

United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service



Aviation Safety Summary

June 2003

Prepared by
National Aviation Safety Center
Boise, ID

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Information Sharing

The National Aviation Safety Center (NASC), located at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) in Boise, ID is in the process of building a new accident prevention library and eventually having it available online. We are also working on getting more aviation related materials available on the internet at: http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/av_safety/index.html and <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/aviation/>. The National Aviation Safety and Mishap Prevention Plan is now available at: http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/aviation/av_library/2003_nasmp.pdf. We would love to hear your feedback/comments on the internet as well as this effort to get information out to the field. Please send comments to bhall@fs.fed.us.

Below is a list of all the National and Regional Safety Personnel. Please feel free to contact any of the safety personnel anytime if you have a safety concern, comment or a good idea.

Aviation Safety Phone Directory			
Region	Name	Office	Cell
NIFC	Ron Hanks	208-387-5607	208-850-5357
NIFC	Morgan Mills	208-387-5614	208-850-0508
NIFC	Barb Hall	208-387-5285	208-850-2375
NIFC	Scott Cochran	208-387-5901	208-863-1526
NIFC	Pat Norbury	208-387-5646	208-863-2482
R-1	Eddie Morris	406-329-4918	406-370-3341
R-2	Ivan Pupulidy	303-275-5711	
R-3	Larry Hindman	505-842-3351	505-362-7020
R-4	Jim Morrison	801-625-5510	801-540-5331
R-5	Dennis Brown	916-640-1038	916-712-8768
R-6	Bill Bulger	503-808-2314	503-819-8706
R-8	Bill McMillan	404-347-1623	404-909-0246
R-9	Gary Morgan	414-297-3632	414-339-8479
R-10	Boyce Bingham	907-586-8740	907-723-7270
NEA	Dan Zimmerman	610-557-4147	484-431-4143
FHP	Tim McConnell	970-295-5878	970-227-9370

New Aviation Safety Managers

Boyce Bingham came from the FAA to the Forest Service as the Aviation Safety Manager in Region 10. Welcome aboard Boyce.

Ivan Pupulidy recently accepted the Region 2 Aviation Safety Manager position. Congratulations Pup and welcome aboard.

Congratulations to Bill Bulger. Bill Bulger, Region 6 Aviation Safety Manager was recently awarded the Chief's Award for Individual Achievement in Safety and Health. Bill was chosen for his unique ability to be a safety officer that is not only the enforcer but the protector as well. Pilots subject to his review know they will be treated with respect and fairness, however, he is known to be "tough as nails" when it comes to safety.

Some of Bills contributions to the aviation safety program include his participation in developing the SAFECOM system, BEAR AIR safety publication, a Crash Response Guide, and the aviation chapter in the new Accident Investigation Guide. Bill has lead many aviation accident investigations including the most recent Bell 407 accident in Texas and the C-130 accident last year.

Bill has provided the type of thoughtful leadership at the regional level that has promoted a team approach to the management of the regional aviation program. If you ask Bill, he will tell you his only job is to prevent accidents. His passion as a safety manager has saved lives and created a safer environment for employees to do their job. The regional pilots say his most important contribution is their feeling that they are safer because of the work he has done. Congratulations and Good Job Bill.

SAFECOM update Barb Hall, National Aviation Safety Center. The Forest Service and OAS are currently beta testing the new SAFECOM system. We had hoped to complete testing and be online prior to this fire season. Unfortunately we were unable to get that accomplished, however, we are still testing and the plan is to move to the new system at the new fiscal year, October 1, 2003. Instructions are currently being written and will be distributed to the Unit/Forest Aviation Officers as well as being available online at the SAFECOM web page. The new system will be located on the internet at: www.safecom.gov

Jim Morrison Region 4 Aviation Safety Manager shared an excellent article from AOPA on See and Avoid. Here are Jims comments with a link to the article.

Hello Folks! Please check out article on the AOPA web site (this can be printed). As I look over the safecom data for our region, I noticed 17 airspace intrusions. Most all became a "See and Avoid situation...We saw the intruder and took evasive action. Minimally we contacted all concerned that we have an airspace intrusion over our fire and at that point it is usually a "see and avoid" situation. At times we've had to shut down operations because the intruder hasn't a clue what's going on and loiters above our fire, not in contact with anyone and unaware that there are other aircraft working in the area. The article brings up some very good points, one of them I'd like to capture is to keep up the vigilance of see and avoid...DON'T BECOME COMPLACENT. All of you have a responsibility for a safe flight weather your the pilot or the passenger. If your the pilot keep up the great work and use all of your tools i.e. training, TCAS, your passengers, etc...And, if your the passenger you have an obligation to "speak-up" to the pilot if you see anything...including other aircraft...don't assume the pilot does see the other aircraft! Please forward this article on! Thanks, Jim <http://download.aopa.org/epilot/2003/sa15.pdf> **Printed Copy - Attachment 1**

From Larry Hindman Region 3 Aviation Safety Manager. See attached and please share with your helicopter folks, and others as appropriate. The recommendations in the attached SAIB make sense. Good reminder for our helitack folks to thoroughly brief passengers on egress procedures in the event of a "problem". <http://www1.faa.gov/certification/aircraft/>
Printed Copy – Attachment 2

From Gil Elmy, Region 4 Aircraft Maintenance Inspector. I was doing some research on remote fuel sites this week, and had to look up some information in the NFPA manuals. Several of these manuals are also referenced in your contracts. I realized there was an awful lot of information in them, but that quite a bit of it I really wasn't interested in. I decided to go through them and try to pull out the information that I felt I needed to know. Now that it's done, I thought some of you might be interested in the information, so here it is. Most of the highlights and all the underlining are mine, you won't find them in the Manuals.

The first 9 pages cover NFPA 10, Portable Fire Extinguishers; NFPA 407 Aircraft Fuel Servicing; and NFPA 418, Heliports. The rest of the pages cover items that might be of interest for those of you that have remote fuel sites. They cover NFPA 30, Flammable Liquids; NFPA 329, Handling of Flammable Liquids; and NFPA 395, Storage of Flammable

Liquids at Isolated Sites. You will find quite a few gaps in the numbering because I just pulled out the stuff I was specifically interested in, so don't be surprised if you see a list of items with a (1), (2), (5), (9).

I would recommend that you all get copies of these manuals, especially the ones referenced in your contracts (NFPA 10 & 407), and the others that pertain to remote fuel sites if you are using them. They can be ordered off the website below, and on average run about \$25 per manual. <http://www.nfpa.org/catalog/home/index.asp>. FUEL SERVICING EQUIPMENT, NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers*, Chapter 4 Inspection, Maintenance, and Recharging http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/av_safety/safety_summaries/attach3.pdf. **Printed Copy – Attachment 3**

From Julie Stewart, National Airspace Coordinator. This year, during Operation Liberty Shield, approximately 22 aircraft were deployed to monitor the northern border of the United States. Most aircraft were released when Operation Liberty Shield ended (except for Blaine, WA). Over the past year, it has become apparent that we need to coordinate with AMICC when we are responding to fires on either of the United States Borders.

AMICC is requesting that you notify them (via a courtesy call) when you have operations within 10 NM of either border. This advisement will keep them from deploying resources and performing interception procedures. While it is considered a courtesy call on the northern border, AMICC considers it "almost mandatory" for flights on the Southern Border.

AMICC is aware of recent issues involving their aircraft and they have taken steps to modify flight routes when they are aware of fire suppression activity. They have stated "Your calls can keep us out of your way!". AMICC works closely with Border Patrol (which is now part of the new Customs and Border Patrol agency (CBP). and can assist with issues.

