

FAX TRANSMISSION COVERSHEET



30th

Space Wing

Flight Safety Office

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Date: 15-Aug-96

To: Steve Vittum

Fax: 805-686-5071

Subject: Fire Bucket Operations Plan

Remarks:

Steve,

Made the changes we talked about plus some others. See the last paragraph especially. Also changed the name to Operations Plan. Let me know what you think.

Pat

Call Pat -  
add who the signer is  
in type - Me  
I will come over  
to sign clean copy  
(2 originals)

This FAX contains 4 pages total.

**VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, 76th RESCUE FLIGHT  
AND SANTA BARBARA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT  
WILDLAND FIRE OPERATIONS PLAN**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this operations plan is to outline the use of 76th Rescue Flight (76 RQF) helicopters from Vandenberg AFB in support of Santa Barbara County (County) wildland fire suppression responsibilities. It provides details concerning criteria for use, area of operations, dispatch procedures, response times, types of equipment mission limitations, and support services.

**BACKGROUND**

Vandenberg Air Force Base maintains a fleet of Bell 212 Helicopters that are capable of providing rescue and firefighting services. The base has developed this firefighting capability because it is situated in a heavily brush covered area and it's mission of space launch provides the right conditions for the occurrence of wildfires.

During fire season, severe conditions throughout the State of California and the Western United States can result in a critical depletion of helicopter fire fighting resources. In addition, response time of available assets may make their use early in a fire situation impractical. When resources are limited, 76 RQF helicopters may be available to assist the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. Santa Barbara County benefits from this agreement because Vandenberg helicopters may provide immediate support when other similar resources are not available.

Providing support to Santa Barbara County also helps the 76th RQF. Providing assistance to off-base agencies allows Air Force crews to maintain the high level of proficiency required to safely perform this mission. This proficiency keeps base helicopter crews prepared for fires on-base.

**CRITERIA FOR USE**

Prior to requesting support from the 76th RQF, the County will ensure there is a significant and imminent threat to life (firefighters committed on the ground constitutes a life or death situation) or property (natural resources included), and that no service by a private operator is reasonably available to meet that threat. Following any request for assistance (within three business days), the County will provide a certification to this effect in writing to the Commander, 76 RQF.

For the purpose of this agreement, there are three types of response situations: initial attack, follow-on support, and training opportunities. Initial attack requests are those that occur during the first burn period of a fire. Vandenberg helicopter resources are used for initial attack responses when other initial attack forces are delayed or unavailable. Helicopters from the 76 RQF will supplement already existing initial attack forces. A follow-on support request occurs during subsequent burn periods. It is a request for sustained support when sufficient resources



are not available to the County from other sources. A training opportunity is a fire where all necessary and required resources are available and committed to the fire, but a training opportunity exists on the fire for 76th RQF helicopter crews. A request to use a fire as a training opportunity may be made by the 76 RQF.

The County will use the following criteria to determine when to request 76 RQF helicopter support:

1. 76 RQF helicopters have the most appropriate equipment for the mission.
2. They are the closest Type II Helicopters available to respond to the incident.
3. The incident is posing an imminent threat to life and property (natural resources included).

### **DISPATCH PROCEDURES**

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department will make contact with Vandenberg Air Force Base Fire Dispatch Center, to initiate a response from the 76 RQF. They will then notify the appropriate responding Air Attack Ship. The following information will be provided by County Dispatch at the time of the request:

1. Incident location using any or all of the following:  
Thomas Brothers Map page and grid, coordinates, or general landmarks.
2. Incident name, Incident Commander or Air Attack call sign, and radio frequency.
3. Type of request: Initial Attack, Follow-on Support, or Training Opportunity

### **RESPONSE TIMES**

During duty hours, 76 RQF helicopters will respond within 30 minutes of notification. During non-duty hours, 76 RQF helicopters will respond within 60 minutes of notification. Flying time to the incident will determine actual on-scene arrival time. All 76 RQF responses will be based on resource availability and on-base mission requirements at the time of the request.

### **TYPES OF EQUIPMENT**

76 RQF helicopters will respond with the following equipment: Water Bucket and VHF radio for air-to-ground communications. Other equipment, such as portable water tanks, must be requested by the County at the time of the request.

### MISSION LIMITATIONS

Helicopter crews will advise the appropriate agencies on the fire of any significant mission limitations. In addition, the 76 RQF Commander or his representative may refuse any mission request. The 76 RQF may perform a variety of missions including, but not limited to:

- A. Water dropping.
- B. Personnel and internal cargo transport.
- C. External load operations.
- D. FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared Radar).

Requests for missions other than water dropping will be coordinated through the on-scene aircraft commander and the 76 RQF operations desk.

### SUPPORT SERVICES

The 76 RQF will arrange for and purchase their own fuel. Maintenance services will be provided by the 76 RQF maintenance contractor. All other services to support the helicopter crew, fuel tender and maintenance person will be provided by the County in accordance with standard fire incident procedures. The 76 RQF helicopters will normally return to Vandenberg AFB each night. In the event the helicopter remains on-scene overnight, the County will provide aircraft security

### REIMBURSEMENT RATES AND PROCEDURES

The USAF will offer these services free and clear of any reimbursement from the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. As a minimum, the plan will be reviewed by each organization no later than 1 May annually. This plan may be re-negotiated or revoked by either party at any time.

SIGNED:

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76 RQF Representative

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S.B. County Fire Dept. Representative