



**File Code:** 5700

**Date:** October 13, 2010

**Route To:**

**Subject:** Policy Change - FSM 5700 and 5709.16, Instrument Flight Conditions and Night Flying

**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, Director, Law Enforcement and Investigations, Regional Fire Directors, Regional Aviation Officers

Current Forest Service (FS) policy prohibits single-engine flight in Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) and at night except for ferry and cargo-carrying flights. Technology has made single-engine turbine airplanes and helicopters as safe to fly in IMC and at night as multi-engine aircraft when equipped to do so.

All Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) which address IFR and night flight will be required for these flights.

**Effective on this date, FSM 5716.12 and 5716.2 will read as follows:**

FSM 5700  
5716.12 – Instrument Flight Conditions

Use only multi-engine or turbine powered single-engine aircraft for flights in Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) that meet the applicable Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) requirements in Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 135, Part 91 and Part 61 as referenced in FSH 5709.16 or applicable contracts.

Low-level (FSM 5716.3) fixed-wing flight operations will be conducted only in daylight Visual Flight Rules (VFR) conditions (30 minutes prior to official sunrise until 30 minutes after official sunset).

5716.2 - Night Flying

Use only multi-engine or turbine powered single-engine aircraft for night flights that meet the applicable requirements in FAR Part 91 and Part 61 as referenced in FSH 5709.16 or applicable contracts.

Pilots flying night missions shall land at airports or heliports that meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) lighting standards, except:

1. This restriction does not apply to helicopter flights utilizing Night Vision Goggles (NVG).

Low-level helicopter flight operations will only be conducted using NVG. Helicopters will be approved for such an operation.

Reciprocating engine powered single-engine aircraft flights at night are authorized only for ferry and cargo-carrying missions at pilot-in-command discretion and in accordance with FAR Part 91.

Low-level (FSM 5716.3) fixed-wing flight operations will be conducted only in daylight Visual Flight Rules (VFR) conditions (30 minutes prior to official sunrise until 30 minutes after official sunset).



**Effective on this date, FSH 5709.16, 11.26 will read as follows.**

FSH 5709.16

11.26 – Operational Requirements – All Pilots

Requirements for all pilots flying Forest Service missions are as follows:

1. Instrument Flight Conditions. Use only multi-engine or turbine-powered single-engine aircraft for flights in Instrument Meteorological Conditions (IMC) that meet the applicable Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) requirements in Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 135, Part 91 and Part 61 as referenced in FSH 5709.16 or applicable contracts.

Low-level (FSM 5716.3) fixed-wing flight operations will be conducted only in daylight Visual Flight Rules (VFR) conditions (30 minutes prior to official sunrise until 30 minutes after official sunset).

2. FSM 5716.2 - Night Flying. Use only multi-engine or turbine-powered single-engine aircraft for night flights that meet the applicable requirements in FAR Part 91 and Part 61 as referenced in FSH 5709.16 or applicable contracts.

Pilots flying night missions shall land at airports or heliports that meet Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) lighting standards, except:

1. This restriction does not apply to helicopter flights utilizing Night Vision Goggles (NVG).

Low-level helicopter flight operations will only be conducted using Night Vision Goggles (NVG). Helicopters will be approved for such an operation.

Reciprocating engine powered single-engine aircraft flights at night are authorized only for ferry and cargo-carrying missions at pilot-in-command discretion and in accordance with FAR Part 91.

Low-level (FSM 5716.3) fixed-wing flight operations will be conducted only in daylight Visual Flight Rules (VFR) conditions (30 minutes prior to official sunrise until 30 minutes after official sunset).

This policy change will be in effect until rescinded.

Questions regarding this policy change should be directed to Paul Linse, 202-205-0974.

***/S/ JAMES E. HUBBARD***

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cc: Karyn L Wood, Wm C Waterbury, Ron Hanks, Pat Norbury, John A Nelson, Richard Kvale, Patricia Hiram, Tom Harbour, Paul Linse