AMICC is located in Riverside California. They are aware of our National Firefighting Transponder code and track many of our aircraft. Let's help them out by having Dispatch

give them a call whenever we are within 10 miles of the border. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions. AMICC Point of contact - Mike Walters 1-866-AIR BUST

From Jim Payne, Wildland Fire Safety Specialist . MTDC has developed a "Fatigue Awareness" training lesson which completes Action A-6 of the Thirtymile Fire Accident Prevention Plan. This training is a power point presentation designed to serve two groups: Phase I is for all employees, with Phase I and II for those employees involved in wildland fire suppression. This presentation is suitable for self-study or a more formal classroom presentation. It is easy to view and understand and thus has no talking points or instructor's guide. A formal release letter will be out shortly. The lesson is posted on Internet at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fire/training/fatigue/fatigue.pdf> **Printed Copy – Attachment 4**

We are making this available now due to the importance of fatigue awareness and fatigue management in our current wildland fire situation. Please share this information widely and encourage all employees to take advantage of this first of a kind fatigue awareness training.

A special thanks to Brian Sharkey and Chuck Whitlock at MTDC for their efforts to develop this training! Good Job!!! If you have questions or require further information, please contact Brian Sharkey, MTDC at (406) 329-3989.

From Jerry Williams, Director, Fire and Aviation Management. Last night we got word of two fireline fatalities on the Cramer Fire (Salmon-Challis NF). An investigation team led by Linda Donoghue was mobilized in response. OIG and, I expect, OSHA will be involved as well.

We do not have much verified information surrounding the circumstances of this accident right now. As it becomes available, we will be certain to make it known.

Let me turn attention to the fire season. We are seeing a rapid escalation in fire danger indices across much of the West. We briefed the Department two weeks ago and the Hill yesterday on this turn of events. Of most concern is the number of large wildfires we're experiencing at high elevations, high latitudes, and in "cooler/wetter" habitat types. We would not expect to see this kind of fire activity in these fire regimes this early in the year. Already we have experienced large, difficult to control wildfires on the Oregon coast, the west side of the Cascades, the Pasayten Wilderness, and in NW Montana.

I want you to take the time, now, to ensure that our people are maintaining a high degree of situational awareness and that we are maintaining highest possible initial attack capabilities. Under these burning conditions, the safest, least costly wildfire is detected early, attacked aggressively, and suppressed quickly. Remain mindful that - again under these circumstances - any wildfire that we are slow to engage or that we back away from will almost certainly require us to deal with later; likely at much larger size, with a smaller suppression force, and with few good options. Now is also a good time to revisit our fire-use plans and ascertain whether or not we can successfully manage within their prescription parameters.

Let's stay close to the basics now. Up-to-date information, good exchange of information, adherence to established safe practices, and proactive, thinking-ahead management based on anticipated load will go a long way in coming through what, by all measures, is shaping up as another very difficult, very dangerous fire season.

Letters

File Code: 5700
Route To: (5100/6300)

Date: March 14, 2003

Subject: Aviation Resource System (ARS)

To: Jerry T. Williams, Director, FAMFire and Aviation Management

The Regional Aviation Officers and Regional Aviation Safety Managers Councils met March 6, 2003. During the meeting both councils reaffirmed a similar decision from 2001 of the value and need for a single system to store and track information concerning aviation contracts, vendors, pilots and aircraft. Both councils are in agreement and a unanimous recommendation was made to accept and implement the system. OAS was in attendance at the meeting and concurred with the recommendation.

We request that the Fire Directors be briefed at the next meeting and be requested to approve the adoption of the web based Aviation Resource System (ARS) as the sole Forest Service aviation database. Full implementation requires data entry by Contracting Officers, Pilot Inspectors, and Aircraft Maintenance Inspectors and will require policy change to be made to the Forest Service Manual System. The councils further recommend that the program be presented to the Aviation Management Council for interagency adoption so that there will be only one source of aviation resources for all agencies.

Users of this system will include Aircraft Dispatchers, Regional Aviation Officers, Regional Aviation Safety Managers, Contracting Officer's Representatives, Forest Aviation Officers and other agencies.

Questions concerning the Councils' recommendations may be directed to Asher Williams, National Aviation Operations Officer.

/s/ Asher Williams
ASHER WILLIAMS
National Aviation Operations Officer

/s/ Ron Hanks
RON HANKS

cc: Regional Aviation Officers, Regional Aviation Safety Managers

Check out the Aviation Resources System online at:
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/carding/index.asp>

File Code: 5700

Date: June 11, 2003

Route To:

Subject: Helicopter Policy Changes

To: Directors, Fire and Aviation Management

BACKGROUND

The shortages of Helicopter Managers and crew personnel during the last several fire seasons have precipitated an on-going review of aviation policy. In order to not jeopardize safety, helicopter operational policies are continually examined and evaluated with risk management, efficiency, and costs taken into consideration.

Before considering any changes to helicopter management practices, Interagency and Forest Service helicopter experts are consulted. Based on their input and operational experience with current helicopter management policies, the following interim helicopter management policy changes are to be implemented agency-wide upon receipt of this letter.

FIRE HELICOPTER STAFFING POLICY CHANGES

1. Allow Standard Category Type III helicopters to be temporarily designated and used as "Limited Use", thus negating the requirement for a helicopter module, and requiring only a Helicopter Manager; assuming compliance to the following operational restriction listed below:

- The appropriate agency Aviation Manager at the State, Area, or Regional level must grant approval on a case-by-case basis.

Note: This practice is currently applicable to Type I and II helicopters. This change expands that practice to Type III helicopters.

2. Allow Type III helicopters performing air attack, helicopter coordinator, plastic sphere dispenser, infrared, and aerial mapping missions to be managed by a Helicopter Manager, thus negating the requirement for a helicopter module, and requiring only a Helicopter Manager; assuming compliance to the following operational restriction listed below:

- The appropriate agency Aviation Manager at the State, Area, or Regional level must grant approval on a case-by-case basis.

Note: The Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide Working Group will be tasked with evaluating these interim policy changes and formulating final language for inclusion in Chapter II of the next Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) revision (2005).

3. Additionally, agency policy will be established to state:

"Civilian Helicopter Managers will not be required for National Guard helicopters carrying National Guard personnel with the following mission profiles:

- Transport of military personnel or transport of internal or external cargo in support of the military operation.

Note: Civilian agencies should provide the National Guard with appropriate military liaison assistance (type of assistance to be coordinated with the Guard unit) when personnel and cargo are transported.

- Water bucket operations.

Note: In order to perform water bucket operations, civilian agency helicopter inspector pilots must approve the military pilot, and appropriate aerial supervision must be provided (i.e. Radio contact with incident personnel: air attack, leadplane, Helicopter Coordinator, etc.)”*

*This change will be reflected as policy in Forest Service Handbook 5709.16 and is currently in USDI Office of Aircraft Services OPM No. 3-41.

The following policy changes were initiated to reduce the demand for helicopter management personnel during the 2002 fire season and remain in effect for 2003 as policy in Chapter II of the IHOG.

1. Allowing two (2) Type I or Type II designated as “limited use” or FAA Restricted Category helicopters to be managed by one qualified Call When Needed (CWN) Fire Helicopter Manager only when the following conditions are met:
 - a. An order for another CWN Fire Helicopter Manager for the second helicopter has been placed and is actively trying to be filled.
 - b. Both helicopters are working out of the same helibase and are physically located side by side.
 - c. A Helibase Manager is assigned.
 - d. Aerial supervision is being provided.
 - e. The appropriate agency Aviation Manager at the State, Area, or Regional level must grant approval on a case-by-case basis.
2. Allowing standard category Type I and II helicopters to be designated for “limited-use” missions, with prior approval at the State or Regional level. Limited Use missions are defined as external cargo hauling or dropping water/retardant. This allows Interagency and State Aviation Managers to use standard category helicopters for limited use missions, eliminating the need for a helicopter module. Helicopter Managers are still required for limited use missions.

