NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Reference Manual #60: Aviation Management

Chapter 1 – Aviation Management Overview

(Update release September 2024)

Prepared by the Branch of Aviation

Reviewed by the Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation Management

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Signature / Date

Approved by the Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection

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Signature / Date

1   Aviation Management Overview

1.1   Background and Purpose

National Park Service (NPS) Reference Manual-60, Aviation Management (RM-60, 2019) is superseded and replaced by this RM-60, Aviation Management 2024 which is intended to guide NPS personnel engaged in aviation management activities. This manual incorporates the policies contained in the latest version of NPS *Management Policies 2006*, and the instructions, requirements, and operational policies contained in Director's Order 60 (DO-60). NPS *Management Policies 2006*, DO-60, and this manual are all supplemental to and must be consistent with, policies, procedures, and instructions issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the Department of the Interior (DOI), where appropriate. FAA and DOI policies, procedures, and instructions are cited or attached as appendices to this manual. FAA regulations may be accessed at the FAA website. DOI aviation policies are posted on the Office of Aviation Services Library page as well as the DOI Interior Library page.

This manual is issued under the authority of DO-60, which requires the Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation Management (DFAM), to: (1) Compile the most relevant information on aviation management; (2) issue other instructions as may be necessary to implement DO-60; and (3) make the information and instructions available to NPS parks and programs in the form of this manual.

NPS is responsible for flight crewmembers, aircrew members, and passengers on board when aircraft are under its operational control. This manual is applicable to all NPS parks and programs, NPS employees, NPS volunteers, persons supervised by NPS employees, and support service contractors when falling under NPS's operational control during flight operations (all hereinafter referred to as NPS personnel for ease of reference). Persons employed by, and whose work is directed solely by, cooperators or contractors are exempt from provisions of this handbook except when their duties include the use of flight services under the operational control of the NPS. In that event, such persons will be subject to the policies and procedures contained herein.

All parks and regions can utilize their existing aviation management plan (USPP Aviation Guidance Manual) for six months after this version is signed by the Chief, DFAM.

DEVIATIONS FROM POLICY: NPS personnel are authorized to deviate from this policy manual for emergencies. See 350 DM 1.3B. All deviations must be reported as expeditiously as possible to the regional and national aviation offices via phone or email. Deviations from policy require a SAFECOM to be filed based on the nature of the incident. More information on SAFECOMS can be found in Chapter 17 and 352 DM 3. See Chapter 3.4, *Risk Management* for requirements regarding the required risk assessments related to emergency or urgent missions.

1.2   NPS Management Policies

NPS *Management Policies 2006, Section 8.4 Overflights and Aviation Uses*, reads, in part:

"A variety of aircraft, including military, commercial, general aviation, and aircraft used for National Park Service administrative purposes, fly in the airspace over national parks. While there are many legitimate aviation uses, overflights can adversely affect park resources and values and interfere with visitor enjoyment. The Service will take all necessary steps to avoid or to mitigate adverse effects from aircraft overflights."

For more information on these subject areas see NPS Management Policies 2006 sections:

8.4.1 Alaska and Remote Areas

8.4.4 Administrative Use

8.4.6 Commercial Air Tour Management

8.4.8 Airport and Landing Sites

1.3   NPS Aviation Strategic Plan

To ensure safe and efficient aviation operations across the NPS, the Aviation Branch has created the following philosophy based on the FAA Notice to Air Missions acronym (NOTAM) for aviation users to become familiar with the guiding philosophy of the national program. This NOTAM can be found within the *NPS Aviation Strategic Plan*.

1. **N**ever stop striving to achieve the highest standards of aviation safety and professionalism for NPS employees and cooperators engaged in aviation activities.

2. **O**ffer accurate and consistent leadership, establish policies that foster a positive culture assuring aviation safety, and provide direction for the aviation program to increase the effectiveness of operations servicewide.

3. **T**raining will promote aviation safety while being relevant and readily available to meet policy requirements and field operational needs.

4. **A**ssurance of aviation policy implementation and accountability are essential to the success of the aviation program.

5. **M**anage aviation risks effectively so that they are minimized to the greatest extent possible.

