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Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

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**Route To:**

**Subject:** Aircraft Security

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

In light of recent events, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has reminded us of the vulnerability of aircraft owned or operated by the Forest Service and Cooperators to theft or sabotage. In a letter received on October 11, the OIG recommends that the Forest Service “conduct an immediate risk analysis of threats to FS owned aircraft and aircraft owned by contractor and State forest agencies.” The WO is developing protocols for this analysis and coordinating a strategic approach to this challenge, but this letter instructs line officers, managers, and operators at every level of our operation to immediately increase awareness of the possibility of theft or sabotage to aircraft and tampering with the products dispensed by our aerial fire suppression operations.

Use all appropriate means at your disposal to insure the safety of the aircraft in your areas against the possibility of theft or sabotage. The means used to protect the aircraft should take into consideration that aircraft are fragile and unforgiving and any scheme to disable the aircraft must be approved by the local aviation operations and safety staff for feasibility and safety. In accomplishing this critical task, we must respect the ownership of all aircraft and insure that we have the approval of the contractor prior to any attempt to secure or otherwise handle aircraft not owned by the Forest Service.

The Geographic Area Coordination Centers that have responsibility for dispatching aircraft have been made aware by the National Interagency Coordination Center of the heightened concern over the possibility of theft. The final line of defense will rest with those who come in contact with the aircraft most frequently, the pilots and maintainers. Heightened awareness of the local environment and area personnel and thorough inspections should provide the best level of protection until such time as we can coordinate additional security measures. Of course, this effort needs to be well coordinated with all appropriate Federal, State and local agencies as well as affected contractors.

Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) aircraft in the custody of State Foresters should also be evaluated for safety and security. Many of these aircraft are parked or hangared in remote or lightly populated areas. Physical security may be limited. The Forest Service will provide the protocols for security evaluation as soon as they are developed but the State may develop and use their own if they so choose. In either case, the State should move quickly to secure FEPP aircraft against unauthorized use or theft. The Forest Service will provide help and guidance as requested.

*/s/ Sally Collins*

for

DALE N. BOSWORTH

Chief



cc:

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