For further clarification, contact Glenn Johnston at (208) 387-5634.

/s/ Jerry T. Williams
JERRY T. WILLIAMS
Director, Fire and Aviation
Management

cc: Tony Kern, Asher Williams, Regional Aviation Officers, Helicopter Operations Specialists

File Code: 5720

Date: June 12, 2003

Route To:

Subject: Interagency Aviation Training Website

To: Regional Aviation Officers, Regional Aviation Safety & Training Officers,
Regional Training Officers

The Office of Aircraft Services in cooperation with the US Forest Service, under the direction of the Interagency Aviation Management Council (AMC) has developed the Interagency Aviation Training (IAT) website (<http://iat.nifc.gov>). This website offers online training modules, class schedules, and student training records.

Employee training records for IAT web-based training, the Aviation Conference and Education (ACE), and other classes performed by Forest Service, OAS and Interagency Aviation Trainers (IATs) have been stored on the website since June 2001. Records prior to this date are not in the system. Employees can access their own records. For you to access your employees' aviation training records, follow the steps below. The Forest Service password/PIN is in bold

They are currently over 5,000 Forest Service employees signed up on the IAT website and taking courses. The development of the web site is continuing, to help you access your employee records

1. From the IAT website (<http://iat.nifc.gov>), chose the "Sign Up" button to create your user profile.
2. Enter the information requested. Choose a password that is easy for you to remember. After you have entered the information, click on the "Save" button.
3. Login. Your username will be your first initial and last name.
4. From the Main Menu, click on "View Training Records by Agency."
5. The Password/PIN is **FS570**. This password may be issued to Forest Aviation Officers, other aviation managers, and Agency Training Officers at the Regional Aviation Officers discretion.
6. Sort the training records by any of the headings at the top of the list (Name, Unit, City, or State).
7. Click on the individual's name to view his or her training record.

The website does not collect or store any personal information about employees (i.e., home address, home phone number, Social Security number).

If you have any questions, please contact Scott Cochran National Aviation Standardization & Training Officer at 208-387-5901 or tscochran@fs.fed.us or Wes Shook at wshook@fs.fed.us. We appreciate your continued support of the IAT program and hope that you find the website improvements to be useful.

/s/ Ron Hanks
RON HANKS
National Aviation Safety & Training Manager

cc: Helicopter Operations Specialists, Regional Training Officers

File Code: 5100

Date: July 3, 2003

Route To:

Subject: Need to Increase Emphasis on Safety

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Job Corps,
and WO Staff

Every morning I attend the “stand-up” briefing in the Chief’s office. Over the past week or so the Forest Service Safety Officer has given reports of a number of accidents and close calls. Some of these may be viewed as relatively minor events because people escaped any serious injury. But when exposed to closer scrutiny, some of those people were merely lucky. Under less fortunate circumstances some of those same accidents could easily have resulted in a fatality. I want to take this opportunity to stress to all that with the onset of summer and advent of the Western fire season, this is not the time to rely on luck. It is the time to increase our diligence and focus on safe practices and proactive risk management.

Fire activity started slowly this year, with much of the nation experiencing heavier than normal precipitation. Some may view this as a slow season and believe we may not have to be so concerned with our safety efforts. Any action taken this year to suppress or manage a wildland fire is a high risk activity, and requires the same situational awareness, operational focus, and attention to safety fundamentals as it does any other year. In terms of numbers of fatalities, small fires (Types 3, 4, and 5) are statistically more dangerous than mega-fires like those we experienced in 2002. We expect our firefighters to exhibit a bias for action while strictly adhering to standard operating procedures. We are teaching them to suspect the benign, and to properly manage the unexpected when it occurs. It is especially important during a year like this that you do the same.

I am even more concerned with the alarming number of near misses we are experiencing in all areas. As the leader of a Chief’s investigation of a fatal accident involving one of our volunteers, I have experienced first hand the tragic feeling of loss, pain, and suffering families and fellow employees must bear. I do not want to experience that again. Right now is not the time to rely on luck. Right now, before the next near miss, is the time to refocus our energy and increase our emphasis on safety.

/s/ Joel D. Holtrop

JOEL D. HOLTROP

Deputy Chief State and Private Forestry

File Code: 5700
Route To: (5100), (5700)

Date: July 15, 2003

Subject: Interagency Aerial Supervision Module (ASM) Test

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Job Corps, and
WO Staff

During the past two years, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has completed a study of the Aerial Supervision Module (ASM) concept, and has adopted ASM training and operations as policy.

The Forest Service has reviewed the BLM policy and determined that we support the concept. Therefore, this letter authorizes the Forest Service to conduct ASM training with the BLM, and test the ASM concept on interagency wildland fire suppression operations.

This letter also allows deviation from FSM 5716.3, which currently does not permit an Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS) aboard ASM aircraft when operating below 500 feet above ground or canopy level except for take-offs and landings. If the ASM crew consists of a third crewmember (Sensor Technician), then missions are restricted from operating below 500 feet.

Training and test ASM operations shall be conducted in accordance with the Interagency Lead Plane Operations Guide (ILOG) and the BLM Aerial Supervision Operations Guide (ASOG).

The direction provided in this letter expires on December 31, 2003.

If additional information is needed, please contact Pat Norbury, National Fixed-Wing Standardization Pilot at 208-387-5646.

/s/ Tom C. Harbour (for)
JERRY T. WILLIAMS
Director, Fire and Aviation Management

File Code: 5700

Date: July 17, 2003

Route To:

Subject: Implementation of Aerial Supervision Module (ASM) Concept

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director

This letter announces the initial implementation of Air Supervision Module (ASM) operations in the Forest Service. This goal, originally proposed in the *National Study of Tactical Aerial Resource Management to Support Initial Attack and Large Fire Suppression* in 1998, was successfully implemented by the BLM in 2001. Since then, the BLM has had remarkable success with its program, and we are eager to mirror and build upon that success.

The ASM module provides leadplane and Air Attack coverage using one aircraft. The aircraft crew consists of a highly skilled Air Tactical Pilot and an Air Tactical Group Supervisor. The crew can also have a Sensor Technician to take advantage of emerging technologies. During 2003, we will use two Beechcraft King Air aircraft (a 200 and C 90 model) for program implementation.

Training of Forest Service ASM crewmembers will be completed by Monday, July 21, 2003. This will provide two additional aircraft in support of incidents during the critical days ahead. To ensure that the concept will be safely implemented with a minimum of confusion, the following steps and guidance applies to ASM operations for 2003:

- All crewmembers will have aircraft difference training, ASM tactical training, and crew resource management (CRM) training
- A job hazard analysis has been completed for the new mission and aircraft
- The ASM module and aircraft will only be operated by an intact and fully trained crew (no single pilot operations or substitutions with non-qualified crewmembers)
- The aircraft and crews will be managed at the national level
- The aircraft will operated with the call sign "Foxtrot" to distinguish Forest Service ASM modules from leadplanes or BLM ASM aircraft

The initiation of ASM operations is a milestone in the evolution of our aviation program. Full replacement of the existing Baron fleet with a modern aircraft is expected in 2004. Contact Pat Norbury, National Fixed-Wing Standardization Pilot, at 208-387-5646 for more information.