1.4   Environmental Concerns

Noise and visual impacts resulting from aircraft operations in the National Parks are a concern. Development of park aviation plans and specific mission planning must consider impacts on wildlife, the natural and cultural soundscapes and visual values of wilderness, historic and cultural scenes, American Indian sacred sites and traditional practices, as well as specific local restrictions or exceptions provided for by law and policy. These include but are not limited to all aspects of NPS *Management Policies 2006* and the following acts:

- National Park Service Organic Act

- Endangered Species Act

- National Historic Preservation Act

- American Indian Religious Freedom Act

- Indian Sacred Sites Executive Order

- Wilderness Act

Director's Orders of special note include:

- DO-12: Environmental Impact Analysis

- DO-18: Wildland Fire Management

- DO-28: Cultural Resources Management

- DO-41: Wilderness Stewardship

- DO-47: Soundscape Preservation and Noise Management

- DO-71B: Indian Sacred Sites

See Chapter 11, *Flight Operations* for additional information to minimize effects to natural and cultural resources and visitor experience.

1.5   Aviation Park Levels

Parks that utilize aviation are broken down into three levels based on the risk associated with the amount of flight hours and types of missions flown. See Appendix 11, *Park Level Determination Sheet*, to evaluate the overall risk and associated park aviation level.

Level 1 – Any park or combined aviation program with a risk level more than 100. Level 1 aviation parks are required to have a non-collateral duty Park Aviation Manager (PAM).

Level 2 – Any park with a risk level between 50 and 100. Level 2 aviation parks shall assign an employee with collateral duty responsibility to serve as the PAM.

Level 3 – Any park that has a risk level less than 50. Level 3 aviation parks may operate under a regional aviation management plan.

The USPP Aviation Unit, based on organizational structure meet the required operational risk management and oversight for a Level 1 park.

Note: See PAM responsibilities Chapter 1.6.18.

1.6 Organizational Responsibilities

Major responsibilities for each of the following include, but are not limited to:

Department of the Interior (DOI) and Interagency Organizations

1.6.1 Office of Aviation Services (OAS)

The OAS is assigned to the DOI Deputy Assistant Secretary of Public Safety, Resource Protection, and Emergency Services. (OAS was formerly known as the Aviation Management Directorate (AMD). References to AMD for printed material and form numbers will continue in field use until reissued by OAS. OAS is responsible for department-wide functions related to aircraft services and facilities, to include fuel systems, and exists to support DOI bureau aviation needs.

1.6.2 DOI Executive Aviation Board (EAB)

The Executive Aviation Board (EAB) is responsible for the DOI aviation program. The EAB provides executive oversight and performance accountability and assures that department-wide strategies and initiatives are developed and implemented consistently throughout the DOI.

1.6.3 Executive Aviation Committee (EAC)

The EAC incorporates a senior line manager from the Visitor and Resource Protection Directorate management level for the purpose of formulating department-wide aviation policies and procedures in conjunction with OAS. These members from each DOI bureau are usually at the senior executive service level of management, and reports to the EAB.

1.6.4 Executive Aviation Subcommittee (EAS)

The EAS is comprised of bureau national aviation managers and aviation safety managers who, as aviation subject matter experts (SMEs), recommend changes in aviation policy to the EAC. The EAS reports to the EAC.

1.6.5 National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG)

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group provides national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners.

1.6.6 National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC)

The National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC) provides national leadership in wildland fire aviation. The NIAC facilitates the development and implementation of interagency fire aviation standards, procedures, and programs to enhance safety, effectiveness, and efficiency in all areas of aviation operations. The NIAC develops interagency guidance for fire aviation for adoption and use by the member agencies. The NIAC also provides interagency aviation guidance for law enforcement, search and rescue,

and resource management aviation for the US Forest Service (USFS) and Department of Interior (DOI). NIAC reports to the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Executive Board.

National Park Service

1.6.7   National Aviation Leadership Board (NALB)

The NALB is comprised of regional aviation managers (RAMs), USPP, and representatives from NPS leadership and the National Aviation Office (NAO). Specific membership within the NALB is captured within the charter.

