# US Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program Quality Assurance Plan

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operations Plan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Short-Haul Programmatic and Needs Assessment Review</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Short-Haul Plans and Equipment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 Forest Service Short-Haul Program Leader’s Intent</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Purpose</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Mission Statement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Director, Fire and Aviation Management Leader’s Intent</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Authority</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 General Policy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Short-Haul Organization and Responsibilities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 National Organization Requirements</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Regional Organizational Requirements</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Forest Organizational Requirements</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Administrative Direction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 General</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Reporting and Documentation Requirements</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Regional Short-Haul Start up request</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Short-Haul Base Operations Plans</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Quality Assurance Team In-Brief Package</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Funding</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Short-Haul QA Operations Review</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix E</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix F</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix G</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix H</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix I</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix J</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Short-haul operations have been conducted in the Forest Service for a number of years in the context of law enforcement missions. Historically there has also been a need in the wildland fire environment for emergency extraction of traumatically injured or seriously ill personnel in remote locations. In many situations, rapid extraction of injured or ill personnel is best accomplished using aviation resources; rapid extraction dramatically increases the likelihood of patient survival and recovery.

Local Government, State, other federal agencies, and military resources with short-haul or winch capability may not be available, timely, located or staffed appropriately to meet operational needs. Development of a capability using aviation resources already contracted by the Forest Service will facilitate the availability of such resources.

The overarching goal is to ensure safe and efficient use of short-haul capabilities where and when needed. In some cases, short-haul may be the most expedient means to get medical care to a person in need as well as extract an injured or ill employee for transport to definitive medical care.

The development and implementation of the National Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program will be a dynamic process. Best Practices will be evaluated from current programs to help develop the Forest Service program. The Quality Assurance (QA) process and documents may be modified to incorporate lessons learned and best practices.

Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program Development

In January 2014, a National Emergency Medical Short-Haul Working Team (NEMSHWT) was chartered by the National Director, Fire and Aviation Management. The focus of the NEMSHWT is to provide oversight and facilitate the standardization, development, implementation, and monitoring of all Forest Service short-haul operations associated with Emergency Medical Services (EMS). This includes crew structure, equipment, pilot qualifications, helicopters, training, operations, facilities and data management systems.

The NEMSHWT has established a sub-committee composed of a variety of Subject Matter Experts and Technical Specialists. This group is designated as the National Short-Haul Operations Subcommittee (NSHOS). The primary mission for the NSHOS is to establish a formal process for review and evaluation of current and proposed helicopter short-haul equipment, training, operating procedures and standardization. Based on those evaluations, the NSHOS will submit recommendations to the NEMSHWT.
The NEMSWHT will forward recommendations to the National Director, Fire and Aviation Management for decision, develop a Forest Service Short-Haul Action Plan, and provide oversight and facilitate the development, implementation, and monitoring of the standardization of all Forest Service short-haul operations.

This plan will identify the process for developing a QA team and recommended participants. The QA Team will address the hazards/mitigations that are national in scope and make recommendations for the development and implementation of the Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program.

The NEMSWHT recommends to the National Director, Fire and Aviation Management, that a limited number of Type 3 helicopters be activated for 2015 as test phase. Future numbers and locations of operations will be determined from a needs assessment process. Additionally, the NEMSHWT made the following recommendations regarding initial startup of the program and locations of operations:

1. Emergency medical short-haul will be just one of a number of options for treating and extracting injured or ill personnel. All such options must be considered and included in pre-incident emergency medical planning.
2. This initiative is being conducted by the Forest Service and will primarily involve Forest Service resources. The intent is to have a national standardized program for EMS short-haul in the Forest Service.
3. Short-haul is a melding of aviation and ground operations, thus it will be important to have firefighters, aviators and medical personnel working closely together to develop a robust, safe and effective program.
4. Short-haul capable aircraft will still be considered primarily firefighting resources; in other words they will continue to perform typical fire missions such as water drops, cargo and personnel transport while being available for short-haul missions if needed.
5. A programmatic risk assessment for EMS short-haul has been completed.
6. Short-haul operations will be conducted on a Type 3 helicopter platform.
7. Funding for equipment, training, contracting and inspection will be provided by the Washington Office, Fire and Aviation Management. Numbers, locations, staffing and contracting specifics remain to be determined.
8. A small number of short-haul test programs are projected to be evaluated in 2015.
9. A Communications Plan has been developed to facilitate effective and timely communications regarding program development to stakeholders and interested parties.
10. A Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operations Plan will be developed and field-reviewed prior to implementation.

**Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operations Plan**

The NSHOS will develop and recommend approval of the 2015 Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operation Plan (EMSHOP). The purpose of the Plan will be to outline
policies, procedures, qualifications, training requirements and equipment within the Forest Service program. Managers, Specialists, and Technicians will use this Plan in planning, administering and conducting short-haul operations.

**National Short-Haul Programmatic and Needs Assessment Review**

The National Emergency Medical Short-Haul Programmatic and Needs Assessment Review will provide a detailed analysis of Forest Service Lands within the Western US, to assist the Forest Service in making logical and supportable decisions regarding placement of short-haul resources.

**Quality Assurance**

**Stand Up of Initial Short-Haul Bases**

A Short-Haul Quality Assurance Team (QA Team) will be staffed to provide the QA review of Regions requesting establishment of the initial short-haul bases. The Short-Haul QA Team will evaluate regional and individual base programs prior to short-haul training to ensure equipment; aircraft, operational procedures, documentation, staffing, and qualifications are in compliance with existing agency aviation policy and procedures including the EMSHOP. Once approved the QA team will then follow the guidelines established in Section 4.0 Initial Base Activation Process, to include risk assessments and QA checklists. The QA Team will also evaluate regional and base participation in consolidated short-haul training.

**Short-Haul QA Operations Review**

Reviews will be conducted during the short-haul operational season, evaluating each of the short-haul bases/helicopters for compliance with the Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operation Plan (EMSHOP), intent and standards of the Forest Service National Short-Haul Program and maintaining an internal Quality Assurance Program. The QA Operations Review utilizes the Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program-Quality Assurance Checklist. (Appendix E)

**Future Short-Haul Plans and Equipment**

A Helicopter Screening and Evaluation Board (HSEB), has been established to evaluate helicopters makes and models for Forest Service aviation operations. The HSEB will be tasked with the evaluation of identified short-haul helicopters for the test program phase and future requests for programs.

**1.0 Forest Service Short-Haul Program Leader’s Intent**

**1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the Forest Service Short-Haul Program QA Plan is to describe National leader’s intent and the quality assurance processes for the Short-Haul Program. The Short-Haul QA plan specifically outlines FS policy, aviation organizations, best practices, training, implementation, and the evaluation and selection process for test programs and future base locations. This plan
documents standards that the National Short-Haul Quality Assurance Team evaluates against to implement a short-haul program and additional requirements. This plan was developed in 2014 to include the Quality Assurance Operations Review process as well as the establishment of the short-haul program management and oversight.

While this document is Forest Service specific, it does incorporate interagency standards.

1.2 Mission Statement

The primary mission of the Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program is to ensure safe and efficient use of short-haul capabilities when and where needed. In some cases, short-haul may be the most expedient means to get medical care to a person in need, as well as extract an injured or ill employee for transport to definitive medical care.

- The Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program provides a highly specialized delivery method of medical and extraction personnel and equipment. Short-haul provides for safe rapid deployment of aerial delivered personnel in areas with limited landing sites.
- All short-haul and medical extraction equipment, procedures, helicopter configuration, training, and training practices will be standardized nationally. The program will maintain the ability to move short-haul resources between geographic areas.
- Short-haul bases will have the capacity to host booster short-haulers and outfit them with appropriate equipment configured in a standard package.
- All short-haul bases will have minimum staffing to provide for seven (7) day coverage as identified in the EMSHOP.

1.3 Director, Fire and Aviation Management Leader’s Intent

The Forest Service’s Fire and Aviation Management Program goal is to provide the aviation tools to safely and efficiently accomplish missions related to the task of managing national forest resources. The Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program is no exception.

The intent of the Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program is to ensure safe and efficient use of short-haul capabilities to aid injured personnel. In some cases, short-haul may be the most expedient means to get medical care to a person in need as well as extract an injured or ill employee for transport to definitive medical care.

The Forest Service highly values the safety and health of its employees. Implementation of a well-designed Emergency Medical Short-Haul program can help us move toward the Chief’s aspiration of a zero-fatality workplace.