/s/ Jerry T. Williams

JERRY T. WILLIAMS
Director, Fire and Aviation Management

cc: Regional Directors (FAM), Assistant Directors (FAM), Regional Aviation Officers, Regional Safety Managers, National Aviation Operations Officer

File Code: 5700

Date: July 23, 2003

Route To:

Subject: National Aviation Program Duties and Personnel Changes

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, Job Corps,
and WO Staff

The purpose of this letter is to announce a modification of the national aviation program to enhance operational and safety effectiveness as we head into the critical stages of the 2003 fire season. This action is being undertaken now to address an emerging trend of maintenance-related accidents and incidents as well as to answer serious operational and safety concerns raised by the Blue Ribbon Panel. The objectives of this action are to create a more comprehensive and inclusive national maintenance program, provide greater support to Regional maintenance programs, and provide contracting officers greater support on issues of airworthiness.

Effective immediately,

- Asher Williams is detailed into a new position for Airworthiness and Logistics. His new duties will include directing the national maintenance program, airfield logistics, and contract officer support for quality assurance on airworthiness and maintenance of contract aircraft. He will continue to report to the Assistant Director for Aviation, Fire and Aviation Management.
- Acting National Aviation Operations Officer duties will be assumed by Pat Norbury on a 120-day detail.

Please join me in supporting these efforts to upgrade our national aviation program. If you have any questions, contact Tony Kern at (202) 205-1505.

/s/ Jerry T. Williams

JERRY T. WILLIAMS

Director, Fire and Aviation Management

File Code: 5700

Date: July 25, 2003

Route To:

Subject: Airtanker Performance Requirements

To: Regional Aviation Officers, Regional Aviation Safety Officers

Density altitudes experienced during the summer in the Rocky Mountain States and high deserts often exceed the limitations of aircraft operating in these areas. We must be constantly aware of the effect of altitude and temperature on helicopter and fixed wing aviation operations.

Airtankers are required by the government contract to be operated in accordance with FAR Parts 91 and 137. Status as a public aircraft does not alter this requirement for compliance with these regulations. FAR 91.9 states "No person may operate a civil aircraft without complying with the operating limitations specified in the approved airplane or rotorcraft flight manual." The FAA has informed us that aircraft performance charts are considered operational limitations and that flight outside of the chart diagram is in effect a violation of FAR 91.9.

Hence, airtanker Captains have the responsibility to determine their aircraft performance capability at any given tanker base and to comply with this FAR. Captains must make a determination whether or not to accept an assignment when considering their aircraft performance limitations and/or other safety considerations.

Tanker bases must assure that density altitude charts are posted with current data for that location. Captains must inform Tanker Base Managers when density altitude reaches a value that exceeds their aircraft performance charts.

Regional Aviation Officers should assure that GACC's and tanker bases are informed when individual airtankers are affected by density altitude limitations.

This should be a relatively temporary situation for us to manage. Vendors are currently working with the FAA to establish chart limitations that reach higher density altitudes for certain models.

/s/
PAT NORBURY
Acting National Aviation Operations Officer

/s/ Ron Hanks
RON HANKS
National Aviation Safety & Training Manager

cc: Alice R Forbes, Tony Kern, Jerry T Williams, Dave Dash, Rick Willis, Kim A Christensen, Tanker Base Managers, Bill Broadwell



AIRWARD NEWS

In Recognition of Professional Performance during a Hazardous Aviation Event or Significant Contribution to Aviation Mishap Prevention

June 2003

And the Thunder Role



John Beck was a Helibase Manager at Ennis, Texas during the Space Shuttle Columbia Debris Recovery. A series of severe weather materialized and rolled toward the Dallas Metroplex. Jack sensed a serious situation billowing and decided to relocate all contract helicopters to other airports with available hangar facilities. John has a strong background in aviation, specifically in helicopter operations. Severe storms passed through Ennis with hail and wind causing damage to vehicles and property. John's experience and decision-making prevented substantial damage to several contract helicopters, which, in turn, deterred numerous substantial damage claims. Here's to you, John! No SafeCom submitted

40, Love

On March 29, 2003, a US Forest Service contract air attack aircraft radioed in for landing clearance. Danny Fuimaono, FAA Temporary Tower Controller, noticed an outline of what appeared to be an aircraft just touching down on the same runway the air attack aircraft was cleared for. Danny immediately issued go-around instructions to the air attack aircraft after this spin was placed on the tennis ball. The air attack pilot backed off to the baseline to play defense by immediately executing the go.



Danny Fuimaono (left) and Bill McMillan (right)

The mysterious aircraft that had touched down was a Cessna 172 with an electrical failure. Due to Danny's and the pilot's quick feet and accurate backhand, a certain accident was avoided. Nice shot, Danny! [SafeCom 03-98](#)



The ONLY Way ^{WE} to Fly!



Aviation Safety Offices

www.aviation.fs.fed.us - www.oas.gov



Mishap Update

By the end of June the Forest Service had experienced two accidents and three incidents with potential (IWP) this year. One accident and two of the IWP's occurred during the shuttle recovery effort. Lets not add to this list, it is going to be a long season and we need to be vigilant, beware of complacency, recognize fatigue, and avoid dehydration.

Region 8, Columbia Shuttle Recovery

NTSB Identification: FTW03FA118

14 CFR Part 91: General Aviation

Accident occurred Thursday, March 27, 2003 in Broadus, TX

Aircraft: Bell 407, registration: N175PA

Injuries: 2 Fatal, 3 Serious.

This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed.

On March 27, 2003, at 1636 central standard time, a Bell 407 helicopter, N175PA, registered to I Inc., of Kirkland, Washington, and operated as a Public Use aircraft under contract to the US Forest Service (USFS), was destroyed when it crashed into heavily wooded terrain near Broadus, Texas, while conducting low level flight operations in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) mission to support an inter-agency (NASA, Texas Forest Service, USFS) recovery effort of Columbia Shuttle Debris. The pilot and 1 crewmember were fatally injured and 3 other crewmembers sustained serious injuries. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed and a VFR flight following plan was filed for the Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 91 Public Use flight. The flight originated at 1515 from Lufkin, Texas.



The helicopter was completing its second search mission of the day while hovering about 125 feet above the ground. During interviews with the NTSB investigator-in-charge, the surviving passengers reported that the helicopter lost power and descended rapidly into the 80-foot tall trees with no warning. The helicopter came to rest on its right side at the base of a 80-foot tree on a heading of 078 degrees magnetic. The cockpit section of the fuselage was found crushed and the main cabin was mostly intact. The engine compartment was intact, and all engine components, lines, electrical connections, and accessories appeared to be undamaged. The electronic control unit (ECU) was removed on-scene for data download. The ECU's connectors were found tight and secure with no damaged pins.

After the wreckage was recovered, the engine was removed and set up in a test cell. During the test cell run, it was discovered that the power lever angle (PLA) indicator on the Hydro Mechanical Unit (HMU) responded erratically to normal throttle inputs when the engine was operated in the electromechanical mode. The engine operated normally in the manual mode. Further testing and evaluation of the HMU revealed anomalies with the potentiometer component of the system.

**Region 8, Gypsy Moth Spray Project
NTSB Identification: NYC03TA138**

14 CFR Part 91: General Aviation

Accident occurred Thursday, June 26, 2003 in Pearisburg, VA

Aircraft: Air Tractor 402A, registration: N4506L

Injuries: 1 Uninjured.

This is preliminary information, subject to change, and may contain errors. Any errors in this report will be corrected when the final report has been completed.

On June 26, 2003, at 0952 eastern daylight time, an Air Tractor 402A, N4506L, under contract to the USDA Forest Service, was substantially damaged during a forced landing in Pearisburg, Virginia. The certificated commercial pilot was not injured. Visual meteorological conditions prevailed for the local flight that departed from New River Valley, Virginia (PSK). The aerial application flight was conducted on a visual flight rules (VFR) company flight plan, under 14 CFR Part 91.