1. Provides input to the Chief, DFAM regarding aviation policy at the departmental and bureau level.

2. Advises the national staff on responses to agency and departmental aviation issues.

3. Develops and facilitates implementation of annual programs of work in support of the NPS *Aviation Strategic Plan*.

4. Provides an avenue to achieve standardization for aviation operations and management related issues.

5. Establishes priority for NPS SMEs to participate on inter-bureau/interagency groups and committees.

6. Recommends level of financial support for participants and projects to the Chief, DFAM.

1.6.8   Chief, Division of Fire and Aviation Management (DFAM)

The Chief, DFAM is responsible for overseeing the NPS Fire and Aviation Program, in which the aviation branch is organizationally located within the Washington D.C. office of the NPS.

1. Provides management oversight of the NPS aviation safety program.

2. May serve as the NPS representative to EAC.

3. Responsible for the implementation of the NPS aviation operation and safety program as the accountable executive.

4. May delegate any responsibilities to the Branch Chief, Aviation (National Aviation Manager, NAM).

1.6.9   Branch Chief, Aviation (National Aviation Manager, NAM)

The NAM serves as the principal aviation advisor for NPS.

1. Functions as the branch representative to the Chief, DFAM.

2. The NAM or designee is the primary point of contact within the NPS, OAS, and with other bureaus for notification of significant aviation-related events and policy-related matters.

3. Serves as NPS representative to the EAS.

4. Serves as NPS representative to the National Interagency Aviation Committee (NIAC).

5. The NAM provides oversight on all aspects of NPS aviation management, including establishing an effective safety management system at a servicewide level.

6. Coordinates requests for new aviation program approvals, (e.g., single skid, toe in, and hover exit/entry procedures (STEP), short-haul, rappel), policy waiver requests, and exceptions to policy. Coordinates and recommends approval requests with the Chief, DFAM.

7. Disseminates aviation-related policy and technical information.

8. Coordinates with OAS for NPS aviation program evaluations.

9. Assigns representatives to accident review boards. Actively works with other program managers to ensure operational aviation issues are addressed in program and policy decisions.

10. Coordinates fleet aircraft acquisition, replacement, and disposal to support agency programs.

11. Responsible for budget submissions, tracking, and branch expenditures.

12. Assigns a liaison to accident investigation teams.

13. Responsible for Regional Aviation Program Reviews.

14. Convenes NPS Pilot Evaluation Board (PEB).

15. Issues and compiles the results of the *Annual Aviation Program Report and Assurance Statement* (AAPRAS) for submission to the Chief, DFAM.

16. Issues Letters of Authorizations and rescinds, as necessary. These letters provide the authority to serve as an NPS pilot and/or DOI Instructor Pilot. Requests issuance, suspension or revocation of DOI pilot qualification cards from the OAS regional director.

17. Consult with the Chief, DFAM and affected Regional Director and affected Superintendent if a program warrants a stand down or suspension if serious safety issues are present.

1.6.10 National Aviation Safety Manager (NASM)

The NASM serves as the principal aviation safety advisor for the NPS.

1. Primary responsibility is to implement the NPS aviation safety program.
2. Serves as the principal safety advisor and lead for implementing an effective Safety Management Systems (SMS) program at a servicewide level.

3. Coordinates with OAS for NPS aviation program evaluations.

4. Performs as the principal NPS representative for accident investigations and review boards.

5. Manages the overall aviation safety effort of the NPS and serves as principal advisor on all technical and administrative aviation safety matters.

6. Analyzes accident and incident trends, monitors the Aviation Mishap Information System (AMIS), SAFECOM reports, and serious safety concerns.

7. Recommends and develops servicewide aviation safety policies covering all phases of the highly complex and diversified mix of NPS aviation activities such as law enforcement; search and rescue (including hoist, short-haul, rappel); aerial capture, eradication and tagging of animals (ACETA); fire management activities; and natural resource support.

8. Coordinates with the RAM and PAM to conduct site visits and quality assurance checks to ensure NPS aviation programs are operating safely and following established policy.

9. Has oversight of aviation training for NPS and provides training and certification guidance for NPS aviation personnel.

