

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	NOAA Administrative Order 216-104A	
NOAA ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER SERIES	DATE OF ISSUANCE 5/1/2015	EFFECTIVE DATE 5/1/2015
SUBJECT Management and Utilization of Aircraft		

SECTION 1. PURPOSE.

.01 This Order prescribes the policy and responsibilities for management and utilization of aircraft, both manned and unmanned, in support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Programs.

.02 This Order is a revision of NOAA Administrative Order (NAO) 216-104, Management and Utilization of Aircraft.

.03 Standardized aircraft operational details can be found in the Aircraft Operations Center (AOC) Policy 220-1 Aircraft Operations Manual and the NOAA Unmanned Aircraft Systems Handbook.

SECTION 2. SCOPE.

.01 This Order governs the management and utilization of all aircraft activities within NOAA, including Commercial Aviation Services (CAS) and Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS). Requirements for collecting and reporting utilization of CAS in order to comply with government-wide reporting requirements and for serving as the point of contact for those who intend to use those services, are assigned to the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO).

SECTION 3. DEFINITIONS.

.01 Throughout this Order, "aircraft" refers to both manned and unmanned aircraft, unless specifically stated otherwise. "Corporate UAS" are UAS that can be classified as NOAA capital assets that are operated for all of NOAA by AOC, owned by AOC, and allocated through the Fleet Council. "Field UAS" fall below the capital asset threshold and meet AOC criteria for being owned and operated by individual line offices in compliance with AOC policy. "Corporate aircraft" refers to all manned aircraft and corporate UAS.

.02 Refer to Appendix A for definitions of terms used in this Order.

SECTION 4. POLICY.

.01 NOAA manned aircraft and UAS are public aircraft, as defined at 49 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) § 40102(a) (41), and applicable Federal Aviation Administration policies and guidance. When conducting public aircraft operations, NOAA aircraft are not subject to Federal Aviation Regulations, except for those prescribed under the authority of 49 U.S.C. Subtitle VII, pertaining to the use of airspace, the control of air traffic, and aircraft registration. However, aircraft shall

be operated and maintained in accordance with all pertinent regulations set forth by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Department of Defense (DOD), and NOAA's AOC unless a deviation is approved by the Commanding Officer, AOC. In addition, aircraft shall be operated and maintained in accordance with all the aircraft manufacturer's recommendations unless a deviation is approved by the Commanding Officer.

.02 For UAS, the FAA has established interim operational approval guidance in the U.S. National Airspace System (NAS) in order to ensure alternate means of compliance with the regulations in 14 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Chapter I (Federal Aviation Regulations). Furthermore, the Interagency Committee for Aviation Policy (ICAP) has determined that Federal agencies will manage UAS as aircraft under Federal Management Regulation (FMR) Chapter 102 Part 33, 41 C.F.R. § 102.33. Management and operation of NOAA aircraft and UAS will adhere to the FMR regulation and the FAA guidance along with any subsequent revisions/rules.

.03 Management and operational control of all aircraft are functions and responsibilities of OMAO.

.04 All NOAA UAS operations will be approved by OMAO to ensure safety and compliance with regulations and policy. Line Offices will be responsible for determining operational goals, mission payloads, and flight strategies within the bounds established by OMAO for safe operation of aircraft and appropriate use of corporate aircraft. Line Offices shall consult with the UAS Program Office on latest technologies to meet their mission needs.

OMAO has established training requirements, standards, and policy for UAS within NOAA. NOAA Line Offices may own and operate field UAS and operate corporate UAS with line office qualified pilots in accordance with AOC policy. Line offices will adhere to these policies and AOC will provide oversight of these systems by approving qualified pilots, system airworthiness, and operations. Line offices will coordinate all acquisitions of UAS with OMAO to ensure that systems being procured meet safety and regulatory requirements and that NOAA complies with federal UAS policy and reporting requirements.

UAS that exceed the capital asset threshold may be designated as field UAS by request of the NOAA Center or Line Office to AOC. The NOAA Center or Line Office will be required to complete an approved Standard Operating Procedures Manual.

.05 No officer or employee is permitted to use or authorize the use of any Government-owned, operated, or exclusively used aircraft for other than official purposes (31 U.S.C. § 1349(b)).

