

## Chapter 5—Operations

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Chapter 5

Operations

**ORGANIZATION CHART**

Figure 5 – Organization Chart: Operations



**Position Checklists**

**Operations Section Chief:** a member of the general staff responsible for the management of all operations directly applicable to the primary mission. The Operations Chief activates and supervises organization

elements in accordance with the incident action plan and directs its execution. The Operations Chief also directs the preparation of unit operational plans, requests, releases resources, makes expedient changes to the incident action plan as necessary; and reports such to the incident commander. The Operations Section Chief shall:

- a. Review Common Responsibilities (page 2-18).
- b. Develop operations portion of incident action plan.
- c. Brief and assign operations section personnel in accordance with incident action plan.
- d. Supervise operations section.
- e. Determine need and request additional resources.

**Deputy Operations Section Chief:** the Deputy Operations Section Chief should have the same qualifications as the Operations Section Chief and shall:

- a. Be prepared to assume the role operations section chief.
- b. Assist in maintaining mission flow and documentation.
- c. Keep EM Constellation (and other mission tracking systems) updated and accurate.

**Branch Director:** the Branch Directors when activated, are under the direction of the operations section chief, and are responsible for the implementation of the portion of the incident action plan appropriate to the branches. The Branch Director shall also:

- a. Review Common Responsibilities (page 2-18).
- b. Develop with subordinates alternatives for branch control operations.
- c. Attend planning meetings at the request of the operations section chief.

- d. Review division/group assignment lists (ICS form 204) for divisions/groups within branch. Modify lists based on effectiveness of current operations.
- e. Assign specific work tasks to division/group supervisors.
- f. Supervise branch operations.
- g. Resolve logistical problems reported by subordinates.
- h. Report to Operations Section Chief when incident action plan is to be modified; additional resources are needed; surplus resources are available; hazardous situations or significant events occur.
- i. During wildfire deployments, respond to incidents that occur within the branch to ensure firefighter safety.
- j. Approve accident and medical reports (home agency forms) originating within the branch.
- k. Maintain unit/activity log (ICS form 214).
- l. Review and approve Crew Time Reports (CTS) and equipment shift tickets for subordinates assigned

**Division/Group Supervisor:** reports to the Operations Section Chief (or Branch Director when activated). The Supervisor is responsible for the implementation of the assigned portion of the incident action plan, assignment of resources within the division/group, and reporting on the progress of control operations and status of resources within the division/group. The Supervisor shall:

- a. Review Common Responsibilities (page 2-18).
- b. Implement incident action plan for division/group.
- c. Provide incident action plan to strike team/task force leaders, when available.

**Strike Team/Task Force Leader:** reports to a Division/Group Supervisor and is responsible for performing tactical assignments tasked to the strike team or task force. The Leader reports work progress, resources status, and other important information to a

Division/Group Supervisor, maintains work records on assigned personnel, and shall:

- a. Review Common Responsibilities (page 2-18).
- b. Review assignments with subordinates and assign tasks.
- c. Monitor work progress and make changes when necessary.
- d. Coordinate activities with adjacent strike teams, task forces, and single resources.
- e. Travel to and from active assignment area with assigned resources.

**Single Resource:** the person in charge of a single tactical resource will carry the unit designation of the resource, and:

- a. Review Common Responsibilities (page 2-18).
- b. Review assignments.
- c. Obtain necessary equipment/supplies.
- d. Review weather/environmental conditions for assignment area.
- e. Brief subordinates on safety measures.

**Staging Area Manager:** the staging area manager is responsible for managing all activities within a staging area, including:

- a. Review Common Responsibilities (page 2-18).
- b. Proceed to staging area.
- c. Establish staging area layout.
- d. Determine any support needs for equipment, feeding, sanitation, and security.
- e. Establish check-in function as appropriate.
- f. Post areas for identification and traffic control.

**Air Operations Branch Director:** the air operations branch director, who is ground based, is primarily responsible for preparing the air

operations portion of the incident action plan. The plan will reflect agency restrictions that have an impact on the operational capability or utilization of resources (e.g., night flying, hours per pilot). After the plan is approved, air operations is responsible for implementing its strategic aspects—those that relate to the overall incident strategy as opposed to those that pertain to tactical operations (specific target selection).

Additionally, the air operations branch director is responsible for providing logistical support to helicopters operating on the incident. The air tactical group supervisor working with ground and air resources normally performs specific tactical activities (target selection, suggested modifications to specific tactical actions in the incident action plan), as well as:

- a. Review Common Responsibilities (page 2-18).
- b. Organize preliminary air operations.
- c. Request declaration (or cancellation) of restricted air space area, (FAA regulation 91.137).
- d. Participate in preparation of the Incident Action Plan through the operation section chief. Insure that the air operations portion of the incident action plan takes into consideration the air traffic control requirements of assigned aircraft.
- e. Perform operational planning for air operations.
- f. Prepare and provide air operations summary worksheet (ICS form 220) to the air support group and fixed-wing bases.
- g. Determine coordination procedures for use by air organization with ground branches, divisions, or groups.
- h. Ensure compliance with SERT Air Operations Branch procedures

## ***Air Operations***

Federal, state, and local government agencies have diverse roles, statutory authorities, and unique capabilities for domestic incident aviation operations. On a day-to-day basis, local responders are utilizing air operations as a response asset to local incidents. Therefore, development of a centralized command and control structure to direct all independent local air missions is impractical. However, as the size, scope, and severity of incidents requiring aviation resources dramatically escalates, there is a need for a unified coordination system that takes into account varied federal, state, and local government aviation operations. This coordinated response enhances response efforts by providing a safer operating environment through flight coordination, reduced redundancy, and money saved by combining missions.

