

Interagency Airtanker Board Briefing Paper

Date June 6, 2006

Topic: Interagency Airtanker Board (IAB)

Issue: Understand the role and responsibility of the IAB

Background: In 2002 two Large Airtanker from Hawkins and Powers had structural failures while flying on wildland fires for the federal government. Five lives were lost and efforts were begun to understand what led to this tragic event. The IAB was drawn into the aftermath in an attempt to use it to correct deficiencies over which it did not have responsibility. This briefing paper identifies the roles and responsibilities of the IAB.

Key Points:

- The IAB is chartered by the National Interagency Aviation Council (NIAC)
- NIAC is an interagency body consisting of state and federal aviation operations managers.
- This Council is responsible for providing common policy and direction for aviation resources involved in wildland firefighting.
- The IAB is a 7 member group appointed by NIAC.
- The IAB is currently chaired by a member from the US Forest Service.
- The purpose of the Board is to review and approve aircraft types and dispensing systems for use by agencies in wildland firefighting.
- Once approved, the resource is reviewed on a 6 year basis to insure conformity with the original design approval.
- The approval process insures that the aircraft with its tank system meets a basic standard for delivery of retardant and suppressant materials. This basic standard provides for compatibility and interoperability between users at various operating locations.
- The approval process relies heavily on FAA certification from CFR 14 parts 21 and 25. These sections are used to certify aircraft in the Commercial and Transport category.
- Agencies may set more restrictive or additional requirements above the basic standard for IAB approval. These requirements are normally a reflection of agency policy and are implemented through the contract.
- An agency contracts for the aviation resource and retains operational control but may surrender tactical control to other state or federal agencies based on demand for the resource and existing agreements.

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