



## Emergency Management – Use of Aviation

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AUTHORISED BY Deputy Director General, Biosecurity & Food Safety

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### Policy Statement

This policy outlines the safe and efficient use of aviation (including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV)) for emergency operations.

### Scope

This policy only relates to aviation and UAV activities undertaken by NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) for emergency operations and not for general business. Personnel involved in emergency operations may include DPI and participating and supporting organisation personnel, contractors and affected stakeholders.

The main uses of aviation in emergency operations include:

- aerial surveillance
- aerial spraying
- aerial spotting
- aerial transport of personnel and animal transport including external lifting
- animal welfare assessment and/or destruction
- aerial mustering

### Requirements

1. This policy aims to ensure the effective and efficient use of aviation to achieve operational objectives within acceptable risk parameters. All aviation use must comply with national and state regulations, rules and standards.
2. Aviation operations must comply with NSW environmental legislation and DPI environmental policies and procedures.

#### *Standing Offer Services Deed (Standing Offer) and contracts*

3. This policy must be used in conjunction with the Regional NSW Critical Risk Control – Aircraft Services, which provide the contractual framework for the use of aircraft. DPI emergency operations will only use contracted aircraft that meet the requirements of the relevant Standing Offer Provisions.
4. DPI is an agency under the NSW Rural Fire Service Aviation Section State Air Desk (RFS SAD) Standing Offer for the purpose of accessing aviation resources including provision of aircraft, air personnel and fuel. A number of other government agencies responsible for emergency response in NSW also access resources through this process to improve safety and coordination of aviation assets in NSW. Each agency has a representative on the Inter-Agency Aviation Working Group (IAAWG), which is coordinated by NSW RFS Aviation Section.
5. External contracting of UAV may be conducted as a separate contracting process within DPI.
6. Due to the risks involved when sharing airspace with manned aircraft and persons on the ground, all aviation operations should be conducted in accordance with appropriate task profiles and risk assessments.
7. The safety of contractors and personnel is of paramount importance. Standing Offers and contracts must stipulate that contractors must meet strict requirements before they, their air crew, their aircraft, UASs or other equipment will be considered. Operators must also demonstrate the implementation of effective and operable Safety Management Systems.

8. RFS SAD maintains an online database (with restricted access) of aviation and fuel operators including, at a minimum, aircraft and operator details as well as approvals and non-approvals as part of their Standing Offer. Operators must be assessed as meeting DPI requirements and standards prior to use.
9. NSW RFS Aviation Section will maintain a database of UAV operations including, at a minimum, operator details (including qualifications and insurances), UAV details (including type and purpose of drone) and operating areas.

#### *Audits, assessments, and review*

10. There must be an ongoing assessment and audit process implemented and managed by RFS Aviation Section, to ensure as far as practicably possible, aviation operators remain compliant and in conformance with regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.
11. Audits conducted by NSW RFS Aviation Section on aviation contractors (operators) must be reviewed by DPI Emergency Management to ensure operators procedures and standards conform to DPI requirements including those identified in task profiles.
12. DPI Emergency Management Unit will ensure the internal and contracted UAV operations are audited to ensure compliance with aviation regulations and the implementation and conduct of safe operations.

#### *Operations*

13. Each aviation task must have a current task profile. All personnel involved in DPI aviation operations must refer to and comply with task profiles. These task profiles must explain the roles and tasks to be undertaken, describe aircraft/UAV use, set requirements and standards for audits and assessments, and provide guidance for resourcing.
14. Personnel involved in aviation operations should be appropriately trained and must be competent to perform the role.
15. Any person within a crew may cancel or cut short a flight if that person has reason to be concerned about the safety of that flight. A pilot may not be pressured to conduct a flight if the pilot has concerns about the safe operation of the flight.
16. Persons (e.g., passengers) being carried on contracted aircraft must conform to DPI rules and standards, such as the task profile. They must also be designated as aerial work passengers or aerial task specialists and their carriage must comply with the appropriate Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (in particular Part 138 "Aerial Work Operations").
17. Procedures must be implemented to ensure the forecasting, coordination and tracking of aviation resources.
18. The State Coordination Centre is responsible for strategic planning and allocation of aviation resources. A Local Control Centre (LCC) is responsible for the tactical planning and tasking of aviation resources. Where a LCC is not established, this responsibility maybe assigned to the LLS region involved in the response.
19. Data and results of prior usage of aviation resources should be analysed in order to support planning and resource allocation.
20. Procedures must be implemented to ensure the effective and efficient coordination of aviation resources both within the agency, and with other agencies, contractors and suppliers.

#### **Procedures**

- [Guide: Managing aviation for DPI emergency responses](#)

## Roles and responsibilities

- State Coordination Centre – responsible for strategic planning and allocation of aviation resources
- Local Control Centre – responsible for the tactical planning and tasking of aviation resources
- DPI Emergency Management Unit – IAAWG representation, coordinate aviation training, contract aviation expert, responsible for contracting and auditing of aviation assets via RFS SAD, manage aviation guides, task profiles, risk assessments and forms
- Personnel operating in or around aircraft – refer to the relevant task profile

## Safety considerations

Aviation tasks are high risk activities and personnel involved in the aviation operations must be competent for the tasks being undertaken, have appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and be aware of the risks. Aviation activities are to be kept to a minimum with alternatives used where possible.

## Delegations

- Financial delegations – Emergency response delegations

## Definitions/Abbreviations

- IAAWG: Inter-Agency Aviation Working Group
- DPI: NSW Department of Primary Industries
- NSW RFS: NSW Rural Fire Service
- LLS: Local Land Services
- PPE: Personal protective equipment
- UAV: Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
- SAD: State Air Desk
- Task profile: Approved description and analysis of an aviation task to determine limits and requirements

## Legislation

- [Biodiversity Conservation Act, 2016](#)
- [Civil Aviation Safety Regulations Part 138](#)
- [Civil Aviation Act 1988](#)
- [Local Land Services Act, 2013](#)
- [National Parks and Wildlife Act, 1974](#)
- [Pesticides Act, 1999](#) and [Pesticides Regulation, 2017](#)
- [Protection of the Environment Operations Act, 1997](#)
- [Work Health and Safety Act, 2011](#)

## Related policies

- Regional NSW Work health and safety policy

## Other related documents

- Regional NSW– Critical Risk Control – Aircraft Services

## Superseded documents

- None

## Revision history

Version	Date issued	Notes	By
1	2 Nov 2011	For approval	Agricultural Protection Officer (Policy)
2	26 June 2012	Included RFS SAD EOI	Agricultural Protection Officer (Policy)
3	17 June 2015	Update EOI process & references; personnel involved	Emergency Management Officer
4	11 January 2022	Updated processes & regulations Introduction of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles	Emergency Management Officer

## Contact

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