.06 All NOAA aircraft will be used in an effective and efficient manner for the conduct of approved projects.

.07 For corporate aircraft, NOAA will maintain airworthiness and employ appropriate aircraft operating standards to ensure optimum safety of flight. Only qualified and designated personnel will serve as NOAA pilots, navigators, flight engineers, crew chiefs, operators or other crewmembers. For field UAS, Line Offices shall follow AOC airworthiness guidelines.

.08 AOC will continually appraise requirements, use, safety, materiel condition, and operating costs of all NOAA aircraft.

.09 NOAA will use scheduled air carrier service for transportation of personnel and cargo whenever practical.

.10 Aircraft obtained solely for spares will not be subject to the aircraft acquisition process. Such aircraft will not be recorded as part of the active NOAA inventory. Any action to assign inactive aircraft to flight status will be subject to the aircraft acquisition approval process.

.11 Assignment of corporate aircraft to NOAA projects will be made in accordance with the OMAO Aircraft Allocation Procedure.

.12 NOAA-controlled inactive aircraft will be disposed of when there are no further program requirements within NOAA. Disposal of NOAA-owned inactive aircraft will be in accordance with Federal Property Management Regulations and the OMAO Aircraft Sale/Disposal Process.

.13 Registration and Identification of Aircraft.

- a. NOAA-owned manned aircraft will be registered with the FAA. The Certificate of Registration will be displayed in the aircraft in accordance with FAA requirements.
- b. All NOAA-owned manned aircraft will display markings as required by FAA Regulations for registered aircraft of the United States.
- c. All NOAA-owned unmanned aircraft will be registered and marked as the prevailing requirements for such are dictated by the FAA.
- d. All NOAA-owned manned aircraft will be painted in accordance with NAO 201-115.

.14 Persons on board NOAA aircraft are limited:

- a. to those whose presence is required for mission performance or who are associated with that mission;
- b. to officers and employees of the U.S. Government traveling on official business;
- c. to Members of Congress and employees of Congressional committee staffs whose work relates to NOAA Programs;
- d. to non-U.S. Government employees with crew member status or a scientific reason for being on the flight who are engaged in activities that enhance accomplishment of a NOAA Program (e.g., personnel of cooperating state, county, or local agencies or universities; representatives of foreign governments; and contractors' representatives);
- e. to Foreign Nationals with crew member status or a scientific reason for being on the flight who are engaged in activities that enhance accomplishment of a NOAA Program that have been cleared in accordance with NAO 207-12, Technology Controls and Foreign National Access, and OMAO Policy "Foreign National Access to NMAO Facilities and Platforms" dated 16MAR06.
- f. For NOAA aircraft that do not have FAA airworthiness certificates, only crewmembers or other persons aboard the aircraft whose presence is required to perform, or is associated with the performance of, a governmental function are allowed on board such aircraft as defined by FAA Advisory Circular No. 1-1 on Government-owned aircraft. The Director of OMAO shall be responsible for complying with this requirement. The Oceans and Coasts Section of NOAA's General Counsel (NOAA GC) should be consulted when questions arise as to the interpretation of the FAA requirements.

.15 The incidental transportation of persons not meeting the conditions of Section 4.14 of this Order is permitted on a space-available basis as approved by NOAA GC, provided it is not prohibited by regulation and it does not affect the official use of the aircraft.

SECTION 5. RESPONSIBILITIES.

.01 The Director, Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO), has overall management authority for NOAA aircraft and shall:

- a. chair the Fleet Council in accordance with the Fleet Council Terms of Reference (TOR);
- b. issue the Annual Call for NOAA aircraft time requests in accordance with the OMAO Aircraft Allocation Procedure;
- c. oversee NOAA aircraft utilization reporting methods and procedures;
- d. be the approval authority for Foreign National access to NOAA aircraft and OMAO facilities in accordance with NAO 207-12, Technology Controls and Foreign National Access and OMAO policy; and
- e. ensure Foreign National activities on NOAA aircraft and in OMAO facilities are conducted in accordance with NAO 207-12, Technology Controls and Foreign National Access and OMAO policy

.02 The Aviation Safety Program Manager (ASPM) shall:

- a. administer the Aviation Safety Program for CAS in accordance with NAO 209-124, Aviation Safety Policy; and
- b. maintain and report cost and utilization data for NOAA's use of CAS in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and GSA requirements.

