

**Forest Service Handbook
National Headquarters - Washington Office
Washington, DC**

**Forest Service Handbook 5709.16 – Aviation Management Handbook
Chapter 20 – Aviation Safety Management Systems**

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Responsible Staff:

Explanation of changes: Following is an explanation of the changes throughout the directive by section.

20: This amendment substantially revises the entire chapter to better align with the U.S. Forest Service mission.

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20 – Aviation Safety Management Systems

Aviation Safety Management Systems (ASMS) foster a safety culture through the development of a flexible, reporting, learning, just aviation culture. This aviation safety culture is established, maintained, and implemented through integrating and implementing the operational execution of the four pillars of ASMS.

Refer to FSM 5700, FSH 5709.16, and The National Aviation Safety Management System Guide (NASMSG).

20.1 – Authority

Refer to FSM 5700 Zero Code.

20.2 – Objectives

To develop a safety culture that incorporates the four pillars of ASMS (Policy, Risk Management, Promotion, and Assurance) that consistently strives to prevent aviation accidents. The Agency is committed to developing, implementing, and continuously improving the aviation program.

In this safety culture, every individual must accept safety as a conscious and ongoing mindset. The goals of the safety culture are to:

1. Continuously seek out and eliminate latent defects through a proactive risk management program.
2. Systematically approach the development of policies, procedures, and practices that assure maximum quality and superior standards in all aviation operations.
3. Clearly define procedures, a hierarchy of responsibilities, and clear lines of reporting to facilitate effective and useful promotion of aviation safety issues.
4. Integrate the ASMS into the Agency fire and aviation management culture.

20.3 – Policy

Forest Service policy requires aviation managers to follow the direction in aviation manuals, handbooks, and guides listed in FSM 5706. The highest priority is to protect our most valuable resource—our employees. Every Line Officer, Manager, Supervisor, and employee must be responsible for identifying hazards and managing risk exposure by mitigating hazards, continuously assessing risk, and making risk-related decisions at the appropriate level.

In accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Doc 9859 Safety Management Manual, the Agency has adopted ASMS as the guiding model for the aviation program. The ASMS is the foundation enabling the Agency to achieve its highest priority. The

program will provide resources to continuously improve safety practices, and provide a framework for responsibility and accountability.

Aviation activities must comply with applicable Federal and State laws, regulations, and standards for aviation safety and for reporting and investigating accidents and incidents (FSM 5700, FSH 5709.16, FSM 6730, and United States Forest Service Aircraft Accident Investigation Guide).

The detailed elements of agency aviation safety must be maintained in the NASMSG. This guide contains best practices to achieve goals and objectives, and contains mandatory policy (FSM 1110.8, FSM 5108).

For information on ASMS components and elements, refer to FSM 5720.31.

20.4 – Responsibility

Refer to FSM 5704 and the NASMSG.

20.41 – Washington Office Branch Chief, Aviation Safety Management Systems

Refer to FSM 5704.32a and the NASMSG.

20.42 – Washington Office Aviation Management Specialists (Aviation Safety Specialists)

The Washington Office Aviation Management Specialists are responsible to the Washington Office Branch Chief, Aviation Safety Management Systems. Washington Office Aviation Management Specialists shall:

1. Promote a safety culture through the development and implementation of the four pillars of ASMS.
2. Meet the training requirements for aviation managers found in the Interagency Aviation Training Guide (IATG).
3. Provide aviation safety coordination for all Forest Service aviation activities.
4. Coordinate with the Washington Office aviation Branch Chiefs, Program Managers, and aviation specialists.
5. Maintain records of reviews, as applicable.
6. Provide coordination with regional aviation training programs.
7. Understand, implement, and maintain the responsible areas of the Forest Service Safety Management System within the scope of their duties.

Refer to the NASMSG.

20.43 – Forest Health Protection Aviation Safety Manager

Refer to FSM 5704.34d and the NASMSG.