According to an inspector from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the pilot was under contract to the Forest Service for Gypsy Moth pheromone flake dispersal, and had been airborne for about 2 hours. He was in the middle of a run when he observed orange flames and black smoke emitting from the engine exhausts. He feathered the propeller, and set up for a forced landing in a nearby open area. After touchdown, the airplane struck rocks embedded in the ground. The landing gear collapsed rearward, the fuselage was wrinkled, and the propeller separated from the airplane.

The FAA inspector further reported that the pilot had estimated that he had at least 100 gallons of fuel onboard at the time of the accident, and there was evidence of a fuel spill at the accident site.

The engine was reported to have a total time of 26,775 hours, including 10,708.9 hours since last overhaul. The engine has been retained for further examination.

The pilot's total flight experience was reported as 7,640 hours, with 78 hours in the preceding 90 days, and 32 hours in make and model.

On the Lighter Side

GRIPE SHEET

Never let it be said that ground crews and engineers lack a sense of humor.

Here are some actual logged maintenance complaints and problems as submitted by Qantas pilots and the solution recorded by maintenance engineers. By the way, Qantas is the only major airline that has never had an accident.

(P = The problem logged by the pilot.)

(S = The solution and action taken by the mechanics/engineers.)

P: Left inside main tyre almost needs replacement.

S: Almost replaced left inside main tyre.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.

S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.

S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.

S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Autopilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.

S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak on right main landing gear.

S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.

S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.

S: That's what they're there for.

P: IFF inoperative.

S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.

S: Suspect you're right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.

S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny.

S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right, and be serious.

P: Target radar hums.

S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit.

S: Cat installed.

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget Pounding on something with a hammer.

S: Took hammer away from midget.

Seeing Eye Dog

A buddy of mine was flying from San Antonio to Baltimore. Unexpectedly, the plane stopped in Nashville along the way. The flight attendant explained that there would be a delay, and if the passengers wanted to get off the aircraft, the plane would re-board in 50 minutes.

Everybody got off the plane except one gentleman who was blind. My buddy had noticed him as he walked by and could tell the man was blind because his seeing eye dog lay quietly underneath the seats in front of him throughout the entire flight. He could also tell he had flown this very flight before because the pilot approached him, and calling him by name, said, "Keith, we're in Nashville for almost an hour. Would you like to get off and stretch your legs?" The blind guy replied, "No thanks, but maybe my dog would like to stretch his legs."

Picture this: All the people in the gate area came to a complete quiet stand still when they looked up and saw the pilot walk off the plane with the Seeing Eye dog! The pilot was even wearing sunglasses. People scattered. They not only tried to change planes, but they were trying to change airlines!

Have a great day and remember ... things aren't always as they appear!

SafeCom Summary

There have been 281 SafeComs filed this calendar year (January 1 – June 30), last year there were 379, 248 in 2001 and 299 in 2000 for the same time period.

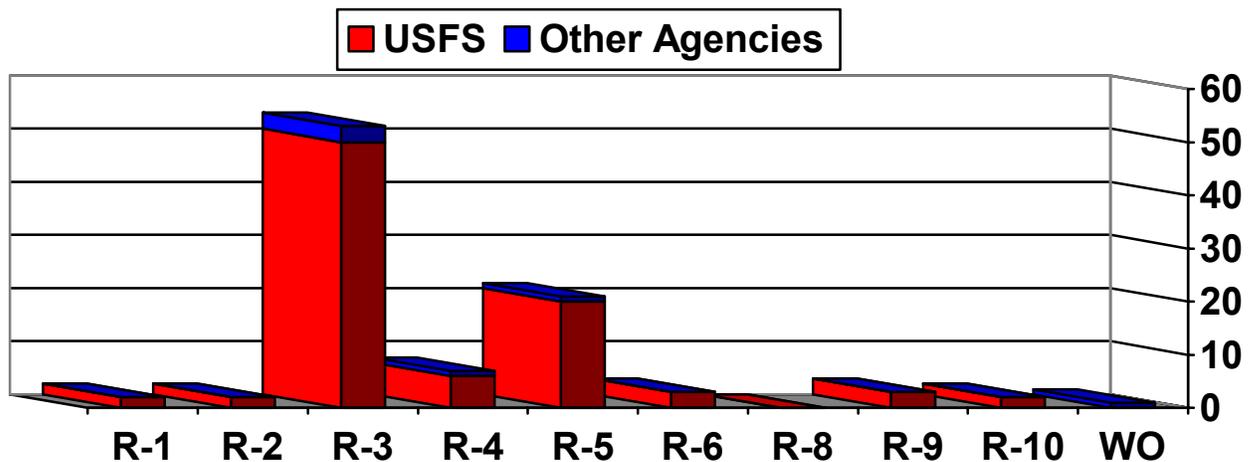
The following charts are based on SafeComs that occurred from June 1 through June 30. There were 94 (88 USFS and 6 other agency) SafeComs reported this June compared to 208 SafeComs last year and 103 in 2001.

Included in this report are representative samplings of the SafeComs reported in June of this year. To view all the USFS SafeComs click on the link to SafeComs below. Pick the options you want to search for, then click on submit, the less fields you enter the better. If you simply click on submit at the bottom you will get a list of all the latest SafeComs, use the arrows at the bottom left of the screen to navigate backward and forward.

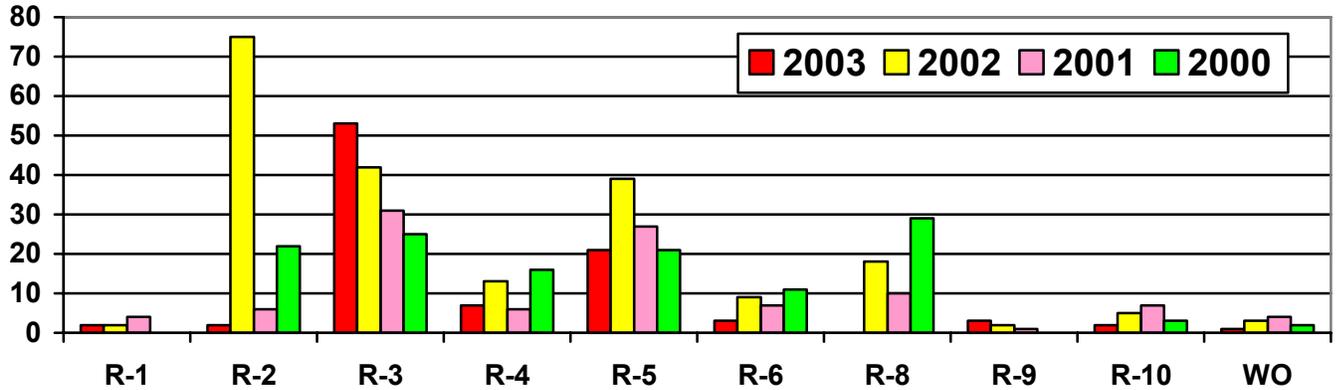
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearch.asp>

June SafeComs by Region

The chart below shows the number of SafeComs by region (FS and other agency) reported for June of this year.

