



# Interagency Aviation Information Bulletin



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**Subject:** Aviation Operations Within Mutual Aid Zone USA/Mexico

**Area of Concern:** Air Operations along the USA/Mexico Border

**Distribution:** Aviation Operations

**Discussion:** Agreements between the Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture of the United States of America and the United Mexican States (CONAFOR) establish guidance and protocols for aerial firefighting operations along the border. These agreements enable firefighting resources of one country to cross the United States-Mexico border to suppress wildfire.

**The firefighting response area is termed the “zone of mutual assistance” and is measured from the border up to 10 miles (16 KM) inside of each country.**

**Any aircraft planning to enter Mexico’s airspace must satisfy various requirements established within the agreement by the appropriate Interagency Dispatch Center. Aircraft are NOT permitted to enter Mexico’s airspace without the permission from the Dispatch Center and concurrence of aerial supervision.**

**Considerations for the use of aircraft are:**

- Permission must be received from CONAFOR prior to airspace entry.
- Suppression aircraft may include restricted category aircraft.
- Airtankers will operate under the supervision of a qualified Leadplane/Aerial Supervision Module and/or Air Tactical Group Supervisor. This is not considered an initial attack activity.
- All aircraft operations will be conducted under appropriate Forest Service, DOI Aviation Management Directorate (AMD), or agency contract regulations.
- Airtankers identified by U.S. Forest Service Fire and Aviation and approved by CONAFOR will be allowed to support fires within the Zone of Mutual Assistance. This includes all the airtankers identified in the Schedule of Items.
- All U.S. contract or agency aircraft will operate from facilities within the United States. Landings outside the United States (with the exception of emergencies and logistical operations involving U.S. Sending Agency personnel) *are not authorized* within the Zone of Mutual Assistance.
- All aircraft will follow normal U.S. Customs re-entry procedures. The Pilot in Command is responsible for ensuring these requirements are met.
- Aircraft investigation procedures will be coordinated with the appropriate Mexican agencies involved at the time of the incident/accident.

**References:**

2011 National Interagency Mobilization Guide, Chapter 40 Cooperation, Amendment to the Wild-fire Protection Agreement Between the Department of Interior and the Department of Agriculture of the United States of America and the Secretariat of Environment, Natural Resources, and Fisheries of the United Mexican States for the Common Border, page 55 – 65.

2011 Southwest Area Mobilization Guide, Chapter 40 Cooperation, International Agreement with Mexico, page 40-1

2011 Emergency Mutual Assistance Operating Plan Between Southeast Arizona Zone, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior, and Mexican National Forest Commission (CONAFOR)



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