20.44 – Region and Area

Regions and Areas must ensure that an ASMS is implemented. The Regional Aviation Safety Manager (RASM) position is on the forefront for responsibility in the ASMS. The RASM must be placed in the organization in a manner that the position does not report to the RAO so that safety duties are separate from operational duties. Refer to FSM 5704 and the NASMSG.

20.5 – Definitions

Refer to FSM 5705 and the NASMSG.

20.6 – References

Refer to FSM 5706.

20.7 – Quality Assurance

Refer to FSM 5717 and the NASMSG.

21 – Aviation Safety Policy

Refer to FSM 5720 and the NASMSG.

22 – Aviation Safety Risk Management

Refer to the 5720 and the NASMSG.

22.1 – Flight Data Governance

Accident prevention and/or safety inquiry requests for data and information must be requested to both the Assistant Director, Aviation and the Branch Chief, Aviation Safety Management System.

Flight data is data from the AFF, ATU, OLM, SAFECOMs, cockpit voice recorder, flight data recorder, and any other recording device, including audio, video, and imagery.

Data or information developed as a result of flight data collected will not be used in any punitive manner or enforcement action by the Forest Service against a member of the flightcrew, except for cases of deliberate or criminal acts. The data may be shared with an ongoing aviation safety investigation to aid in the development of organizational learning.

Access to flight data is tightly controlled and identifying information is permanently stripped from any records released. The success of safety management and non-punitive reporting

depends on cooperation with flightcrews who can provide further insights beyond what the data can reveal.

23 – Aviation Safety Assurance

The Agency must maintain an effective and relevant Aviation Safety Assurance Program in accordance with Federal Management Regulations (FMR) 102.33. The Aviation Safety Council provides a focal point for Safety Assurance. National and Regional Aviation Safety Managers must provide aviation safety oversight for aviation planning including but not limited to Regional Aviation Safety Management Plans, Forest Supplements and Mission Aviation Safety Plans.

US Forest Service Aviation Safety Assurance Program encompasses the following components and elements:

1. Monitoring of risk and affected controls:
 - a. SAFECOM hazard reporting system; and
 - b. Aviation improvement plans.
2. Internal evaluations and external audits to review aviation management and operations, and the development of corrective actions.
3. Safety performance and analysis.
 - a. Accident and Incident Investigations at the appropriate level in accordance with FMR 102.33;
 - b. Aviation Investigation Review (AIR).
 - c. Safety Summaries
4. Aviation Management Review and Evaluation

23.1 – Aviation Investigation Reviews and Improvement Plans

The Branch Chief, ASMS, with support from Washington Office Aviation Branch Chiefs, must develop an aviation improvement plan based on recommendations from the AIR.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Guide, the Aviation Investigation Addendum to the Learning Review Guide, and the NASMSG will establish a team of representatives from each functional area to develop corrective recommendations to be implemented agency-wide.

24 – Aviation Safety Promotion

Accountable executives and management must implement an ASMS that provides safety resources, to continuously improve safety practices, and to provide a framework for

responsibility and accountability. The United States Forest Service Aviation Safety Promotion framework consists of:

1. Aviation Safety Recognition (Awards Program):
 - a. National Airwards; and
 - b. Regional safety awards.
2. Aviation Safety Education;
3. Interagency Aviation Training (IAT);
4. Internal aviation safety training;
5. Communicating and Disseminating Information;
6. Safety Alert, Accident Prevention Bulletin, Lessons Learned, Technical Bulletins,
7. Information Bulletins, Airward News; and
8. Regional aviation safety documents – Safety Summaries, rapid lessons learned.

The Branch Chief, ASMS is authorized to issue National Safety Alert, Accident Prevention Bulletin, Aviation Lessons Learned, Technical Bulletin, and other documents necessary for the timely dissemination of aviation safety information. RASM's are responsible for dissemination of safety information to all affected personnel in the most appropriate and timely manner possible. RASMs may develop the above safety documents appropriate to their level of the organization and must coordinate the development and dissemination of those documents with the Branch Chief, ASMS.

Refer to the NASMSG.