



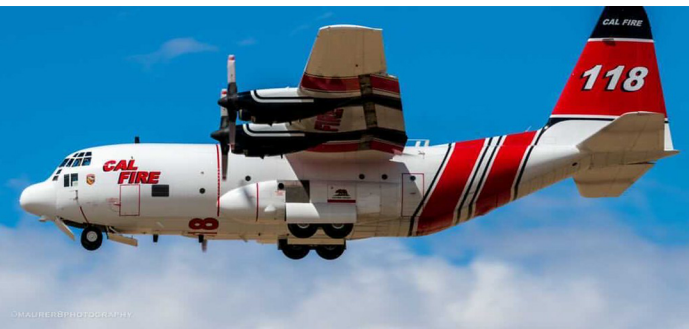
CAL FIRE ENHANCES WILDFIRE RESPONSE CAPABILITIES WITH ADDITION OF NEW AIRCRAFT

Seven C-130H airtankers are set to join CAL FIRE's aerial firefighting mission. The former military aircraft are currently based at CAL FIRE's Aviation Program headquarters at McClellan Airfield where they have undergone a substantial retrofit including the replacement of inner and outer wing boxes. The transition from military planes to fire ready airtankers also included a new paint job into the CAL FIRE red and white scheme. Next up for the C-130Hs is the installation of the fire retardant delivery system, which CAL FIRE's Aviation program will complete at its McClellan facilities.



"We've taken the handoff from our military partners, who have maintained the airworthiness of these planes thus far," says CAL FIRE Aviation Management Chief Martin Buno. "Now, it's been agreed upon that CAL FIRE will complete the final phase of the conversion in-house and put the C-130H airtankers into service."

Once completely outfitted, the C-130H will be capable of dropping nearly four times the amount of retardant as CAL FIRE's S2Ts. Along with the larger payload, the new airtankers will have a longer range—an increase of nearly 300 miles.



"Expansion of the fleet is only one part of the comprehensive plan CAL FIRE Aviation needs as it looks to the future of firefighting in California," explains CAL FIRE Deputy Director Jake Sjolund. While the increased range and capacity of the C-130H immediately supports the mission of fire suppression, says Chief Sjolund, there are future benefits to the Aviation Program as a whole.

"Having these seven C-130Hs in our fleet gives us the ability to extend the life of CAL FIRE's S2T airtankers," says Chief Sjolund. "Rotating the S2Ts into maintenance for a service life extension program greatly extends the life cycle of those planes."





Five of the fully operational C-130Hs will be stationed at air attack bases throughout California. The remaining two will be used to provide coverage for planes that rotate in for maintenance and for deployment during heavy fire activity. The CAL FIRE Aviation Program strategically places aircraft and personnel to enable aerial firefighter resources to reach the most remote parts of the state in approximately 20 minutes.

Once the retardant tank and delivery system have been installed, the C-130H will take its first test flight as a CAL FIRE airtanker. CAL FIRE anticipates test flights to begin late 2024.

To learn more about the C-130H and CAL FIRE's Aviation Program visit <https://www.fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/fire-protection/aviation-program>

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