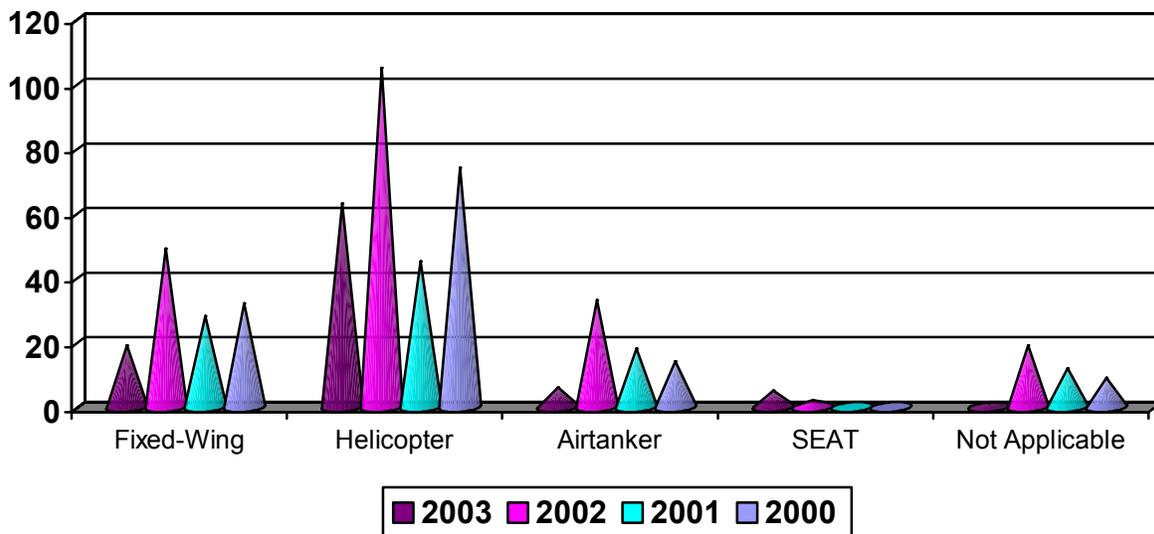


The following chart shows the total number of SafeComs reported by region this year and the past three years.



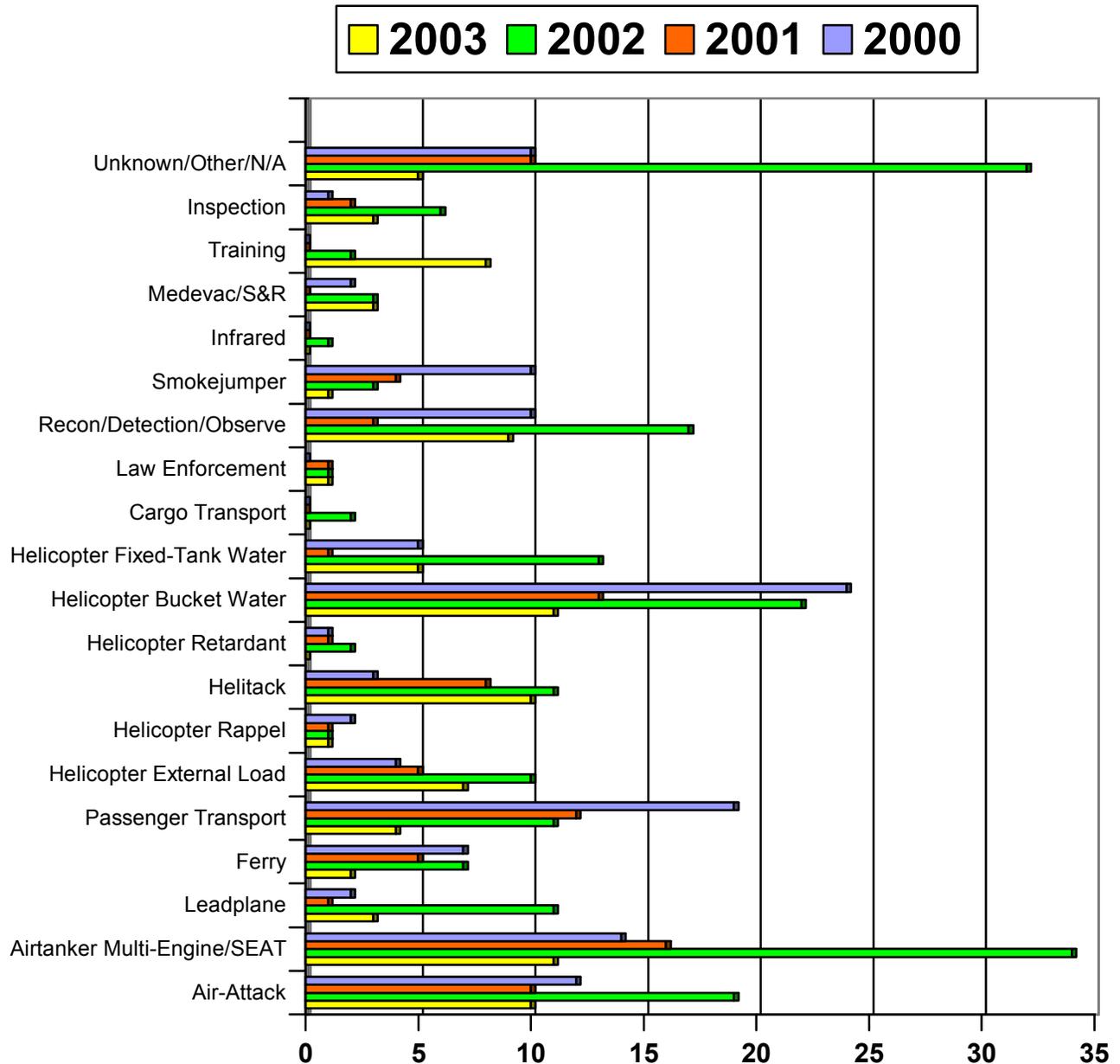
June SafeComs by Aircraft Type

Helicopter SafeComs accounted for 68% of the SafeComs this year compared to 50% last year, 44% in 2001 and 57% in 2000. Fixed-wing SafeComs were 20% this year, 24% last year, 27% in 2001 and 25% in 2000. The percent of Airtanker SafeComs were much less this year at 6% compared to 16% last year and 17% in 2001, and 11% in 2000. The number of SafeComs filed for SEAT's continues to increase as we utilize more SEATS. The chart below shows the number of SafeComs reported by aircraft type this year and the past three years.



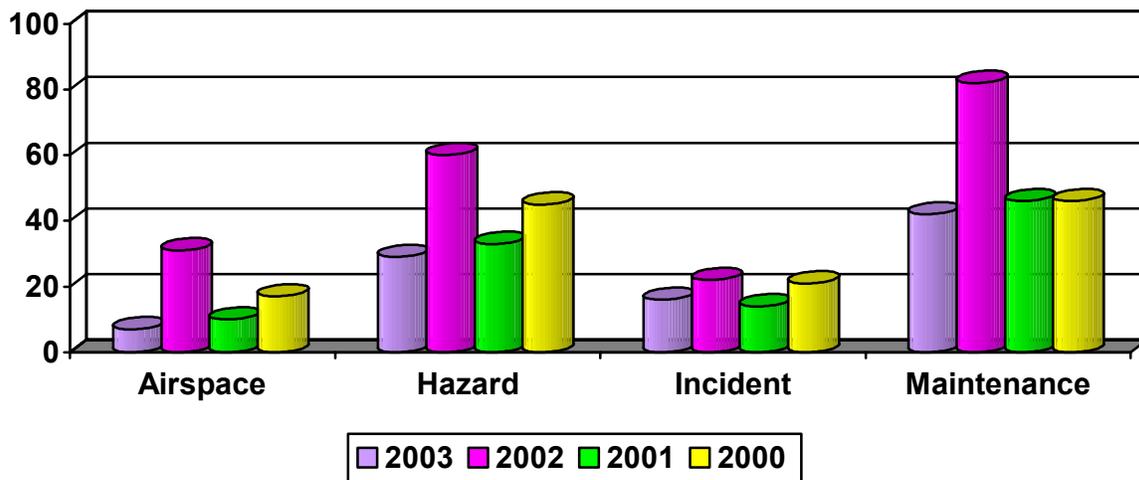
June SafeComs by Mission Type

With the exception of Unknown/Other/N/A, airtanker retardant drop and helicopter water bucket drop SafeComs continue to be the most reported. Training and Helitack SafeComs increased significantly this year for the number of SafeComs reported. The chart below shows the number of SafeComs reported by mission this year and the past three years.



