procedures
- Last Tanker off the drop Call
- FTA exit
- Flight Rejoin on RTB

### Return to Airport

- Standard Radio Calls
- Non-Standard Calls at non-towered airport if confusion about the flight
- Formation position for Airport Arrival
- Maneuver to take spacing
- Landing Spacing
- Go Around
- Flight or Single
- Taxi Back

### Abnormal/Emergency Procedures

- “Blind” Procedures
- **Lost Sight/Lost Wingman (for reduced visibility operations)**
- No Radio (NORDO)/Lost Comm
- Support of Emergency Aircraft
  - Lead Change as Required
  - Checklist Assistance
  - Comm and Nav Assistance
  - Damage Check
  - Chase Position
  - Wingman Drop Off

### Scooper Specific Topics

- **Scooper Common (Safety of Flight) Frequency**
- Circuit Leadership and Circuit Management
- Operating with multiple flights (cross circuit vs. close staggered)
- Non-Scooper Aircraft Integration (Helicopter, LAT)
- Scoop Formation Position
- Scoop Lanes
- Drop Formation Position and Spacing
- Rejoin at the Scoop
- Flight Go Around
- Single Go Around

## Briefing and Standardization

Pilots that anticipate operating together in formation should conduct a general briefing covering all topics in this attachment at the first opportunity such as at arrival at a new base or over the phone with pilots at nearby bases. This brief must be especially detailed for pilots who have not trained together or previously flown together in formation. During this briefing the pilots should agree to a “standard” plan for administrative tasks such as radio frequencies, check-in procedures, and formation positions.

Once the general administrative brief is accomplished pilots may agree to join up in formation with as simple of brief as agreeing to which pilot will be in each formation position #1, #2 etc.

“Tanker 2 if you want to join up as flight, 1 will have the lead. Everything is standard IAW our brief from yesterday morning.”

This may even be accomplished airborne.

“Tanker 1, Tanker 2 is at your six o’clock for 3 miles, request rejoin.”

“Tanker 2 cleared rejoin standard in accordance with (IAW) the brief from yesterday morning.”

In accordance with (IAW) the *NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision*, PMS 505, new flights may not be created inside the FTA. Pilots may join up airborne prior to entry into the FTA.