10. Serves as a member on Interagency Aviation Training Subcommittee (IATS) and Aviation Risk Management Subcommittee (ARMS) under NIAC. May serve as a member of other NIAC subcommittees, as directed by the NAM.

11. Oversees aviation training and compliance for national level employees.

1.6.11 National Helicopter Operations Specialist (HOS)

The HOS serves as principal helicopter advisor for NPS.

1. Serves as NPS representative to aviation committees tasked under EAS.

2. Serves as NPS SME for hoist, ACETA, search and rescue (SAR), short-haul, rappel, and aviation risk management, as requested.

3. Coordinates with the RAM and PAM for existing and new programs, providing technical expertise in the preparation of program approval requests (STEP, short-haul, rappel), quality assurance checks, and coordinates with aviation managers and NPS leadership for waivers and exceptions to policy requests.

4. Coordinates and recommends approval requests to the NAM for aviation operations requiring agency level approval.

5. Disseminates helicopter related policy, safety, and technical information.

6. Performs as NPS representative for accident investigations and review boards.

7. Actively works with other program managers and RAMs to ensure operational aviation issues are addressed in program and policy decisions.

8. Responsible for helicopter budget tracking and preparing budget submissions, assisting regions with requests.

9. Serves as a member of the Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee (IHOpS) under NIAC. May serve as a member of other NIAC subcommittees, as directed by the NAM.

10. Serves on the team that reviews submissions from vendors for all rotary wing exclusive use contracts and any follow-on modifications.

1.6.12 National Fixed Wing Specialist (NFWS)

The NFWS serves as a principal fleet aircraft and pilot training advisor for NPS.

1. Serves as NPS representative to aviation committees tasked under EAS.

2. Serves as NPS SME for aviation projects to include pilot training and fleet aircraft management, as requested.

3. Coordinates with the RAM and PAM and provides coordination between the national office and all NPS units concerning safety, operations, investigation, direction, training, and compliance for the conduct of aircraft operations and program activities, and quality assurance checks.

4. Coordinates with OAS on fleet management activities and resolving aircraft issues.

5. Provides national coordination for the NPS Developmental Pilot Program contained in *OPM-22, DOI Operational Procedures Memorandum*.

6. Analyzes NPS fleet aircraft and pilot needs.

7. Serves as the point of contact for the Aviation Business Case Study (ABCS) process for NPS crewed fleet aircraft and works with parks on fleet aircraft acquisition, replacement, and disposal to support agency programs.

8. Coordinates and recommends approval requests, to the NAM, for aviation operations requiring agency level approvals.

9. Disseminates aviation related policy, safety, and technical information.

10. Performs as an NPS representative for accident investigations and review boards.

11. Actively works with other program managers and RAMs to ensure operational aviation issues are addressed in program and policy decisions.

12. May serve as a member of NIAC subcommittees, as directed by the NAM.

1.6.13 The National Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (NUAS) Specialist

The NUAS serves as the principal UAS advisor for NPS.

1. The NUAS serves as NPS representative to aviation committees tasked under EAS.
2. Serves as NPS SME for UAS aviation projects and committees to include pilot training, fleet aircraft, and management, as requested.

3. Coordinates with the RAMs and prioritizes NPS employees to attend all UAS interagency training based on available allocation of training slots.

4. Coordinates with the RAM and PAM and provides coordination between the national office and all NPS units concerning safety, operations, investigation, direction, training, and compliance for the conduct of aircraft operations and program activities, and quality assurance checks.

5. Provides national coordination for the NPS UAS training program contained in OPM-11, *DOI Use of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems*.

6. Analyzes NPS UAS fleet aircraft and pilot needs.

7. Serves as the point of contact for acquisition and procurement for NPS uncrewed fleet aircraft.

8. Coordinates and recommends approval requests, to the NAM, for aviation operations requiring agency level approvals.

9. Disseminates aviation related policy, safety, and technical information; performs as an NPS representative for accident investigations and review boards.

10. Actively works with other program managers and RAMs to ensure operational aviation issues are addressed in program and policy decisions.