Based on the level or magnitude of the event, within the scope of the State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, the State Emergency Response Team may create an air operations branch within the operations section of the State emergency operations center for the State of Florida. This action may come at the request of a local jurisdiction, or created directly at the state level consistent with the guidelines as promulgated in the Florida Division of Emergency Management Air Operations Branch Guide (see below).

This measure will consolidate the various efforts of multiple agencies with aviation responsibilities and/or assets into a single point-of-contact at the statewide level for better coordination and more efficient use of valuable aviation-related resources.

Enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of air operations will add to the state's disaster response capability. More importantly, improved

flight safety will result from the coordination of all flight operations in highly congested airspace within a disaster area, through the benefit of better aircraft separation and increased pilot awareness of other agency flight operations in the vicinity.

### **SERT Air Operations Branch Guide**

The purpose of the SERT air operations branch guide is to outline the organizational structure and operating procedures of the air operations branch within the State EOC and to identify agencies, assets, and infrastructure within Florida that are expected to be employed in a disaster or emergency situation. This guide will enable personnel assigned to the air operations branch to better coordinate air operations with federal, state, and local entities and serve as a working reference document for all those needing to interact with Florida's single point-of-contact for disaster-related aviation issues.

### **Air Operations Branch (AOB)**

The air operations branch will be activated at the direction of the SERT chief and will coordinate all disaster-related State and local agencies and volunteer organizations air operations efforts with appropriate federal authorities and the aviation branch at the federal level, if activated at the joint field office.

The AOB will operate under the authority of the operations section in the same timeframe and manner as the state emergency operations center, as a whole, using the same level 1, 2, and 3 activation levels. The air operations branch will coordinate its efforts with appropriate emergency support functions within the State EOC, as well as appropriate federal, state, and local government

agencies, plus private sector, volunteer and non-government organizations supporting disaster aviation operations.

### **Responsibilities**

The air operation branch's primary responsibility is to plan for and implement the efficient and effective use of aviation-related resources, aircraft assets, and support infrastructure, including airports, communications, and airspace management to enhance overall disaster and emergency management response efforts in Florida. As a coordination authority, the air operations branch serves only to ensure the efficient and effective use of aviation resources

The air operations branch is intended to provide a unified planning and operations coordination mechanism that integrates all aviation-related resources for missions carried out by federal, state, and local agencies participating in the response efforts. Command and control of aviation-related resources remains the exclusive authority of the respective, individual agencies.

### **Key Operational Functions**

- Ensure the timely and appropriate support of air mission requests
- Review of air mission requests to determine prioritization of critical needs
- Review of available resources and capabilities to determine best utilizations
- Review mission planning and coordination to ensure safe aircraft deconfliction
- Promote federal, state, and local aviation-related interagency communications

- Monitor and update the State EOC's comprehensive air picture of flight operations
- Coordinate essential airport and aviation ground support infrastructure needs
- Coordinate air operations communication requirements, including frequency management, data and image transfer capabilities, and transponder codes
- Coordinate airspace management procedures, including temporary flight restriction requests and management with the federal aviation administration.
- Promote attention to flight safety by incorporating best practices and lessons learned and monitoring operations to identify and mitigate potential hazards to flight operations through timely implementation of warnings and corrective action.

### **Aviation Mission Priorities**

Aviation mission priorities vary depending on the type and severity of a disaster. Personnel involved with aviation operations should be briefed on the requirements for and knowledgeable of their agency roles with respect to the following priorities:

- a. Lifesaving (airborne search and rescue)
- b. Life sustaining (medical evacuation and distribution of food and water)
- c. Property protection (firefighting, law enforcement and national security)
- d. Reconnaissance for rapid needs assessment (critical infrastructure, healthcare, transportation systems and hazardous materials)
- e. Logistical support (personnel, response, relief and recovery resources)
- f. Environmental protection (prevent or minimize damage)

### Aviation Mission Sets

Aviation missions are assigned based on the Air Operations Branch assessment of availability of suitable and properly equipped aircraft and availability of qualified aircrews. Aviation mission sets may include, but are not limited to, the following types of activities:

- a. Airborne search and rescue (SAR)
- b. Aero medical evacuation (medical evacuation, patient movement)
- c. Evacuation and relocation
- d. Incident Awareness and Assessment (IAA)
- e. Firefighting and suppression
- f. Airborne Command and Control (c2)
- g. Airfield recovery and sustainment
- h. Response team personnel movement
- i. Relief and recovery logistical support
- j. Aerial imagery and air quality sampling
- k. National defense and homeland security
- l. VIP and media flight operations support

### Key Operational Elements

- The Air Operations Branch will ensure coordination among applicable state and local agencies and volunteer organizations for planning, managing, and implementing all air operations in Florida.
- Operation of the national airspace system is the responsibility of the federal aviation administration before, during, and after a major incident regardless of the initiation of federal assistance. Disaster response air missions must be carried out with the local air traffic control facilities responsible for the airspace over or adjacent to an area impacted by a disaster or emergency situation.
- Liaison officers or identified points of contact will be provided to the air operations branch by appropriate

agencies with aviation assets planned for disaster relief operations to assist, advise, plan, and communicate applicable aviation operating procedures, and to share feedback and other information to and from their agencies.

- Aviation units with resources planned for use in disaster relief may relocate away from impact areas to preserve their viability to perform their mission or preposition at closer, designated, staging areas to decrease their response time, if feasible. Non-participating aircraft (civilian and military) may evacuate the impact area, if feasible.
- Public-use and private-use airports and military airfields may be suitable as disaster relief airports due to their location and capabilities. Prior permission will be obtained from private-use airport owners and prior coordination for their use will be effected with all anticipated airport and/or airfield operators.

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