**AIR OPERATIONS**

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

**A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this appendix is to establish consistent policies, organizational structures, and procedures for the use of aviation support during emergencies in West Virginia (WV).

**B. SCOPE**

This appendix establishes parameters for the effective integration of aviation assets into disaster response and recovery activities.

**II. SITUATION AND ASSUMPTIONS**

**A. ASSUMPTIONS**

1. Disasters will result in a need for aircraft to support operations in the

impacted area.

2. State government is responsible for planning, organizing, directing,

managing, and controlling Air Operations prior to activation of the National Response Framework (NRF). After activation of the NRF, the State Air Operations Coordinator (AOC) must contact the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) and then coordinate missions closely at the Disaster Field Office (DFO).

3. Aviation assets used in disaster aviation support operations in WV will remain under the command of their parent organization/owner/operator.

4. The AOC will coordinate disaster air operations.

5. Airspace control and management rests with the Federal Aviation

Administration (FAA).

6. The AOC can activate all or part of the Air Operations plan.

7. Aircraft, aircrews, support, and supplies may be pre-positioned at staging areas in order to be in a position to respond after a disaster strikes.

8. Civil Air Patrol (CAP) missions are coordinated within the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC)and must be approved by either the Commander, WV Wing CAP (if a state mission) or by the US Air Force (if a Federal mission).

**III. ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES**

**A. LEAD STATE AGENCY**

**WV DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURIITY**

**WV EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION (WVEMD)**

a. Support local government efforts through resource and technical

assistance during emergencies and coordinate State and Federal

response and recovery activities

**B. SUPPORTING STATE AGENCIES**

**CIVIL AIR PATROL (CAP)**

a. Assist in air search, land rescue, aerial surveillance of surface

routes and traffic.

b. Provide aerial courier/messenger service, light transport flights for personnel and supplies.

c. Provide aerial reconnaissance and photographic flights for damage assessment as well as fixed, mobile, and airborne communications.

d. Provide aircraft to support disaster air operations as available.

e. Provide a CAP liaison officer to support air operations in the SEOC.

f. Provide ground team support and ground transport.

g. Support and participate in Point of Distribution operations (POD).

**West Virginia State Police (WVSP)**

a. Assist in air search and rescue.

b. Assist in aerial surveillance of surface routes and traffic.

c. Provide rotary wing aircraft.

d. Provide light transport flights for personnel and supplies.

e. Provide aerial reconnaissance and command and control.

f. Provide rotary wing aircraft to support disaster air operations as

available.

g. Respond to requests for aviation support from the State EOC.

**NATIONAL GUARD (WVNG)**

**AIR OPERATIONS COORDINATOR (AOC)**

a. Act as liaison among aviation resource agencies.

b. Maintain and update aviation resource list and track status of resources during emergencies.

c. Identify necessary staffing and activate selected components.

d. Identify the need for temporary flight restrictions and coordinate the requests with the FAA.

e. If requested by the FAA, establish restricted airspace management.

f. As necessary, identify and establish a forward staging area and the associated logistical support necessary for operations.

g. Brief the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) on the status of air operations, including current missions, available aircraft by type, locations of staging areas, and proposed priorities for aviation support.

h. Advise SEOC personnel on aircraft capabilities,

recommendations for appropriate mission by type of aircraft, and restrictions or costs associated with use of private sector aircraft.

i. Respond to requests for aviation support from the SEOC.

j. Maintain Daily Aviation Activity Logs including all missions flown.

k. Coordinate maintenance and logistical support for aircraft.

l. Other operational, managerial, and administrative support as needed.

J. When a state active-duty mission begins, WVNG AVN will assign an officer for the duty and responsibilities. The SAAO (State Army Aviation Officer) will assign himself or another AVN Officer to the JOC, State EOD or other area of responsibility depending on the mission and size of operation.

**AIR OPERATIONS OFFICER (AOO)**

a. Coordinate flight tasking, sequencing and frequency assignments for military air operations.

b. Report all flight related data and logistics support requests through the Air Logistics Section (ALS).

c. Provide aircraft to support disaster air operations as available.

d. Provide personnel and equipment to support communications as available.

**AIR LOGISTICS SECTION (ALS)**

a. The ALS will be comprised of State Aviation Chief Pilots (SACP) from each of the aviation support agencies.

b. Responsible for contacting all SACPs in times of need to obtain current aircraft availability, locations and capabilities.

c. During SEOC activation, the ALS is responsible for assisting the AOC in the State EOC by tracking flight hours, fuel costs, support personnel scheduling, passenger manifests, cargo shipments, billing, contracting and other tasks as assigned by the AOC.

e. Provide aircraft to support disaster air operations as available.

f. Provide personnel and equipment to support communications as available.

**AIR MEDICAL OPERATIONS**

a. Assist WVOEMS with critical care patient transportation.

b. Provide rotary wing aircraft in support of patient movement.

c. Respond to requests for aviation support from the SEOC.

d. Coordinate agency flight tasking, sequencing and frequency assignments with Air Functional Lead.

e. Provide rotary wing aircraft to support disaster air operations as available.

**IV. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

**A. GENERAL**

Most aviation support will be limited in scope to the site of the disaster area during the assessment. For early reconnaissance flights, the AOC may be called during the initial stages of the event assessment.

During Level I, the AOC may select a location and alert additional staff to

support forward air operations. Aviation Liaisons may also be positioned in

the SEOC. The Aviation Logistics Section will address the coordination and allocation of resources, staging, logistics, intelligence, reporting, and communications for air support.

During Level II, the AOC would be requested to join state personnel in the

SEOC. The AOC is the central point of contact for disaster aviation support activities. Depending on the severity of the situation, or the anticipated levels of air operations, additional staffing may be activated at the SEOC, an airport, or other appropriate facility to support this function.

Funding will be in accordance with the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Public Law 93-288, as amended).

All state aviation mission requests, after an approved MA is processed, should be recorded on a flight request form (FRF). FRFs are processed by AOB for constant visibility with the federal asset missions to include federal operations support (FOS) requests to the AOB’s ESF and OFA partners.

**B. NOTIFICATION**

WV Emergency Management Division, via the SEOC, will notify the

AOC when aviation support is required. The AOC will notify the appropriate aviation asset holders as deemed necessary for the incident.

NEED to have a section on UAS’

An Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) is composed of an unmanned aircraft, control station and command and control link. There are three types of UAS operations: public (governmental including military), civil (nongovernmental) and recreational. Operations range from ground level to above 50,000 feet and there are constraints on operations in Class B airspace and over population centers.

* UAS Operations require an existing Part 107 Remote Pilot with a current certificate, or the pilot must have a Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA). A waiver is applied through the Special Governmental Interest (SGI) process (also known as eCOA). Be advised, no COA or no Part 107 operator certificate means no SGI.
* The FAA can expedite SGI authorizations to certified first responders during response operations. To submit a waiver through this process, fill out the Emergency Operation Request Form and email the FAA’s System Operations Support Center (SOSC) with a follow-up phone call to 202-267-8276. Additional UAS information can be found at the FEMA Air Operations Management Course 0808 Participant Guide.

**Airspace deconfliction related to UAS systems.**

* Unmanned Aerial Systems: 0-400’ AGL
* Rotor-wing Rescue Assets: 400’-2000’ AGL
* Fixed-Wing Assets: 2500’ and above.
* -Rotor-wing assets would be allowed to descend below 400’ AGL for rescue operations within the AO, in which case UAS operations should cease until rotary wing assets complete rescue operations.
* -All UAS systems should be flown by line of sight of the pilot.