11. Serves as the primary NPS contact with OAS UAS branch for UAS specific needs and projects.

12. Serves as a member of the Interagency Fire Unmanned Aircraft Systems Subcommittee under NIAC. May serve as a member of other NIAC subcommittees, as directed by the NAM.

1.6.14   Regional Director (RD)

The RD is responsible for implementation, management, and supervision of the aviation program(s) in their region. This includes the following:

1. Support and disseminate aviation policies and information.

2. Ensure availability of aviation expertise to field managers who are responsible for aircraft operations.

3. Assign a liaison to aviation accident investigation teams.

4. Promote and support the SAFECOM system.

5. Participate in or assign a senior line officer from the region to participate in an Aircraft Mishap Review Board (AMRB) for incidents occurring within their region.

6. Responsible for ensuring park aviation programs are reviewed periodically for compliance with applicable regulations and policies.

7. Approves waivers for Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE).

8. May approve an exception to policy utilizing Appendix 5 regarding park aviation levels.

1.6.15 Regional Aviation Manager (RAM) and Deputy Regional Aviation Manager (DRAM)*

The RAM and DRAM provides technical expertise and aviation safety oversight of the parks in their geographic area. Each region has a designated RAM, and some regions also utilize a DRAM. Regions may partner to share a RAM.

*Note: USPP will be considered a region for the purposes of RM-60. This will allow the USPP Aviation Unit (as noted below in Section 1.6.17) to be considered as a park. USPP will receive support from a RAM or NAO staff, as determined by the USPP Chief and NAM.

1. Provides technical and policy oversight for aviation safety.

2. Observe regional aviation activities and provide liaison with the NAO staff, and other agencies, as appropriate.

3. Serve as NPS representative to aviation committees such as NALB.

4. Provide assistance to aviation users for the implementation of departmental policy, DO-60 and this reference manual.

5. Review proposed changes in policy and procedure.

6. Coordinate or instruct aviation training courses, as requested.

7. Review requests for new flight services such as on-call contacts, aircraft rental agreements, exclusive use contracts, or call-when-needed (CWN) contracts.

8. Review, as requested, park aviation management plans.

9. May be delegated to serve as NPS representative for accident investigations and review boards.

10. Serve as regional point of contact for UAS development, planning, and process.

11. Review and correct, if necessary, NPS SAFECOM submissions prior to release.

12. Where applicable, manage quality assurance/quality compliance (QAQC) process for fleet aircraft maintenance.

13. Assist parks in drafting letters of agreement, program enhancements, waivers to DOI policy and memorandums of agreement/understanding and determining park aviation staffing needs.

14. May act as the NPS representative on interagency committees and to OAS.

15. Ensure completion of the AAPRAS by Level 1, 2 and as appropriate, Level 3 parks. Compiles for submission to the NAM.

16. Assist parks in preparing and reviewing project aviation safety plans (PASP).

17. Responsible for reviewing park aviation programs for compliance with applicable regulations and policies. See also 352 DM 1 and Chapter 1.7.2.

18. Coordinate with the park and/or regional fire management officer when wildland fire preparedness reviews are conducted to ensure aviation policy compliance.

19. Assists with aviation facilities and operational reviews at parks.

20. Responsible for disseminating pertinent aviation safety information and actively engaging aviation managers, pilots, and users throughout the year.

21. Responsible for coordinating with OAS for the completion of fuel systems inspections.

22. Ensures current aerial hazard maps are available to all park aviation users.

1.6.16 Superintendents

The Superintendents will ensure that decision-making and risk assessment are used in determining the appropriateness of using aviation resources. Superintendents are responsible for all NPS flight operations conducted in their parks and shall ensure aviation activities are conducted in compliance with applicable policies and regulations, and the park aviation management plan (AMP). The USPP Chief of Police, or their designee, will be considered the equivalent to a Superintendent for RM-60.

1. The park superintendent is considered the accountable executive for the aviation operations at their park. Superintendents have overall responsibility, oversight, and leadership for management of aviation programs and missions in the park, including supporting and maintaining effective safety management systems.

2. Designate, in writing, a park aviation manager (PAM) - a required position at Level 1 and 2 aviation parks.

3. Ensure risk assessments are performed for all aviation activities.

4. Ensure employee and public safety is considered foremost for all aviation activities, with full consideration given to resource and visitor impacts.