.03 The Chief, Policy Planning/Program Services (PPP), through the PPP staff, shall:

- a. participate in the OMAO Aircraft Allocation Process in accordance with its terms;
- b. provide interface between NOAA and other Federal Agencies to meet aircraft related needs; and
- c. maintain current and accurate aircraft allocation plans throughout the covered cycle.

.04 The Aircraft Working Group (AWG) contains one representative from each Line Office appointed by its respective Assistant Administrator and one representative from OMAO, and shall:

- a. provide the Fleet Council with recommendations and assistance to support its functions in accordance with the Terms of Reference; and
- b. participate in the OMAO Aircraft Allocation Procedure in accordance with its terms.

.05 The Commanding Officer, Aircraft Operations Center (AOC), shall:

- a. maintain operational authority over NOAA aircraft to ensure safe, efficient, and effective use of resources;
- b. provide logistical, technical, and administrative support necessary for the successful accomplishment of NOAA corporate aircraft schedules;
- c. represent NOAA on external and interagency groups in the area of aircraft management;
- d. approve, by waiver, deviations from policies regarding the qualifications of pilots and other crew members as set forth in the AOC Flight Operations Policy;
- e. review current aircraft requirements and associated costs on a continuing basis;

- f. administer policy and guidelines for the management and use of NOAA corporate aircraft and aircraft facilities, budgets, personnel, etc.;
- g. provide the interface between NOAA and elements of DOD and other Federal Agencies for the coordination of interagency agreements, and seek other agencies' support to serve NOAA's aircraft related needs (Line Offices are responsible for planning their science programs on other Federal Agency aircraft and shall keep AOC informed of their interagency aircraft activity);
- h. obtain the required clearances from foreign government(s) through the Department of State for NOAA corporate aircraft operations abroad (the Commanding Officer, AOC, will advise NOAA offices and programs when approvals have been obtained from foreign government(s));
- i. coordinate annual meetings with Program Managers to jointly review possible means for improvement in operational support;
- j. develop policies governing the management of NOAA aircraft, standard operating procedures, aviation personnel, and related matters;
- k. perform technical assessment and evaluation of proposed acquisitions, classifications, assignments, and dispositions of NOAA aircraft;
- l. review and evaluate the adequacy of facilities and the procedures for corporate aircraft operations and maintenance;
- m. develop and maintain current information on AOC corporate aircraft operations and related budgetary and cost data;
- n. support the Fleet Council in assessing current and future operational requirements and evaluate the effectiveness of NOAA corporate aircraft to meet those requirements;
- o. make recommendations to the Fleet Council to approve the replacement, disposition, and acquisition of NOAA corporate aircraft as required to meet agency objectives, together with the funding responsibilities for operations;
- p. maintain liaison with other government agencies and the private sector on matters pertaining to aircraft operations and maintenance;
- q. provide authorization for personnel with official flight duties to perform, operate, or travel on NOAA aircraft;
- r. administer the Foreign National/Deemed Export program for NOAA corporate aircraft and AOC facilities in accordance with NAO 207-12, Technology Controls and Foreign National Access and OMAO policy;
- s. ensure all NOAA aircraft operations comply with the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), 15 CFR Parts 730-774;
- t. ensure all NOAA aircraft operations comply with International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) requirements;
- u. ensure an Operational Risk Management (ORM) review is conducted for each project assigned to NOAA aircraft and UAS;
- v. ensure safety investigations are conducted for all incidents involving NOAA aircraft, including UAS;
- w. develop criteria and approve all NOAA UAS airworthiness, flight operations, and UAS crewmembers designations;
- x. ensure that UAS operations do not pose unacceptable risks to persons or property, operations meet applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, maintain a standardized

process to review and approve NOAA UAS operations, identify roles and responsibilities consistent with federal regulation managing UAS, and ensure that applicable government reporting requirements are met;

- y. develop standards for, monitor and provide oversight of, and delegate authority for field UAS operations and management to NOAA Line Offices for UAS that are non-capital assets and meet criteria for line office control in the UAS Handbook;
- z. review Line Office requests for UAS procurement to provide guidance on UAS operations and ensure that pertinent AOC and government policy are being met; and
- aa. when requested by a Line Office or Center, waive the capital asset threshold for corporate UAS with appropriate justification such as specially modified UAS being used for research and development. The NOAA Center or Line Office will be required to complete an approved Standard Operating Procedures Manual.

