CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.

I. Objectives.

The objectives of the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) are to:

- Promote safe, cost-efficient and effective aviation services in support of agency and inter-agency goals and objectives.
- Define and standardize national, interagency helicopter management and operational procedures for helicopter users from participating agencies.
- Through standardization, facilitate the ability of personnel from different agencies to work cooperatively on incidents or projects.
- Provide a framework within which areas, regions, states, and local units can provide supplemental, site-specific guidance.

II. Scope.

The procedures contained in this guide apply to helicopter operations conducted by providers and users of helicopters from participating agencies. This guide addresses both incident and resource/project helicopter operations.

For aviation operations using Active Duty/Reserve military helicopters, and National Guard units officially “federalized” by the Department of Defense (DOD), refer to Chapter 70 of the Military Use Handbook for specific policy and procedural information.

The use of National Guard units for federal firefighting purposes within their state must be outlined in national, regional, state or local agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between federal agencies and the specific National Guard units.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The contractual relationship between the vendor and government is key to successful helicopter operations. There may be discrepancies between direction found in this guide and applicable helicopter contract language. When discrepancies arise, the current helicopter procurement document should be followed. However, if discrepancies cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the vendor and government representative, the Contracting Officer should be consulted.

While it is recognized that field offices from most participating agencies have the authority to issue more restrictive guidance and directives than that contained in the IHOG, they are encouraged not to do so in the interests of the guide’s objective to promote interagency standardization of helicopter operations. Exceptions to the IHOG may only be authorized through agency specific procedures.
III. Authority.

The aviation directives of participating agencies contain the authority to require implementation of this guide.

IV. Participating Agencies.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Forest Service (USFS)

Department of the Interior (DOI) – Office of Aviation Services (OAS)

DOI – Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

DOI – Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

DOI – Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

DOI – National Park Service (NPS)

Participating State and Local agencies

A. Fire Operations

The IHOG is policy for all participating federal agencies for interagency fire operations.

The target group for distribution includes users and managers of helicopters, helibase management and air operations personnel, and other personnel involved in helicopter operations such as aviation managers, dispatchers and project managers.

B. Resource/Project Operations

The following agencies have adopted the IHOG for all helicopter operations.

- USFS
- BLM
- NPS
V. Organization.

The chapters of the guide are organized to assist the user in obtaining an understanding of standards and requirements for helicopter operations. The appendices provide the user with standard operational and administrative forms, checklists and other job aids.

VI. Publication.


VII. Review and Revision.

The Interagency helicopter Operations Guide Unit (Formerly the IHOG Working Group) has revised the IHOG. The IHOG Unit met to review and consolidate proposed revision to the IHOG that were generated from the field and from user agencies at all levels. The process allowed almost a full year for the field to propose changes. Each proposal was analyzed and either approved or rejected. Users are encouraged to recommend changes to this document through their aviation program manager or IHOG representative. The IHOG Unit was represented as follows:

- Carrie Vernon, NPS, Chair
- Bill Schuster, State, Vice Chair
- Patrick Kenny BLM
- Bob Quirino, USFS
- Todd Courture, BIA
- Dianne MacLean, FWS
- Michael Reid, OAS

The IHOpS Subcommittee reviewed and approved the revisions.

- Bryan Bitting, BLM, Chair
- Vince Welbaum, USFS, Vice Chair
- Dave Underwood, BIA
- Arlyn Miller, OAS
- Gary Morgan, USFS
- Glenn Cullingford, FWS
- Brad Koeckeritz, OAS
- Shad Sitz, NPS
- Dan Boyle, States
The Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee and the National Interagency Aviation Committee have reviewed and endorsed this document.

The IHOG Unit will conduct a general review at least every three years. At that time, appropriate changes will be recommended to the Interagency Helicopter Operations Subcommittee (IHOpS).

It is recognized that interim revisions (those that occur within the three year revision cycle) may be necessary. Proposed revisions will be considered and, as appropriate, recommended to IHOpS. Interim revisions will then be issued under individual agency directive. Every effort will be made by the subcommittee to ensure that these revisions are issued in a timely and coordinated manner by participating agencies.

**VIII. Ordering and Distribution.**

The IHOG and the IHOG Supplemental Forms Package will be available for viewing and downloading at http://www.nwcg.gov