5. Direct development and approval of the park's AMP in consultation with the PAM.

6. Ensure adequate funding exists to support the level of aviation activity at the park.

7. Ensure aviation training compliance.

8. Confirm aviation activities are conducted in compliance with applicable policy and regulations.

9. Approves annual completion of the AAPRAS, as required by this reference manual.

10. Ensure options such as the incorporation of quiet technology aircraft and the establishment of flight corridors and other protocols governing administrative use of aircraft are evaluated and used, when appropriate.

11. Promote and support the SAFECOM system and ensure a mishap response plan drill is conducted annually.

12. Verify that aviation safety hazards are mitigated, and flight following is accomplished.

13. Verify that aviation life support equipment requirements are followed.

14. Ensure records related to the aviation program are maintained.

15. Confirm significant operational problems are reported to the RAM.

16. Ensure aviation resources are procured, managed, and operated within the scope of the contract.

17. Ensure that readiness inspections are conducted annually for all permanent rotary and fixed-wing bases.

18. Ensure that parks that host aviation fuel storage or facilities manage the program in accordance with policy outlined in Chapter 11.17, *Aviation Fuel Handling*.

1.6.17 Park Aviation Manager (PAM)*

The PAM is responsible for providing oversight to all flight operations conducted in the park unit. Level 1 aviation parks (See 1.5 Aviation Park Levels) are required to have a non-collateral duty PAM. Level 2 aviation parks are required to have at least a collateral duty PAM. The USPP Aviation Commander will serve as the PAM for all USPP aviation activities.

*Note: Some parks or regions may use different terminology than PAM to indicate an aviation manager who oversees more than one unit (e.g., hub manager, unit aviation officer, interagency aviation officer). NPS parks with adjacent DOI or USFS managed lands may benefit by creating a shared interagency unit aviation manager.

The PAM position will receive a delegation of authority, in writing, from the park superintendent. In the absence of the designated PAM, an acting PAM must be designated in writing.

1. The PAM serves as the park superintendent's aviation manager, providing subject matter expertise on aviation in the park and ensuring aviation operations are in compliance with policies, regulations, and laws, including effective safety management.

2. Responsible for writing and implementing the park aviation management plan. See Appendix 1, *Park Aviation Management Plan* for an example of topics that may be included in the plan.

3. Ensures local Aviation Hazard Maps are reviewed and updated or verified annually, and available to all park aviation users.

4. Reviews project aviation safety plans (PASPs). Coordinates the planning and completion of project plans and risk assessments using aviation. See Appendix 3, *Project Aviation Safety Plan*, for the NPS standardized template, which must be used unless otherwise approved by the RAM.

5. Ensures that aircraft and pilots for both crewed and uncrewed missions are appropriately approved for the mission.

6. Requests technical assistance for aviation problems.

7. Validates that all aviation users meet the training requirements of the *Interagency Aviation Training Guide* and OPM-04, *Aviation User Training Program*. May serve as the IAT Unit Aviation Training Administrator (UATA) and connect staff to external opportunities, as applicable.

8. Where applicable, validates fleet aircraft operations per OPM-22, *Crewed Aircraft, Pilot-Training Program*, and OPM-11, *DOI Use of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS)*.

9. Ensures that a qualified fixed-wing or helicopter manager is designated for all flights under NPS operational control or when NPS personnel are on board a cooperator or affiliate aircraft.

10. Ensures that a qualified flight manager is assigned for charter, contract, or rental flights. Seat fares are exempt from this requirement.

11. Requests waivers, exemptions, or exceptions to policies, standards, procedures, or other instructions (request must be submitted to the appropriate authority through the RAM).

12. Apprises the superintendent and the RAM of aviation concerns and problems.

13. Addresses aviation related issues or concerns with appropriate park staff.

14. Serves as the park's primary representative with the RAM on the QA/QC team where a QA/QC program is utilized.

15. Ensures annual completion of the AAPRAS.

16. Analyzes and determines the Park's aviation needs.

17. Distributes policy and safety information to the Park's aviation users.

18. Coordinates with the RAM and Acquisition Services Directorate (AQD) Contracting Officer to develop specifications for exclusive-use contracts and may serve as the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR).

