



Interagency Aviation TECH BULLETIN



No. IA 2010-02

February 26, 2010

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Subject: Interagency Guidance on Toning of the National Flight Following Frequency

Distribution: All Users of National Flight Following

During the 2008 National Interagency Radio Meeting, an agreement was reached between the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior (DOI) requiring tone protection on the National Flight Following (NFF) frequency (168.650 MHz, narrowband analog) to avoid radio interference.

The DOI Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) Directive 2009-009 and USDA Forest Service Memorandums dated August 13 and August 14, 2009, authorized and provided guidance on implementation. The project to implement NFF toning is to be completed by May 31, 2010.

The implementation is a three-phase approach managed by the Interagency Radio Alliance (IRA). The following guidance is provided by the Interagency Interoperability Oversight Group (IIOG):

- **Phase I: NFF toning action plan data collection.** Phase I consists of radio technicians and telecommunications managers collecting data on what will be required to tone NFF during the implementation of Phase II and Phase III.
 - Phase I has been completed.
- **Phase II: Tone radio transmitters.** Phase II consists of toning the transmitters of all base station and aircraft radios using this frequency, without exception. All transmitters operating on NFF must be programmed to transmit the Continuous Tone-Controlled Squelch System (CTCSS) tone of 110.9 Hz.
 - Phase II for base stations (ground) has been completed.
 - Phase II for aircraft (air) has begun and must be completed **no later than** March 26, 2010.

Fire and Aviation Management is responsible for ensuring all aircraft have complied with this direction and should verify for proper configuration.

It is important that the Phase II toning of transmitters is done no later than the date specified above. If the transmitters are not toned before the receivers are toned in Phase III, then there will be a loss of communications.

- **Phase III: Tone radio receivers.** Phase III consists of toning the receivers of all base stations and aircraft radios using this frequency, without exception. All receivers operating on NFF must be programmed to accept the CTCSS tone of 110.9 Hz.
 - Phase III for aircraft (air) shall begin **no earlier than** March 29, 2010, and be completed **no later than** May 28, 2010.
 - Phase III for base stations (ground) shall begin **no earlier than** April 19, 2010, and must be completed **no later than** June 25, 2010.

Fire and Aviation Management is responsible for ensuring all aircraft have complied with this direction and should verify for proper configuration.

It is important that the Phase III toning of receivers is done no earlier than the date specified above. Toning the receiver before the transmitters are toned in Phase II will result in the loss of communications.

• **Exception areas due to safety:**

- Due to chronic interference issues affecting aviation safety, the following areas are authorized to immediately implement Phases II and III (ground and air):
 - CA: Los Padres NF, Angeles NF, Cleveland NF, San Bernardino NF
 - AZ: Coronado NF, Tonto NF, Apache-Sitgreaves NF (AZ and NM)
 - NM: Gila NF, Cibola NF, Lincoln NF, Santa Fe NF

Progress of these activities is being monitored on a monthly basis by the IIOG through reporting by the IRA.

Any questions or concerns relating to this project should be directed to the appropriate IRA representative:

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