Operations

- The National Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program will be standardized.
- Short-haulers and short-haul aircraft will be a national shared resource as part of the Forest Service’s Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program.
- Short-haul training will be consolidated inter-regionally to maintain national standardization. Consolidated training will be defined in the Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operations Plan.
• The Short-Haul Program will maintain the ability to move short-haul resources between geographic areas to provide an effortless exchange of any individual short-hauler or group of short-haulers, their equipment, procedures, and helicopter with any other short-haul operation anywhere in the nation and be operational with minimum delay.
• A national database will be developed and adopted that produces efficient and accurate reports and documents short-haul equipment use.
• The number of short-haul bases, short-haulers, and platforms will be determined to meet regional and national needs.
• Short-haul module staffing and organization will be standardized throughout the program.

Risk Management and Safety
• Risk Management and Safety must be core values of our culture, ingrained in the character of every employee.
• Provide a safe and healthful environment for all our employees, volunteers, and partners.
• Risk management as part of Safety Management Systems (SMS) will be inherent in all aviation missions.
• All personnel are empowered and expected to manage the risks of aviation operations and make reasonable and prudent decisions to accomplish the mission. Individuals will be held accountable for their decisions, which should be based on policy, principles, risk management, training, experience, and the given situation.
• The agency is committed to ensuring our workplaces are free of recognized hazards and, prior to conducting any work project, all risks are mitigated to the lowest acceptable level possible.

Professionalism
• Personnel performing aviation functions must meet all qualification requirements of the Federal Aviation Regulations, Forest Service Manuals, Handbooks, and Guides.

Diversity
• Individual development, employee wellness, and workforce diversity will be emphasized at all levels of the Forest Service aviation program.

Innovation
• With a commitment to aviation risk management and efficiency, managers at all levels are responsible for enhancing the aviation program.

1.4 Authority

The National Emergency Medical Short-Haul Working Team is responsible for Forest Service national program oversight. This group and its advisors serve as the “Steering Committee” and are authorized to develop policy, procedures, and operational oversight and approve equipment for the national emergency medical short-haul program. It is the responsibility of the
NEMSHWT to ensure that the Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operations Plan adheres to the policies and procedures as outlined in the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG), FSM-5100, and FSM-5700.

1.5 General Policy

Policy that requires employees to follow the short-haul direction as in the FSM 5700, which references the Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Helicopter Operations Plan (EMSHOP).

- Any changes to Regional, Forest, or individual base management, leadership or key short-haul operational positions may require short-haul base(s) stand-down and a re-evaluation by the QA Team.
- The national office should establish a dedicated National Short-Haul Specialist position that will provide program management and oversight to the short-haul program. This position is critical to the implementation and continued quality assurance of the Short-Haul Program.

2.0 Short-Haul Organization and Responsibilities

Staff, at all levels must be able to perform the operational, safety and risk management, and quality assurance oversight for all the short-haul operations. Vacancies can be mitigated through long term details, as well as normal placement options. The QA Team would expect a mitigation plan if positions are vacant. Additionally, key oversight and management positions can be supported by qualified supplemental personnel during peak operational periods.

2.1 National Organization Requirements

The National Office needs to be staffed to support the national short-haul program. The positions required are:

- Assistant Director, Aviation
- Branch Chief, Airworthiness
- Branch Chief, Aviation Operations
- Branch Chief, Aviation Risk Management and Training
- National Helicopter Operations Specialist
- National Short-Haul Specialist
- National Helicopter Standardization Pilot

2.2 Regional Organizational Requirements

The Region needs to be staffed to support short-haul prior to submitting request and activation of a program. These positions need to also be staffed before the Quality Assurance team’s arrival. The positions required are:

- Regional Fire Director
- Regional Aviation Officer
- Regional Helicopter Operations Specialist
- Regional Aviation Safety Manager
- Aviation Maintenance Inspector
- Regional Short-Haul Specialist
- Regional Check-spotter

The Region needs to provide documentation to the QA Team that each position is staffed.

### 2.3 Forest Organizational Requirements

The Forest needs to be staffed to support short-haul prior to Quality Assurance arrival. The positions required are:
- Forest Fire Management Officer
- Forest Aviation Officer
- Helicopter Base Manager
- Short-Haul Spotters
- Short-haulers
- Emergency Medical Technicians

Each Forest needs to provide documentation to the RO that each position is staffed.

