



Interagency Aviation TECH BULLETIN



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SUBJECT: National Flight Following Frequency

We received official implementation notice this week through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture for the joint use of air frequencies for fire incidents. The intent of this bulletin is to alleviate some, if not all, of the confusion this MOU generated.

The 1995 Joint USDA/DOI MOU was renewed in May of this year to make it more readable and incorporate the user community requirements, as expressed in a stakeholders meeting during the Joint DOI and USDA 2008 Radio Workshop, in February 2008, for toning the National Flight Following frequency. It was the understanding of the representative stakeholders that the user community would establish an implementation schedule, based upon operational mission requirements, which would provide the lowest impact possible.

The primary change in the MOU is that all National Flight Following (168.6500 MHz) transmissions must use the CTCSS tone of 110.9 Hz. While the language in the MOU revolves around fire incident communications, the decision to implement the tone 168.6500 MHz applies to all aviation operations. Tones will be placed on the transmitters of all radio types (aircraft, base stations, and portables) using 168.6500 MHz. The tone of 110.9 Hz will not be placed on receivers unless local conditions dictate otherwise. Without the tone of 110.9 Hz being placed on a transmitter, communication with toned dispatch centers is lost. 110.9Hz is the same tone currently used on the Air Guard frequency (168.6250 MHz).

Subsequent to February's Interagency Radio Workshop, the user community received the Workshop decision document, but erroneously excluded the request to establish an implementation plan. AMD and USFS Aviation must now coordinate with the WO Communications organizations to establish the best possible plan, and including a timeline for toning 168.6500 MHz. Once that plan has been finalized, we will publish the action items with a target completion date for the agencies to implement.

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