19. Ensures the process for requesting the use of aircraft by park personnel is documented within the regional or park aviation management plans.

20. May represent the park at interagency meetings, events, and incidents.

21. Ensures routine inspections are being conducted and necessary repairs are completed.

22. Assists with coordination, scheduling, recruiting, hiring, and training of fleet pilots, as applicable.

23. Ensures aviation facilities are in alignment with all applicable policies and requirements, to include aviation fuel systems, hangars, and any other aviation facilities.

24. Provides advice or assistance to NPS personnel for the procurement of flights via contracting, as applicable.

25. Ensures all PPE and ALSE gear is inspected and maintained to required standards, including restocking used items, properly disposing of expired items, maintaining inventory records, and training staff on use of required equipment.

26. Serves as liaison between park staff and regional staff on aviation topics and serve as point of contact for park/program staff on all aviation-related matters.

1.6.18 Pilot-in-command (PIC)

The PIC is responsible for conducting aviation operations in accordance with applicable policy and regulations, contract requirements, maintains proficiency and currency appropriate to the missions performed, overall safety of the aircraft and personnel. Has sole authority for operations of the aircraft, ensures airworthiness and operates aircraft for maximum safety and efficiency, provides aircraft briefing, reports unsafe operations, conditions, and situations using the SAFECOM. When required, complies with ALSE, and flight time reporting requirements, and completes payment documents.

1.6.19 Helicopter Manager

A Helicopter Manager must be assigned to all NPS helicopter flights. The manager is responsible for coordinating, scheduling, and supervising helicopter operations, to include reviewing the approved PASP with assigned personnel. The manager supervises operations involving transport of personnel or cargo to/from unimproved landing sites, external load operations, or other complex special use activities. Managers are not required to be on board all flights. A PIC may load and unload passengers and cargo when rotors are not turning when a manager is not present.

For a cooperator conducting emergency or urgent flights a Helicopter Manager is recommended. However, if a Helicopter Manager is not available the crew chief (or equivalent) from the cooperator aircraft can fulfill this role.

1.6.20 Fixed-wing Flight Manager

A Fixed-wing Flight Manager must be assigned to all NPS fixed-wing flights. Fixed-wing managers are responsible for ensuring flight following is completed, scheduling flights, passenger briefing, and manifests are completed.

Managers are not required to be on all flights. A fleet PIC may also fill this role. See the Interagency Aviation Training (IAT) Guide to determine what level of training is required.

1.6.21 Aircrew Member

An Aircrew Member is a person working in and around aircraft and essential to ensure the safety and successful outcome of the mission. See the IAT Guide for training requirements and additional duties.

1.6.22 Helicopter crewmember

A helicopter crewmember assists the helicopter manager in the performance and completion of helicopter missions. Helicopter crewmembers must meet the requirements of the training and currency listed in Chapter 13, *Aviation Training*.

1.6.23   Aviation Dispatcher

A dispatcher who may receive, process, and place orders for aircraft, provide flight following, and other aviation support services.

Personnel may work in a dispatch center or at a remote location where they have the ability to monitor a flight by radio or a satellite tracking system and the means to initiate an aircraft mishap emergency response should the need arise. Flight followers and aviation dispatch personnel must meet the requirements of the training listed in OPM-04, *Aviation User Training Program* and the IAT Training Guide.

1.6.24   Flight Follower

A government employee who is responsible for monitoring aircraft flight activities in accordance with DOI/bureau and USDA-FS policies. They may work in a dispatch center, or at a remote location, where they monitor flights by radio or satellite tracking systems, and could initiate an aircraft mishap emergency response, when needed. Additional training may be specified by each bureau or agency.

Personnel may work in a dispatch center or at a remote location where they have the ability to monitor a flight by radio or a satellite tracking system and the means to initiate an aircraft mishap emergency response should the need arise. Flight followers and aviation dispatch personnel must meet the requirements of the training listed in OPM-04, *Aviation User Training Program* and the IAT training guide.