### 3.0 Administrative Direction

#### 3.1 General

The administration section establishes management responsibilities, policies, and procedures for the administration of the establishment and implementation of the short-haul program in each Forest Service Region. Regions that would like to add the short-haul capability to existing type 3 exclusive use helicopter base(s) need to submit the required documents to the chair of the National Emergency Medical Short-Haul Working Team (NEMSHWT). For the 2016 season, proposals must be submitted by June 1st 2015; recommendations for new base startups will be made by July 15th 2015. For subsequent fiscal years, proposals must be submitted by February 1st of the year prior to desired implementation. NEMSHWT will review and make recommendations for new bases by March 15th of the same year.

#### 3.2 Reporting and Documentation Requirements

The requesting Region is responsible for submitting the documents listed below to request a Quality Assurance Team Review to activate a short-haul base:

- Formal written Short-haul capability request from the Forest to the Region.
- Formal written request for Regional short-haul start up from the Regional Forester or designee to the Chair of the National Emergency Medical Short-Haul Working Team (NEMSHWT)
- Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Plan Quality Assurance Checklist (Appendix E)
• Provide a copy of each Base(s) Helicopter Short-Haul Operations Plan
• Train-the-Trainer course attendee list (proposed)
• Crew Resource Management course attendee list
• Regional and Forest fire and aviation staffing adequate to support short-haul oversight and QA. (A list of aviation positions are listed in Chapter 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of this document.)
• Regional and Forest analysis supporting these requests including:
  1) Current extraction capable resources within a 100nm, including type, response times and availability
  2) Amount of inaccessible terrain
  3) Frequency of aerial delivered firefighter use
  4) Historical need and use of extraction
• Regional Quality Assurance Review for operational season

3.3 Regional Short-Haul Start up request

A request to establish a short-haul base in a Region will include the following at a minimum:
• Helicopter availability for QA Team Aviation Maintenance Inspection.
• Number and location of bases and short-hauler personnel.
• Exclusive Use Fire short-haul crewmembers shall have previous wildland fire experience and all crewmembers shall be minimally qualified as HECM (t).
• Regional aviation leadership staffing to support short-haul and quality assurance.
• Forest aviation leadership staffing to support short-haul and quality assurance.
  o Adequate number of qualified spotters to support 7 day coverage. Provide mitigation measures if this may be an issue.
• Proposed timeline including the QA review, training (if known) and operations.

3.4 Short-Haul Base Operations Plans

Short-Haul Base Operations Plan shall document the following:
• Introduction/Overview
• Organization and Responsibility
  o Qualified spotters for 7 day coverage
  o Qualified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) Short-Haulers for 7 day coverage
• Operational Risk Management Process
• Helibase Operations
• Helicopter Operations
• Administrative Procedures
• Aircraft Accident/Incident Planning and Processes
• Supplements including:
  o Other aircraft operations
  o Helispot/Helibase directory
  o Minimum equipment list to short-haul
3.5 Quality Assurance Team In-Brief Package

The QA Team will provide In-brief documentation prior to arrival that will outline the team’s expectations, agenda, and individuals that should be present.

3.6 Funding

The Washington Office will incur all of the expenses for the QA Team.

3.7 Short-Haul QA Operations Review

The regional fire and aviation staff in collaboration with national aviation staff will conduct a QA operations review of helicopter short-haul operations and programs as part of the Short-Haul Quality Assurance Plan as outlined in the Short-Haul Risk Assessment Action Plan. QA Operations reviews of each regional component(s) will continue throughout the initial startup season and subsequent years. Regions and the National Short-Haul Specialist will coordinate to minimize the number of reviews, minimize the impact to operations and to include other reviews, audits, etc. planned for the same base or unit. Planning for reviews should be completed early in the season and scheduled with the hosting Region/Unit.

The purpose of the Short-Haul QA Operations Review is to ensure that all short-haul programs are meeting the intent and standards of the Short-Haul Program, abiding by the Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operations Plan (EMSHOP) and maintaining a Quality Assurance Program. This information will also be utilized to provide a detailed end of season report to the National Director, Fire and Aviation Management to ensure the Quality Assurance Program is progressive, appropriate, and consistent with the short-haul mission.