.06 AOC's Program and Projects Staff shall:

- a. participate in the OMAO Aircraft Allocation Procedure in accordance with its terms;
- b. provide cost estimates for NOAA aircraft support of projects; and
- c. work with Program/Project Managers on programmatic and logistical requirements, and on development of Project Instructions for NOAA aircraft.

.07 NOAA Line Offices shall each:

- a. designate a representative to the AWG;
- b. assist their AWG representative in the OMAO Aircraft Allocation Procedure in accordance with its terms;
- c. ensure NOAA Form (NF) 57-11-52 Charter Aircraft Services Report, is completed in accordance with requirements;
- d. submit all requests for UAS operations to AOC; and
- e. coordinate all UAS acquisitions with AOC.

.08 Program Managers requiring aircraft support shall take the following actions:

- a. upon recognition of the need for CAS, submit a NF 57-11-51 Aircraft Support Request, to OMAO;
- b. upon issuance of the Annual Call, prepare a NF 57-11-51 for each request for NOAA aircraft time and forward to the AWG representative in accordance with instructions for the Annual Call;
- c. coordinate with OMAO and AOC on projects that will utilize aircraft by:
 - i. drafting project protocol(s) covering the scientific and technical aspects of field work, and forwarding such protocol(s) to the AOC Programs and Projects Staff for comment as early as practical;
 - ii. supplying resources necessary to install, operate, and maintain special equipment aboard aircraft in a timely manner;
 - iii. completing and submitting customer satisfaction evaluations; and
 - iv. participating with the AOC Programs and Projects Staff in pre- and post-project briefings.

- d. if commercial aviation services are utilized, submit 57-11-52 Charter Aircraft Services Report, to ASPM within 30 days of completion of the agreement, along with copies of purchase orders, contracts, or receipts. The reporting requirement applies to all methods of acquisition, including bankcard. Include the clearance number, as assigned by ASPM, on the NF 57-11-52 in order to ensure the cost and utilization data may be matched with the initial project request;
- e. cooperate with OMAO on budget initiatives to acquire enhanced NOAA aircraft capabilities to support future Program requirements; and
- f. comply with NAO 207-12, Technology Controls and Foreign National Access, and OMAO policy, for access to NOAA aircraft and/or OMAO facilities if foreign national personnel are participating in their project.

.09 Acquisition offices shall ensure requests for CAS and UAS include an OMAO-assigned clearance number. As awards are made, acquisition offices should provide ASPM with a copy of each obligating document.

.10 Finance offices shall monitor CAS-related documents and shall provide CAS disbursement information upon request of ASPM.

SECTION 6. REFERENCES.

.01 14 C.F.R. § 91, Federal Aviation Regulations.

.02 22 C.F.R. §§ 120-130, International Traffic in Arms Regulations.

.03 31 U.S.C. § 1349.

.04 49 U.S.C. § 40102.

.05 49 U.S.C. § 40125GSA BULLETIN FMR Bulletin-24 UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS.

.06 NAO 201-101, NOAA Fleet Allocation Council REVOCATION NOTICE.

.07 NAO 201-115, NOAA Aircraft, Color and Identification.

.08 NAO 207-12, Technology Controls and Foreign National Access.

.09 NAO 209-124, Aviation Safety Policy.

.10 AOC Policy 220-1 Aircraft Operations Manual.

.11 AOC Policy 220-1-5 Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Operations.

.12 NOAA Fleet Council Terms of Reference.

.13 NOAA Unmanned Aircraft System Handbook.

SECTION 7. EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUANCES.

.01 This Order supersedes NAO 216-104, Management and Utilization of Aircraft, dated February 10, 2003.

.02 NOAA UNSEC signs because there is no delegation of authority for this NAO.

An electronic copy of this Order will be posted in place of the superseded Order on the NOAA Office of the Chief Administrative Officer website under the NOAA Administrative Issuances Section. <http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/~ocao/index.html>



Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere

Offices of Primary Interest:
Office of Marine and Aviation Operations
Aircraft Operations Center
Policy Planning/Program Services

Attachment:
Appendix A Definitions