



# Interagency Aviation Information Bulletin



No. IA IB 24-01

Date: January 30, 2024

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**Subject: Approval Process for Aircraft Participating within Incident Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs)**

**Area of Concern: TFR Participating Aircraft**

**Distribution: All Fire and Aviation Operations**

**Discussion:** Over the past several years, there has been an increase in the number of requests and accommodations for allowing non-participating aircraft to operate within incident Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFRs). This trend is likely to continue due to the increase of incident size and complexity and impacts to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the new standards and to increase aviation safety within incident TFRs, the following items have been implemented. In the new standards, the official in charge of on-scene emergency response activities has been defined, participating aircraft categories (other than suppression) have been established, a Hazard Relief Participant Request Form has been created, and guidance for notification and coordination has been established.

Requests to participate in hazard relief efforts, while rare, will most often occur during large fires of long duration in the WUI environment. When requests are received, coordination must take place with the official in charge of on-scene emergency response activities and the designated participating aircraft prior to entering the TFR. The official in charge of on-scene emergency response activities will approve or deny the request based on aviation safety. **Fire Mission Aircraft, not assigned to the incident meet the definition of participating aircraft. Permission may be granted in real time by the designated official in charge of on-scene emergency response for access into or through a TFR.**

Good stewardship of incident TFRs, with continued evaluation of appropriate size both laterally and vertically, as well as appropriate timeframes will reduce the need to designate non-incident aviation resources as participating aircraft.

**Definition of official in charge of on-scene emergency response activities:** When a TFR is active over an incident as stated in 14 CFR 91.137 the “official in charge of on-scene emergency response activities” is defined as a competent interagency aviation specialist that is fully qualified in their position. The official in charge has the discretion to approve or deny entry into the incident TFR.

**Hazard Relief Participant Request Form**  
(Complete information below. Attach graphic depiction of route of flight.)

1. Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Pilot: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
NOTAM (TFR) NUMBER(s) and INCIDENT NAME(s) REQUESTED: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Please acknowledge: If determined to be a participant, you must coordinate with the official in charge of the on-scene emergency response prior to entering the TFR.

APPROVAL INFORMATION FOR REQUESTOR:  
2.  FEMA Mission Assignment (MA) #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mission Resource Task (MRT) #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State Designated Approval Document: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SGT Waiver: \_\_\_\_\_

AIRCRAFT INFORMATION:  
3. No.: \_\_\_\_\_ or Call Sign: \_\_\_\_\_  
Category: \_\_\_\_\_ Type: \_\_\_\_\_  
 UAS  Fixed-Wing  Rotor-Wing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
Paint Colors or Distinct Markings: \_\_\_\_\_

SUPPORT TO AID DISASTER RESPONSE OR RECOVERY:  
4. Mission Objective (Definitions on back): \_\_\_\_\_ Can mission be performed above or outside TFR?  YES  NO  
 Safety and Security Describe Mission: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Food, Water, Shelter  
 Health and Medical  
 Energy (power and fuel)  
 Communications Requirements to perform mission:  
 Transportation  Daytime  
 Hazardous Materials  Nighttime  
 Altitude  
Possible alternatives to conduct mission? Contingency Plans: \_\_\_\_\_  
What technology is being used? Who will have access to the data? \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: Boxes 1-4 must be completed by the requestor. Dispatch will complete the following information.**  
This form was submitted to Dispatch Center: \_\_\_\_\_ Dispatch Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit or Forest Aviation Officer will complete.  
Aviation personnel who determined requestor has met criteria to participate/initial approval or denial:  
Reason for denial:  Does not meet requirement to participate  Incident Complexity  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_

If approved by Unit or Forest Aviation Officer, then the Official in Charge or designee will complete.  
Participant Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Reason for denial:  Does not meet requirement to participate  Incident Complexity  Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

PMS 520-1 (04/23) <https://www.mwca.gov/publications/520-1>

Clear Form Print

Figure 1 [Hazard Relief Participant Request Form, PMS 520-1](#)

- On incidents managed by a Complex Incident Management Team (CIMT), the official in charge, in order of precedence would include the Incident Commander (IC), Air Operations Branch Director (AOBD) or Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS), Aerial Supervision Module (ASM), or the Leadplane (LP) or Helicopter Coordinator (HLCO). The official in charge can also be delegated to other aviation positions assigned to the incident, such as Helibase Manager (HEBM) or Helicopter Manager (HMGB).
- For locally managed incidents, the official in charge can be the Unit or Forest Aviation Officer, Aerial Supervisor, or Incident Commander. This can also be delegated at the discretion of the Unit Aviation Officer Forest Aviation Officer or IC to include positions such as HEBM or HMGB.

The official in charge or designee is situationally dependent based on incident complexity and delegation from the Incident Commander. When aerial supervision is present they are the final authority in the approval process.

**Link to Hazard Relief Participant Request Form and criteria to meet definition of Participating Aircraft:**  
[Hazard Relief Participant Request Form, PMS 520-1 \(nwcg.gov\)](https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pms520-1.pdf)

### **Procedures for Hazard Relief Participating Aircraft Within Incident TFRs.**

Approval for aircraft participation will occur at two levels. The first level will be the Aviation Officer who will determine the applicable criteria for participation. The second level will be the official in charge (or designee) of the on-scene emergency response.

This guidance is explicit to aircraft participating in hazard relief mission(s) within a TFR. It does not pertain to media aircraft as there are separate established protocols in place for them.

The perspective Participant Pilot will be required to establish contact with the TFR's managing dispatch office listed on the NOTAM and submit the written request by 6:00 p.m. the day prior to the requested flight operation.

### **The TFR's incident dispatch office should:**

- Gather contact information and provide a dispatch email address to the requestor pilot or point of contact.
- Send the requestor the Hazard Relief Participant Request Form or link to complete <https://www.nwcg.gov/sites/default/files/publications/pms520-1.pdf>.
- Once the managing dispatch office receives the completed request, they will forward the request to their Aviation officer to determine if the request meets the criteria to participate.

### **The Aviation officer will:**

- Make the determination whether or not the requestor meets the criteria for participation.
- Provide initial approval or denial of the request based on current complexity.
- If approved, the Aviation officer will forward the completed request to the official in charge of on-scene emergency response activities for their approval and coordination with the managing dispatch center.

### **The Official in charge of on-scene emergency response or as delegated will:**

- Approve or deny the request and coordinate with the managing dispatch center and the requesting participant pilot to discuss details on the mission, time frames, and to verify frequencies.

### **The Incident Commander will:**

- Designate the official in charge of the Temporary Flight Restriction via email and carbon copy (CC) the UAO, RAO, RASM, Managing Dispatch, and Cooperators.

### **If the managing office is the Geographic Area Coordination Center (GACC), they will forward the request to:**

- Local/Tier 3 dispatch centers, who will share with
- Respective Unit Aviation Officer(s).
- Official in charge of the on-scene emergency response or as delegated Respective State and/or Regional Federal Aviation Officers.

**If the managing office is a Local Center, they will forward the request to:**

- Geographic Area Coordination Center Airspace POC, who will share with the respective State and Federal Aviation Officer(s) of jurisdiction.
- Respective Unit Aviation Officer(s).
- Official in charge of the on scene emergency response or as delegated.

**For questions, contact:** Kim Owczarzak, National Interagency Airspace Coordinator at [kimberley.owczarzak@usda.gov](mailto:kimberley.owczarzak@usda.gov).

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