The review teams will consist of:

- National Short-Haul Specialist
- Regional HOS and/or appointed Regional Short-Haul Representative
- Regional Aviation Safety Manager not from the Region being reviewed
- Helicopter Inspector Pilot not from the Region being reviewed
- Aviation Maintenance Inspector not from the Region being reviewed
The Short-Haul QA Operations Team will evaluate all facets of the short-haul program utilizing the *Forest Service Short-Haul Program – Quality Assurance Checklist* (Appendix E) meeting the intent of the National standardization effort, adhering to the EMSHOP and implementation of a Region/Unit Short-Haul Quality Assurance Program. The areas to be evaluated include but are not limited to:

- Standard approved equipment is used per the EMSHOP
- Inspection, maintenance, and care of equipment is performed as outlined in the EMSHOP
- Procedures and equipment are consistent with EMSHOP requirements for short-haul operations
- Aircraft are equipped in a consistent manner per the contract specifications
- Documentation is completed as required in the EMSHOP
- Qualifications (short-haul, medical and fire) of the personnel follow the EMSHOP, FSM, and FSH policy
- Aircraft configuration meets specifications as stated in the helicopter contract and EMSHOP
- Verbal commands and hand signals are consistent from base-to-base per the EMSHOP
- Currency and proficiency requirements are being met per EMSHOP
- After Action Reviews (AAR’s) are performed and documented after each operational short-haul

### 4.0 Initial Base Start Up Process

#### 4.1 General

Establishment of a short-haul base will be a large undertaking and should be planned well in advance.

#### 4.2 Consolidated Short-Haul Training

Consolidated Short-Haul Training shall be defined as, “In one location consecutively scheduled to provide continuity of instruction for purposes of standardization.” The intent of consolidated short-haul training is to ensure there is standardization nationally and across the individual short-haul crews. Training location(s) will be approved by the NEMSWT. A National Short-Haul Training Cadre will conduct the training at the nationally approved location(s). The cadre will ensure that standardization is consistent across the National Emergency Medical Short-Haul Program.

#### 4.2.1 Forest Service Short-Haul Training Cadre

A National Short-Haul Training Cadre will be organized by the National Short-Haul specialist (NSHS) with oversight from the NEMSHWT/NSHOS. The identified cadre for the initial startup phase will be allowed to provide training and guidance with approval from NEMSHWT, and in subsequent years will consist of qualified short-haul check spotters, spotters, and other relevant trainers. Regional requests for short-haul training will be need to follow the approval process as listed in section 3.0.
4.3 National Short-Haul QA Team Planning

The National Short-Haul QA Team will be organized by the NSHS. The QA team will include at a minimum (or designee); the National Short-Haul Specialist; NEMSHWT Chair, Aviation Risk Management and National Helicopter Operations Specialist. A National Helicopter Inspector Pilot; National Aircraft Maintenance Inspector, National Fire and Forest Service Medical Officer and other Subject Matter Experts may be included on the QA Team. The team should be organized 30 days prior to attending a regional short-haul training academy or comparable session.

4.4 Documentation

A requesting Region will submit the documents listed in Section 3.2. Once selected the requesting Region will also complete Regional Risk Assessment listed in EMSHOP Appendix L.

4.5 Train-the-Trainer

The Train-the-Trainer (TTT) concept was identified in the Short-Haul Risk Assessment as one means to facilitate standardization in procedures, terminology, and instruction. The NSHS will coordinate TTT training sessions using the nationally developed course agenda.

4.6 Crew Resource Management Training

Crew Resource Management (CRM) training has been identified in the Forest Service National Program Action Plan. CRM is a means to facilitate standardization in spotter and pilot communication. The CRM training agenda will be documented in a lesson plan reviewed by the National Short-Haul Training Cadre and approved by the NEMSHWT. The agenda will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Seven critical skills of CRM
- Short-haul mission normal and emergency procedures.
- Challenge and response and scenarios.
- Fueling considerations
- CRM training includes the Pilot Test Standards and pertinent sections of the Forest Service Emergency Medical Short-Haul Operations Plan.
- Base Managers conduct base specific CRM training with short-haul pilots (vendor pilots and relief pilots) and spotters.

5.0 Deactivation and Reactivation Process for Existing Bases

5.1 General

If for any reason a short-haul base is not in compliance with existing standards, the Short-Haul Quality Assurance (QA) Operations Team or NEMSHWT may recommend in writing to the National Director, Aviation and Operations that the short-haul base be restricted to helitack
operations only until all deficiencies are corrected. This documentation will also be sent to the Regional Fire Director and the Regional Aviation Officer.

