



---

## National Fire and Aviation Executive Board

---

August 23, 2005

### Memorandum

**To:** Agency Administrators

**From:** National Fire and Aviation Executive Board

**Subject:** Aviation P25 Radio Implementation within the All-Risk/Fire Community

**Program Area:** Radio Narrowband Advisory Group

On May 12, 2005 a meeting was held in Boise, Idaho to determine when the aviation P25 compliant (wideband analog, narrowband analog and digital narrowband capable) radios would be required within the all-risk/wildland fire aviation community. The meeting was attended by representatives from the USDA Forest Service and all Bureaus from the U.S. Department of the Interior having an interest in P25 aviation radio/communications. These representatives came from the technical, management, contracting, and operations fields.

### Overview

The meeting was held to solicit input from all government stakeholders for reaching a common date to implement an aviation P25 radio for all-risk/wildland fire use. When the agencies would begin utilizing these radios, in a "pure" P25 digital format, will be determined by the NWCG at a later date.

DOI began requiring the purchasing of P25 radio equipment in 1998 with a department wide conversion by 2005. The Forest Service required the purchase of P25 radio equipment in 2005 with an estimated agency wide conversion date of 2015. As both DOI and FS share aviation missions and equipment, a common implementation strategy was necessary to avoid policy, political, mission, contractual, and equipment inconsistencies.

### Discussions

Attendees discussed various implementation issues and strategies including; budgetary constraints, policy impacts, interagency compatibilities, equipment availability, contractor issues, and contract timelines. None of the attendees objected to committing toward a firm P25 aviation radio requirement date. However, several discussions surrounded budgetary issues and the fiscal impact on our contractors. There will be over 1,700 aircraft impacted by this conversion to P25. Many of these aircraft are operated under call-when-needed (CWN) and aircraft rental agreement (ARA) contracts. Other aircraft affected are exclusive use contract aircraft as well as fleet aircraft.

The Aviation Management Directorate (AMD) recently awarded several exclusive use contracts where the government would incur significant costs if P25 radios were required before 2009. In addition, manufacturers of aviation P25 radio equipment would benefit from an extended implementation date whereas they could refine their products to meet our needs. Law enforcement personnel from both the DOI and FS currently require P25, in digital mode communications equipment with little support toward aviation P25 communications requirements.

### Conclusion

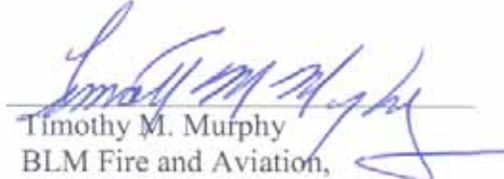
The consensus of the group was that the most feasible implementation date will be January 1, 2010 for requiring P25 aviation radios into all fleet and contract aircraft. All new aircraft contracts will include a note giving contractors notice of the impending P25 radio implementation date.

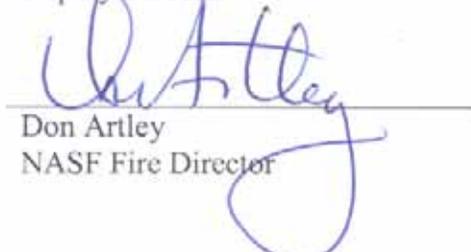
  
Tom Harbour  
USDA-FS Director of Fire and  
Aviation Management

  
Lyle Catfile  
BIA Fire Director

  
Edy Williams-Rhodes  
NPS Chief, Division of Fire and  
Aviation Management

  
Phil Street  
USFWS Fire Director

  
Timothy M. Murphy  
BLM Fire and Aviation,  
Deputy Director

  
Don Artley  
NASF Fire Director