



GENERAL ORDER OPS-53 AVIATION OPERATIONS

EFFECTIVE AUGUST 8, 2008

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This General Order contains the following sections:

- I. POLICY
- II. DEFINITIONS
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I. POLICY

The Howard County Department of Police (HCPD) shall provide aviation support to enhance the effectiveness of services provided by the members of the Department.

II. DEFINITIONS

A. Ground Command

The supervisor in charge of the incident necessitating the deployment of the helicopter shall perform this function. This includes the request for aerial support and requests for specific actions.

B. Air Command

The Pilot-in-Command is responsible for all flight operations and has direct supervisory control over personnel serving as flight crew onboard the helicopter during flight and will provide input on ground activities associated with the mission. The pilot has the ultimate authority to make decisions about the mission parameters regarding the use of the aircraft.

C. Pilots¹

An authorized member assigned to the Aviation Unit who possesses a commercial rotorcraft/helicopter pilot certificate with instrument rating issued by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). These pilots are authorized to operate aircraft utilized by the Aviation Unit in accordance with the privileges and ratings of their licenses. Pilots must maintain at least a current Class II medical certificate as required by the FAA.

D. Pilot-in-Command (PIC)

The pilot responsible for the operation and safety of the aircraft during flight time.

E. Tactical Flight Officer (TFO)

A sworn officer who has completed the Aerial Observer Training Program presented by the Aviation Unit. Exceptions: Any County employee may serve as an observer or crewmember for a specific mission that requires their expertise and knowledge. Should an emergency response be required while this person is on board, the crewmember is authorized to act as an observer and assist in the mission.

F. HCPD Aviation Unit Coordinator

A member of the Aviation Unit assigned specific administrative duties by the Commander of the Emergency Response Division.

¹ CALEA 41.1.3b

G. HCPD/Anne Arundel County Police Department (AACPD) Regional Operations

The HCPD and AACPD will share resources, aircraft and personnel on a regular basis to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. Joint operations shall be conducted pursuant to the Mutual Aid Agreement governing joint aviation operations between HCPD and AACPD. Operations will be approved by the HCPD Special Operations Commander and the AACPD Special Operations Commander. The PIC remains the final authority on all flight missions.

III. OPERATIONS

The helicopter shall be utilized based on the design limitations of the aircraft and the safety of the members of the Department and the community.

A. Patrol and Special Operations

1. Aircraft Uses²

The Aviation Unit is designed to provide support to operational components throughout the Department. The Aviation Unit shall provide routine aerial patrol, patrol support, aerial support for planned events, and unplanned exigent uses. These uses include:

Searches and perimeter support	Burglary and robbery in progress calls/alarms
High speed pursuits ³	Tactical assessments and reconnaissance
Surveillances	Photography
Traffic monitoring and crowd control	Diversions
Saturation patrols	Static displays
Officer safety support	Drug eradication

2. Request for Use/Mission Documentation

- a. During routine aerial patrol hours, requests for Aviation can be made by Patrol and CIB supervisors, Watch Commanders, or any commissioned officer. These requests can be made directly to the Pilot-in-Command using HCPD radio frequencies.
- b. When the aircraft is in an on-call status, a request for use must be authorized by the Watch Commander or any commissioned officer.
- c. Requests for unplanned exigent use shall be accomplished by having the Howard County Communications Division activate the call-out procedures for aircrews.
- d. Requests for planned services (e.g. special events, surveillances, photography) shall be directed to the Commander of the Emergency Response Division, who shall approve and coordinate the mission.

3. Discretion of the Pilot

The Pilot-in-Command has the authority to deny any request for aircraft support when unsafe conditions exist or when requests are in violation of operating procedures. Additionally, he has complete authority to cancel or terminate a flight for any reason, which in his judgment, may compromise the Aviation Unit's safety standards.

² CALEA 41.1.3a

³ CALEA 41.2.2d

4. Only sworn police officer pilots and sworn police crew members are authorized to participate in pre-planned high-risk missions. Any crewmember or passenger who is likely to act in an enforcement capacity must wear body armor.

5. Safety Procedures

Safety on and around the aircraft is the responsibility of each member. Personal conduct shall conform to Departmental policies and requirements of the Pilot-in-Command. Members shall adhere to the following safety guidelines:

- a. Members shall report any situation they believe may constitute a flight hazard to the Pilot-in-Command.
- b. Members shall ensure that the Pilot-in-Command is aware of their presence and actions whenever they are in the proximity of any operating aircraft. Members shall approach helicopters from the front, make eye contact with the pilot, and receive a gesture that indicates that it is safe to approach the aircraft.
- c. Mission safety and pre-flight briefings shall be conducted for all missions.

6. Landing Zones

- a. Landing zones shall be free of obstacles and have clear take off corridors. The landing zones shall be large, level, free of debris, clearly identified, and able to tolerate a firm load. Personnel shall be clear of the landing area when aircraft are using it.
- b. Federal, State, and local laws and regulations shall be followed. This shall include owner permission or use permit requirements or at the discretion of the Pilot-in-Command in exigent circumstances.

7. Air to Ground Communications

When requesting Aviation support, HCPD members shall request an Air Unit. The specific aircraft assigned shall be designated as Air 1, Air 2 or Air 3. When referring to ground units, Aviation members shall indicate a unit by using the assigned call numbers for each unit. If the unit's number is unknown, Aviation shall use the vehicle numbers clearly marked on the trunk of each member's vehicle. Unmarked vehicles shall continue to answer by their assigned call numbers.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- A. HCPD Aviation Unit

1. The Aviation Unit consists of both full-time and decentralized part-time HCPD members. The Commander of the Emergency Response Division has primary responsibility for the management and operation of the Aviation Unit.
2. The personnel assigned to the Unit shall consist of sworn members detailed to the Unit on a full-time or part-time basis. The full-time members shall report to the Commander of the Emergency Response Division. While participating in an Aviation Mission the part-time member shall report to the HCPD Pilot-in-Command.

B. HCPD Aviation Unit Coordinator Responsibilities:

1. Providing a list of scheduled flight times to the Commander of the Emergency Response Division, or his designee, to be published for operational personnel to be familiar with availability;
2. Scheduling documented inspections and maintenance of equipment;⁴
3. Scheduling documented training activities; and,
4. Providing copies of this documentation to the Commander of the Emergency Response Division or his designee as well as the Research and Planning Section for Accreditation purposes.

C. Shared Responsibilities

1. All pilots, TFO's, and other personnel performing aviation services shall report directly to the Commander of the Emergency Response Division, or his designee, while performing aviation duties.
2. The officers assigned to the Unit shall adhere to all rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of his or her respective agency, which includes any operating procedures outlined in this General Order and the Memorandum of Understanding. Failure to adhere to these requirements may lead to termination from the Unit and disciplinary action.
3. To ensure proper management and utilization of resources, supervision shall be divided into two areas, Ground Command and Air Command.

V. **CANCELLATIONS**

This General Order cancels and replaces the following:

General Order OPS-53, Regional Aviation Unit, dated September 1, 2006.

AUTHORITY:



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REVISIONS MADE TO PAGES 2 AND 3 AUTHORITY OF CHIEF WILLIAM J. MCMAHON ON MAY 27, 2011.

⁴ CALEA 41.1.3c