The short-haul program will be given adequate time, as acknowledged by the Short-Haul QA Operations Review Team or NEMSHWT, to respond to the deficiencies and to identify corrective action planned or already taken. A formal request by the region for a follow-up review will be conducted by the NEMSHWT, National Helicopter Operations Specialist (NHOS), and the Branch Chief, Aviation Safety Management Systems (BCASMS) to ensure the deficiency(s) has been corrected.

Approval to permanently restrict a short-haul base to helitack or approval to reactivate short-haul operations after being restricted will be by the National Director, Fire and Aviation Management based on documented recommendations from the NSHS, NEMSHWT, NHOS and the BCASMS to the Assistant Director, Aviation, Assistant Director, Fire Operations and the Assistant, Director Risk Management.

Deactivation/Reactivation Process:
1. QA Operations Team and or the NSHS recommend in writing, identifying deficiencies to AD’s and the region that short-haul base is restricted.
2. The decision to restrict the short-haul base shall be communicated to the appropriate individuals within 24 hours.
3. The program is given adequate time to correct deficiencies, two (2) weeks from the date of the written recommendation in No. 1 above.
4. A formal request by the Region including corrective actions will be sent to the AD’s.
5. At a minimum, a review will be conducted by the Short-Haul QA Operations Team or NEMSHWT with recommendations to AD’s.
6. AD’s will provide written recommendation for reactivation or continued restriction to helitack (with rationale) of program to the region.
7. If recommendation is to restrict a short-haul base to helitack only on a permanent basis, AD’s will confer with NSHS, NEMSHWT, NHOS and BCASMS and provide written recommendation to the National Director, Fire and Aviation Management.
8. National Director, Fire and Aviation Management will provide to the Region, the decision to deactivate short-haul at that base on a permanent basis.
9. If after one (1) calendar year the Region wishes to activate short-haul operations at the deactivated base, a formal request will be sent to the National Director, Fire and Aviation Management.
10. If approved, the QA plan for reactivation in this document will be followed.

6.0 Consolidated Short-Haul Training Plan

6.1 General
The United States Forest Service has demonstrated that a National Consolidated Training model is an effective and efficient way to provide quality aviation training to large groups of individuals from several Regions. Consolidated training promotes standardization of procedures, equipment, and increases quality assurance, while promoting efficiency inside the whole program. Consolidated training provides individuals with high quality instruction from the most qualified individuals within the program. It also promotes networking between individual
programs which can foster cultures associated with crew cohesion and highly reliable organizations.

6.2 Train the Trainer
During the 2014-15 seasons Forest Service NSHOS participants may be evaluating and learning from the following:

- National Park Service Short-Haul Program
- Forest Service Region 5 LEI Program
- HIP Evaluation Trainings
- Contracted Subject Matter Experts

The following Cadre members are recommended to form the initial group of subject matter experts for developing the consolidated training program. A combination of these individuals will review and evaluate the aforementioned programs and report back to the NEMSHWT and/or NSHOS. This will be the foundation for developing the Forest Service national consolidated training program:

- National Short-Haul Specialist
- Short-haul check spotters
- NSHOS Voting Member(s) and/or HOS group
- Training
- Equipment
- Helicopter Inspector Pilot
- NPS Short-Haul program managers
- Medical
- Safety/SMS/Risk Assessment

6.3 National Short-Haul Training Cadre
The National Short-Haul Training Cadre should be comprised of individuals from different Regions and bases, with check spotters included as the primary cadre leaders. The NSHS will coordinate with NEMSHWT and the Operations Group for the selection of cadre members. The NSHS position would provide oversight to the National Short-Haul Training Cadre.

The NSHS shall:

- Develop expectations for each position
- Complete a plan for the development of the National Consolidated Short-Haul Training
- Create a formal letter that is sent out to the Regional Aviation Group(s) that introduce the training cadre and plan

6.4 National Short-Haul Training Team
One key component of consolidated training is staffing key ICS positions to plan and coordinate logistics and training sessions. As the program develops, the ICS structure will adapt to specific needs and opportunities and additional positions will be adjusted as needed. The training academy may be comprised of the following positions:

- Incident Commander
All positions can be staffed by veteran short-haulers or individuals with expertise and qualification for the position. Short-haul trainees will not hold any collateral role and duties in the listed ICS functions.