1.6.25   All NPS Employees

All NPS employees are responsible for knowing and following applicable policy and directives, maintaining currency by attending required aviation training in accordance with DOI and NPS policies, using appropriate personal protective and life support equipment, reporting potential and actual problems, identifying safety hazards, and engaging in risk management to ensuring their own safety as well as that of others.

1.7   Evaluation and Monitoring

Periodic internal reviews of NPS aviation operating procedures and readiness are necessary in order to enhance safety, identify program strengths and weaknesses, help identify fiscal and personnel needs, and ensure the efficient use of aircraft under NPS operational control. These reviews are supplemental to those conducted periodically by the department.

Occasionally, concerns regarding some aspect of the aviation program are discovered requiring immediate investigation and possible action by RAMs or the NAM. When these infrequent situations occur, written documentation will be provided to the park superintendent who must then respond in writing to the reviewers within 30 days of the receipt of the documentation. The response will include corrective actions, a timeframe, and responsible party.

1.7.1   Annual Aviation Program Report and Assurance Statement (AAPRAS)

Annually, Level 1 and Level 2 parks, and at the discretion of the RAM, Level 3 parks will complete the AAPRAS. The RAMs will compile these reports for submission to the NAM by April 15 to account for the previous calendar year. The NAM will provide a

summarization to the Chief, DFAM. See Appendix 2, *Annual Aviation Program Report and Assurance Statement*.

1.7.2   Regional Aviation Program Review

Each region's overall aviation program will be reviewed at least once every five years by the NAM. The periodic DOI program reviews, conducted by the OAS per 352 DM 2, *Aviation Program Evaluation*, may serve in lieu of an NPS initiated review.

1.7.3   Park Aviation Program Review

Regional directors are responsible for ensuring park aviation program reviews for policy compliance are conducted. These reviews shall occur at a minimum of five-year intervals. This review may be accomplished by completing the annual AAPRAS requirement. However, OAS, as per 352 DM-2, will conduct a review of each park with an aviation program at least every five years.

1. NPS programmatic areas (e.g., Inventory and Monitoring, WASO Branch of Emergency Services, Invasive Plant Management Teams) that are not directly associated with a park and conducting aviation operations, require periodic operational reviews.
2. The NPS programmatic reviews conducted by the NAM shall occur at a minimum of five-year intervals, which may be satisfied with the completion of the OAS review.

1.7.4   Local Facility Inspection

Superintendents will ensure that inspections are conducted annually for all permanent rotary and fixed-wing bases. This requirement will include permanent helipads in those parks with rotary wing operations but lacking helibases. The preparedness evaluation process, found in the *NWCG Standards for Helicopter Operations, Appendix C*, will be the standard criteria for evaluating rotary wing facilities. Readiness evaluations will be in writing and a copy will be forwarded to the RAM. See Appendix 9 for a fixed wing specific checklist.

1.7.5   Office of Aviation Services (OAS) Reviews

OAS conducts an aviation program evaluation of each region and the NAO every five years. The purpose of these evaluations is primarily to review aviation activities as they relate to administration, operations, safety, training, and security. The NAO will identify individuals to assist with the review. The RAM will assist with the review and provide scheduling and logistical support. See 352 DM 2.

1.7.6   NPS Fire Preparedness Reviews

Fire aviation operations and facilities are reviewed as part of the fire preparedness review of park operations, in accordance with RM-18 Chapter 5. Park fire preparedness reviews are completed annually by the park and/or regional fire management officer and submitted to the RAM for review. Park fire preparedness reviews are conducted every three to five years by a regional level review team. The park fire management officer has the responsibility to ensure the reviews are being conducted for fire related aviation operations within the required time frame and to identify well qualified individuals to conduct the review.

1.8   Management of Aviation Mishaps

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is responsible for the factual investigation of aircraft accidents. OAS has responsibility for determining contributing factors and present but not contributing factors which preceded NPS aviation mishaps, incidents, or accidents. The NPS is responsible for determining the active and latent organizational conditions, if any, that contributed to the mishap, incident or accident and developing findings/recommendations.

Parks will respond to any findings as directed. For more specific procedures, see Chapter 17, *Aviation Mishap Procedures.*