



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Response Reply to:
FWS/AMB/049695

OCT 17 2011

Memorandum

To: Service Directorate
From: Deputy Director *Gugary E. Sebastian*
Subject: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Aviation Reforms

In December 2010, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) plane struck a wire in Reedsport, Oregon while conducting a migratory bird survey. Fortunately, no one was injured although the plane suffered significant damage. The DOI-Aviation Management's (DOI-AM) report (Aircraft Mishap Report 11-1H01-O-FWS) regarding the wire strike incident was reviewed by the National Aviation Manager, Migratory Birds and Refuges. Based on the Reedsport Report, we contracted a Service-wide aviation program review by an independent, unbiased entity. Bowhead Systems Management (Bowhead) was selected to perform this review. Although Bowhead's final report is forthcoming, we request your immediate attention to this very important issue because of outstanding safety concerns.

Regional Directors are responsible for implementing the following action items no later than December 31, 2011. Many of these issues can be addressed in a one stop method by organizing an Aviation Safety day within your respective Region/Program. Accomplishments of the items below are to be reported to the National Aviation Manager (NAM) through the Regional Aviation Manager.

1. All pilots and crewmembers will be in compliance with OPM 04 and 22. Pilots, crewmembers and their supervisors will make it their highest priority to complete all mandatory training obligations. All applicable on-line training must be completed prior to any aviation activities. Training deficiencies that require classroom or webinar presentations must be completed at the next available course offering. Aviation privileges will be suspended until pilots, crewmembers and/or their supervisors have complied with their mandatory training requirements.
2. Refresher training for Basic Aviation Safety (B3), Aviation Safety for Supervisors (M3) and Water Ditching and Survival when required, will be reduced to 2 years from 3 years. Initial Water Ditching and Survival training will include classroom and simulated dunking in a controlled environment with water depth no greater than 4 feet. Refresher Water Ditching and Survival training may be accomplished with a classroom only session but inclusion of the simulated dunking is preferred.

3. Project Aviation Safety Plans are required for "special-use" operations, excluding training and point to point travel. All existing plans are to be reviewed and/or developed and must include the following items:

- Supervision
- Project name/objective
- Justification
- Project date and location
- Projected cost of aviation resources
- Aircraft pilot and names of all aircrew and participants
- Flight following and emergency search and rescue
- Risk assessment utilizing the Safety Management System
- Personal protective clothing/equipment
- Load calculations and/or weight and balance information requirements.
- Supervisor and line officer approval signature

4. All Station Aviation Plans will be reviewed to ensure the following are included:

- Aerial hazard map
- Aircraft Pre-accident Plan
- Go/No go risk matrix. This standardized matrix will be developed by the National Aviation Manager and distributed no later than December 31, 2011. It must be included in all Station Aviation Plans as soon as it is available.

5. Attendance is mandatory at the upcoming National Pilot Ground School (NPGS). Non-attendance must be approved by Regional Directors. Regional Aviation Managers will advise the National Aviation Manager of any pilot that has been excused. The NPGS is scheduled for December 12-15, 2011 in New Orleans. The NPGS will be conducted every 2 years and will be rotated between Alaska and lower 48 States. The intent of the NPGS is to provide natural resource oriented training to Service pilots and to maintain their DOI training currency. The Washington Office will pay for the instructor's travel and associated costs. Each Region is responsible for their pilots' travel and per diem.

In addition to implementing the actions above, a Service Aviation Safety Policy Statement will now be included in all messages to the field when referencing aviation issues. This Aviation Safety Policy Statement will be posted to the FWS aviation home page.

We often refer to our employees as our greatest resource and there is no better way to demonstrate this than to provide them the resources and the training they need so that they can accomplish their work with the highest regard to safety and our conservation mission. Please contact Acting National Aviation Manager, Mr. Glenn Cullingford at 321-431-9352 if you have any questions. Thank you all for promoting a positive aviation safety culture within you're the Service.