6.5 Training Sessions

Consolidated training will combine initial and annual re-currency training.

6.6 Initial and Re-currency Short-Haul Training

Initial short-haul and spotter training will consist of the following topics:

- Crew Resource Management
- Program Overview and Policy
- Ground school and equipment orientation
- Communications
- Aviation flight dynamics
- Safety concerns and emergency procedures
- Documentation
- Field Training/Helicopter and equipment orientation
- Equipment and aircraft configuration
- Spotter responsibilities
- Short-hauler responsibilities
- Ground Mockups
- Static Suspension
- Lift Training
- Circuit Training
- Typical Terrain Training
- Mission Specific Training (Patient packaging)

Helicopters would be coordinated between the NSHS and Regional HOS for each training session.

6.7 Consolidated Short-Haul Training

To efficiently conduct consolidated short-haul training a facility should meet the following criteria:

- A training room large enough to accommodate known attendees
• Operations room that facilitates all the helibase requirements associated with consolidated short-haul training
• Additional conference/meeting room for accommodating additional group needs (HIP, QA, and HOS’s)
• Pre-established logistical requirements (Cache Orders, Food Vendors)
• Helibase is large enough to accommodate aircraft
• Pre-identified typical terrain short-haul sites
• Reduced travel time between the training facility and lodging

7.0 Short-Haul Best Practices

7.1 General

It has been determined that Best Practices, Lessons Learned and Quality Assurance Reviews are very important aspects of a highly reliable organization and should be shared globally throughout the Short-haul community.

7.2 Inter-Regional Short-Haul Working Group

Establish an Inter-Regional Short-Haul Working Group. Members include regional management representatives and short-haul specialists presently involved in the short-haul program. The responsibility of the Working Group is to promote standardization, provide quality assurance, oversight, and exchange ideas and techniques with the entire short-haul community.

7.3 Spotter Emersion Training

Spotters can be in limited numbers on occasion due to personnel changes, other fire assignments, and other factors that may impede qualifying people to that level. A shortage of spotters may require moving spotters from base to base to provide coverage and maintain short-haul capability. A Best Practice is to develop a Spotter Emersion Training curriculum (Appendix G) to ensure that there are adequate spotters available for every operational mission and during training.

7.4 Use of the SAFECOM System for Reporting

All short-haul mishaps (including ground, training and operational) shall be reported through the SAFECOM system until there is another approved process.

7.5 Aviation Operational Risk Management

Forest Service policy (FSM 5720.3, 5704.61, and FSH 5709.16 03) requires “a risk assessment prior to any aviation mission.” Utilizing the Aviation Operational Risk Management worksheet (Appendix H) will meet this policy requirement for all aviation missions.

The Aviation ORM may be a combination of time critical and deliberate risk assessment depending on planning time.

• The primary purpose of the Aviation ORM Work Sheet is to initiate and stimulate dialogue between aviation managers and users
• The AORM provides a simple means to assess risk and document risk decisions
• GAR will be utilized to meet this requirement

7.6 Use of Aviation Safety Technical Assistance Teams (A STAT)

Use the guidance and procedures in the Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Handbook (Redbook) Chapter 16-6 to initiate, provide direction to, document, and utilize an ASTAT. ASTAT teams can provide additional quality assurance and audit oversight during active fire periods. Specific to short-haul, ASTAT may need additional in-briefing, specialized team members (Check Spotter) and documentation.

7.7 Regional Helicopter Short-Haul Specialist

Regions hosting short-haul programs will identify a dedicated Regional Short-Haul Specialist that can provide program management and oversight to the Region’s short-haul program(s). This position is critical to the activation, implementation, and continued quality assurance of the short-haul Program. This position will coordinate short-haul activities with the National Short-Haul Specialist.

Appendix A

Official Correspondence:
• National Short-Haul Program briefing paper (Oct. 2014)
• Short-haul communications Plan

Appendix B

Appendix C

National Short-haul QA Team – Activation Checklist

Appendix D

Blank

Appendix E

National Short-haul Program – Quality Assurance Checklist
Appendix F
Blank

Appendix G

Appendix H
Aviation Operational Risk Management Worksheet v8.1

Appendix I
Activation Request Documentation Checklist

Appendix J