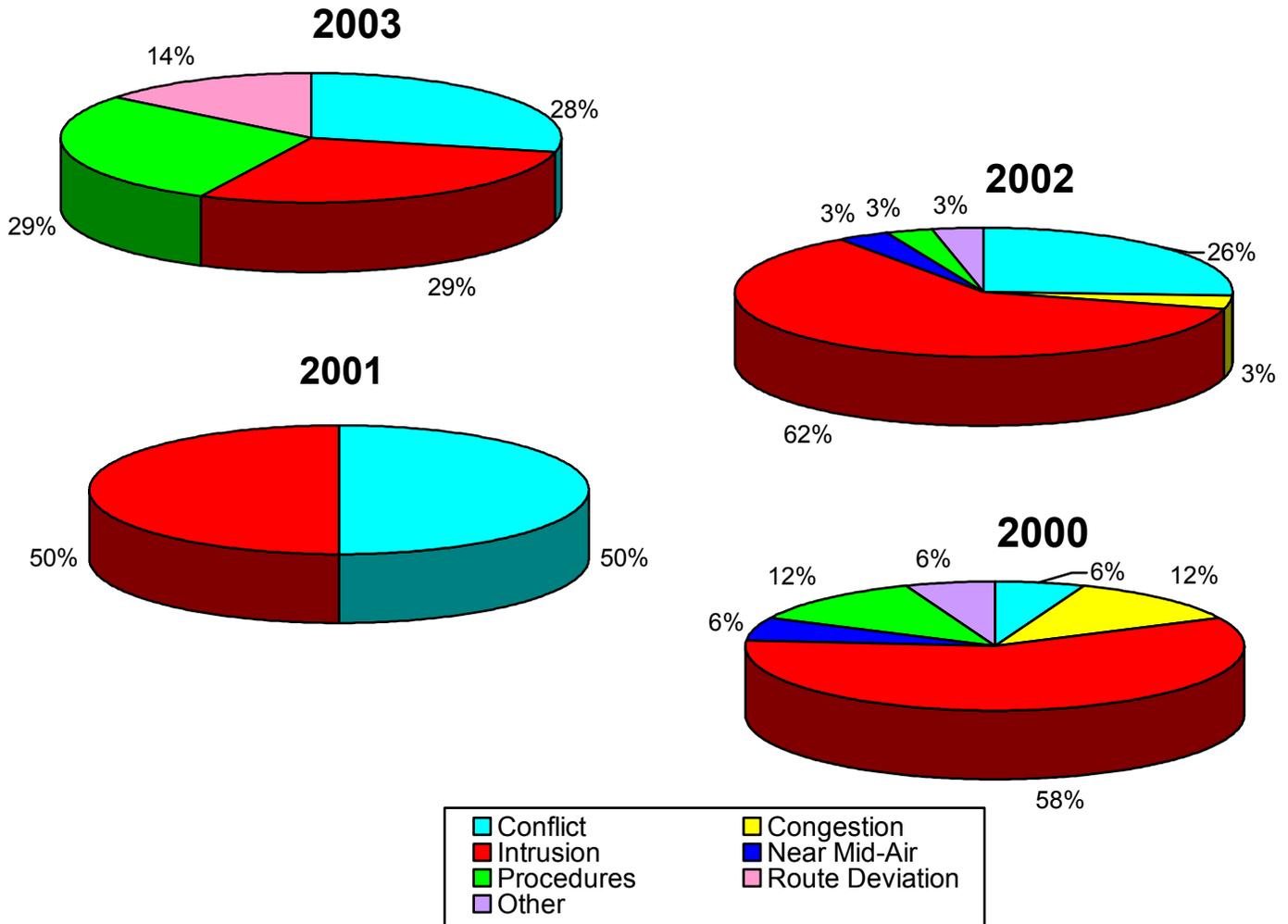
June SafeComs by Category

SafeComs on Maintenance are generally the most reported, which the chart below shows for the month of June the last four years. This year maintenance SafeComs accounted for 45% compared to 42% last year, 44% in 2001 and 36% in 2000. Hazard SafeComs were similar over the past three years, 31% this and last year, 32% in 2001 and 35% in 2000. Airspace SafeComs decreased this year to 7% from 16% last year, 10% in 2001 and 13% in 2000. Incident SafeComs were slightly higher this year with 17% compared to 11% last year, 14% in 2001 and 16% in 2000. The chart below shows the number of SafeComs reported in June by Category this year and the past three years.



June Airspace SafeComs

There were 7 SafeComs reported in this category this year compared to 31 last year, 10 in 2001 and 17 in 2000. The percent of Intrusions were significantly lower than the past few years, which are typically the most reported issue in this category. Remember "See and Avoid" TFR's help but they do not guarantee keeping all non-incident aircraft out of the airspace. The charts below show the percent of Airspace SafeComs by sub-category this year and the past three years.

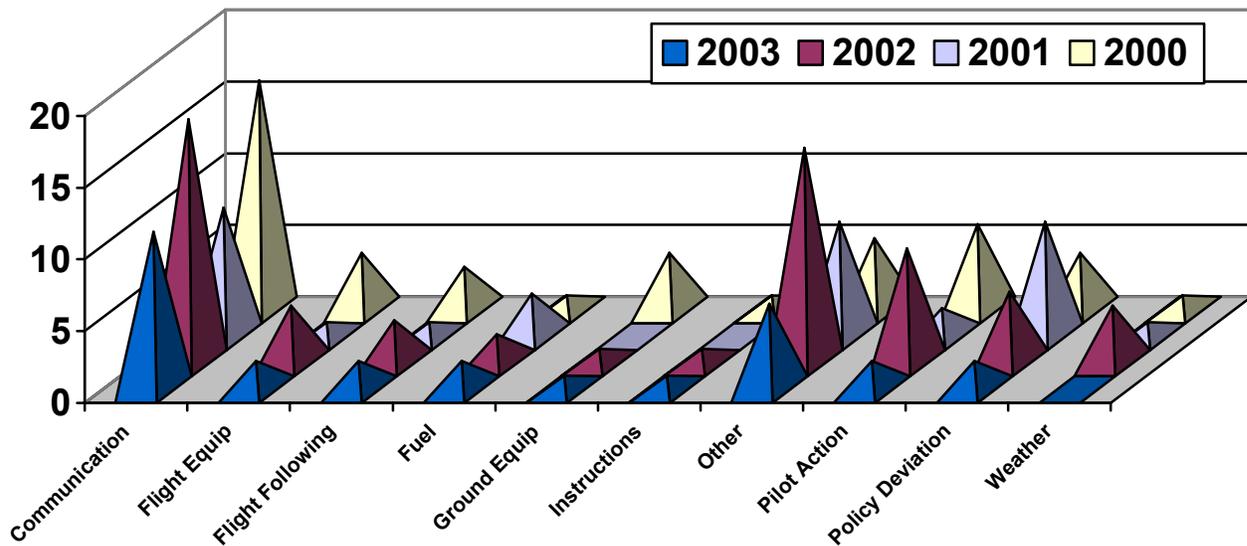


Select from the links below to view a sampling of June 2003 Airspace SafeComs:

- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4142>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4145>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4154>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4159>

June Hazard SafeComs

There were 29 SafeComs reported in this category this year compared to 60 last year, 33 in 2001 and 45 in 2000. They accounted for 38% of the Hazard SafeComs this year and 28% last year and 2001 and 36% in 2000. Communications continue to be the biggest problem in this category and show no improvement. Our frequencies are complicated and continue to plague us. Remember, you must have positive communications before entering a Fire Traffic Area (FTA), if not do not enter. Policy deviations continue to decrease, down to 7% this year and 8% last year compared to 24% in 2001. The chart below shows the number of Hazard SafeComs by sub-category this year and the past three years.

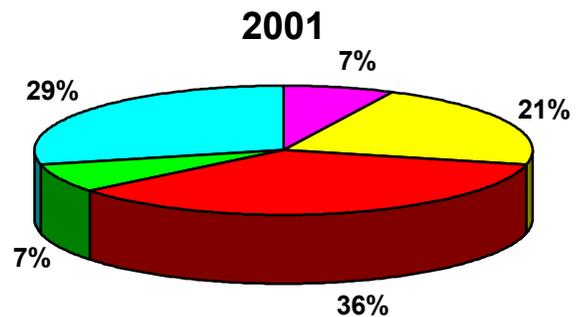
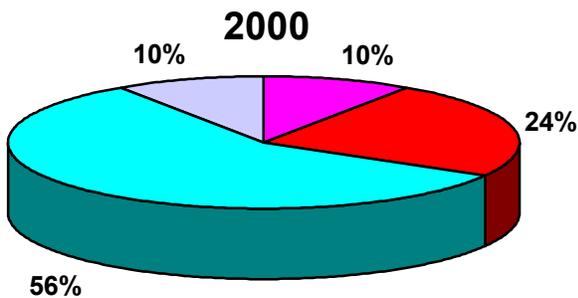
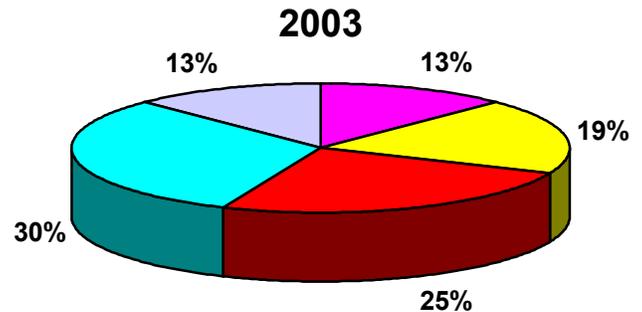
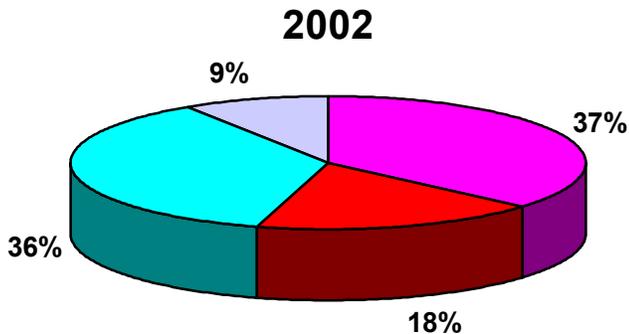


Select from the links below to view a sampling of June 2003 Hazard SafeComs:

<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4104>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4125>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4129>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4136>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4150>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4160>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4161>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4163>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4173>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4192>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4094>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4097>

June Incident SafeComs

There were 16 SafeComs reported in this category this year, 22 last year, 14 in 2001 and 21 in 2000. Besides "Other" and the exception of 2002, Dropped Loads are the most reported SafeComs in this category. Aircraft damage was the highest number of SafeComs reported in this category last year. Dropped loads were the most reported in 2001, and other than "other" the most reported in 2000. The charts below show the percent of Incident SafeComs by sub-category this year and the past three years.

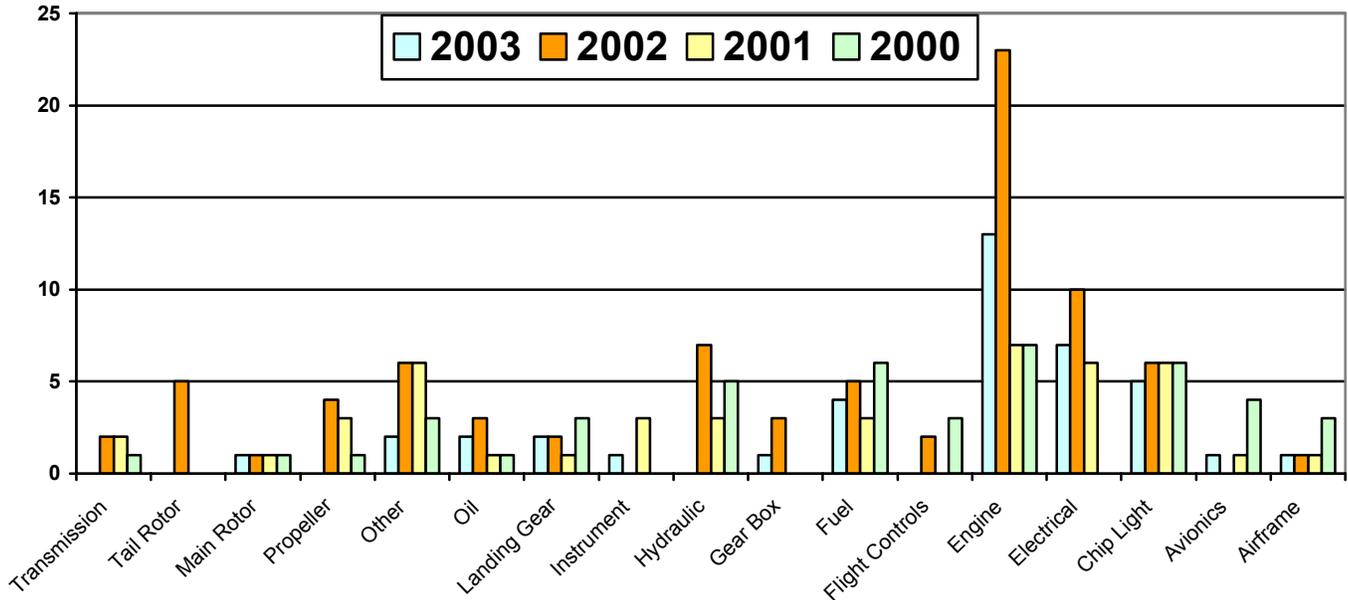


Select from the links below to view a sampling of June 2003 Incident SafeComs:

<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4092>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4102>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4112>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4113>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4149>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4171>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4177>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4191>
<http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4195>

June Maintenance SafeComs

There were 42 Maintenance SafeComs reported this year compared to 82 last year and 46 in 2001 and 2000. SafeComs reported on engines continue to be the most reported followed by electrical then chip light. The chart below shows the number of Maintenance SafeComs by sub-category this year and the past three years.



Select from the links below to view a sampling of June 2003 Maintenance SafeComs:

- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4182>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4091>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4131>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4132>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4148>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4143>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4138>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4155>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4162>
- <http://www.aviation.fs.fed.us/safecom/psearchone.asp?ID=4164>

Safety Alerts

[2003-01 Turbine Engine Compressor Stalls \(pdf file\)](#)

[2003-02 Over the Counter Medications \(pdf file\)](#)

[2003-03 Commercial Airline Security Information \(pdf file\)](#)

[2003-04 Helicopter Water Bucket Operations \(pdf file\)](#)

[2003-05 Aviation Resources Shortfall \(pdf file\)](#)

[2003-06 AS 350 Series Collective Locking Mechanism \(pdf file\)](#)

[2003-07 Helicopter Emergency Seating Position \(pdf file\)](#)

[2003-08 Bell 407 Helicopter Stand Down \(pdf file\)](#)