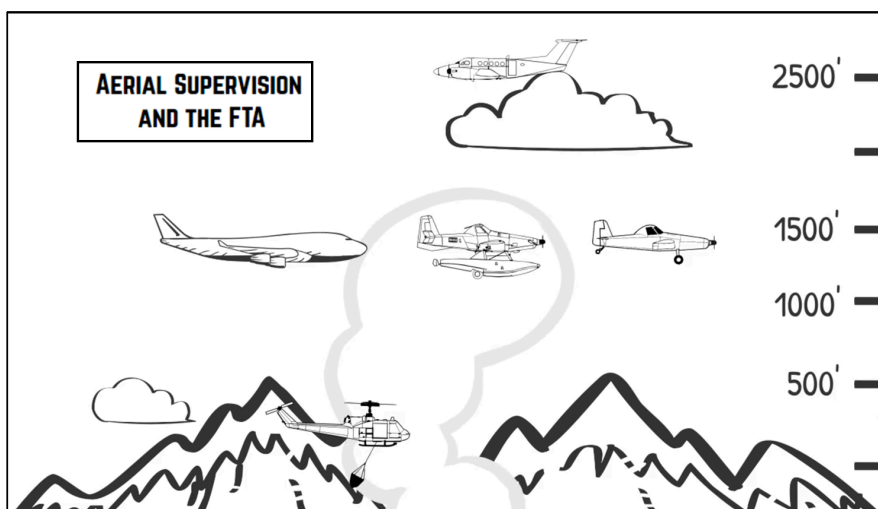




Aerial Supervision and the Fire Traffic Area

Explainer Video (6 minutes)

The Aviation Training Delivery Team and National Training Delivery Team are developing short training videos to promote Aviation Safety. The second video of the series is complete and ready to be utilized for training refreshers, 6-minutes for safety, or in any other training application. Click the YouTube link or Scan the QR code below.



[Aerial Supervision and the Fire Traffic Area Video \(6 minutes\)](#)



Aerial Supervision and the FTA Video

The first video in the series:

[Communicating with Aviation Resources Video \(6 minutes\)](#)



Communicating with Aviation Resources Video

WILDLAND FIRES – Media Aircraft Communication Protocol

During wildland fires, safety remains the prime concern of all pilots, and media. The Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS) “Air Attack”, or in the absence of the Air Attack, the Helicopter Coordinator (HLCO) “Helco”, are responsible for directing air traffic within the Fire Traffic Area (FTA) and, if present, the Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR). All aircraft, air tankers, water dropping and aerial supervision helicopters as well as media aircraft will be under their supervision. The Aerial Supervisor will coordinate aircraft firefighting operations with the Incident Commander (IC) on the ground.

All media aircraft requesting access into any Fire Traffic Area (FTA) should first establish communications with the Aerial Supervisor on the appropriate air-to-air frequency listed on the TFR NOTAM, 122.925 Mhz, or assigned Rotor Victor, at seven miles out and stay clear of the incident air traffic until cleared into the airspace and assigned an operating altitude. These frequencies should be obtained and confirmed prior to entering the affected FTA/TFR. Pilots should be prepared to notify the Aerial Supervisor of their present position, altitude and heading. Pilots should also be prepared to state their request and identify their aircraft by type and color.

Otherwise, permission to fly into the affected area rests with the Aerial Supervisor. It is recommended that media aircraft contact Air Attack/HLCO using station name instead of N number.

Ideally, Air Attack/HLCO prefers that media aircraft fly above Aerial Supervision Aircraft when arriving on the incident scene. However, this will be determined on an incident-by-incident basis according to aircraft altitude and airspace restriction of the incident. Media aircraft should expect to be given a clearance altitude that places them above the Aerial Supervision aircraft.

Fire TFRs are subject to unexpected updates as dictated by operational needs. All pilots are encouraged to review updated NOTAMs prior to each flight as these changes may affect frequencies, altitudes, and boundaries. For regulatory information on Fire TFRs see 14 CFR 91.137.

It is common practice to put media helicopters above the ATGS/HLCO to keep them away from firefighting aircraft.

Being familiar with this protocol and strengthening the 3 C’s, Communication, Collaboration, and Coordination will help with airspace deconfliction for mid-air collision avoidance in the low-level flight environments that we operate in. Please see below for more information on the FTA.



NWCG Fire Traffic Area (FTA)

NWCG Standards for Aerial Supervision, PMS 505,

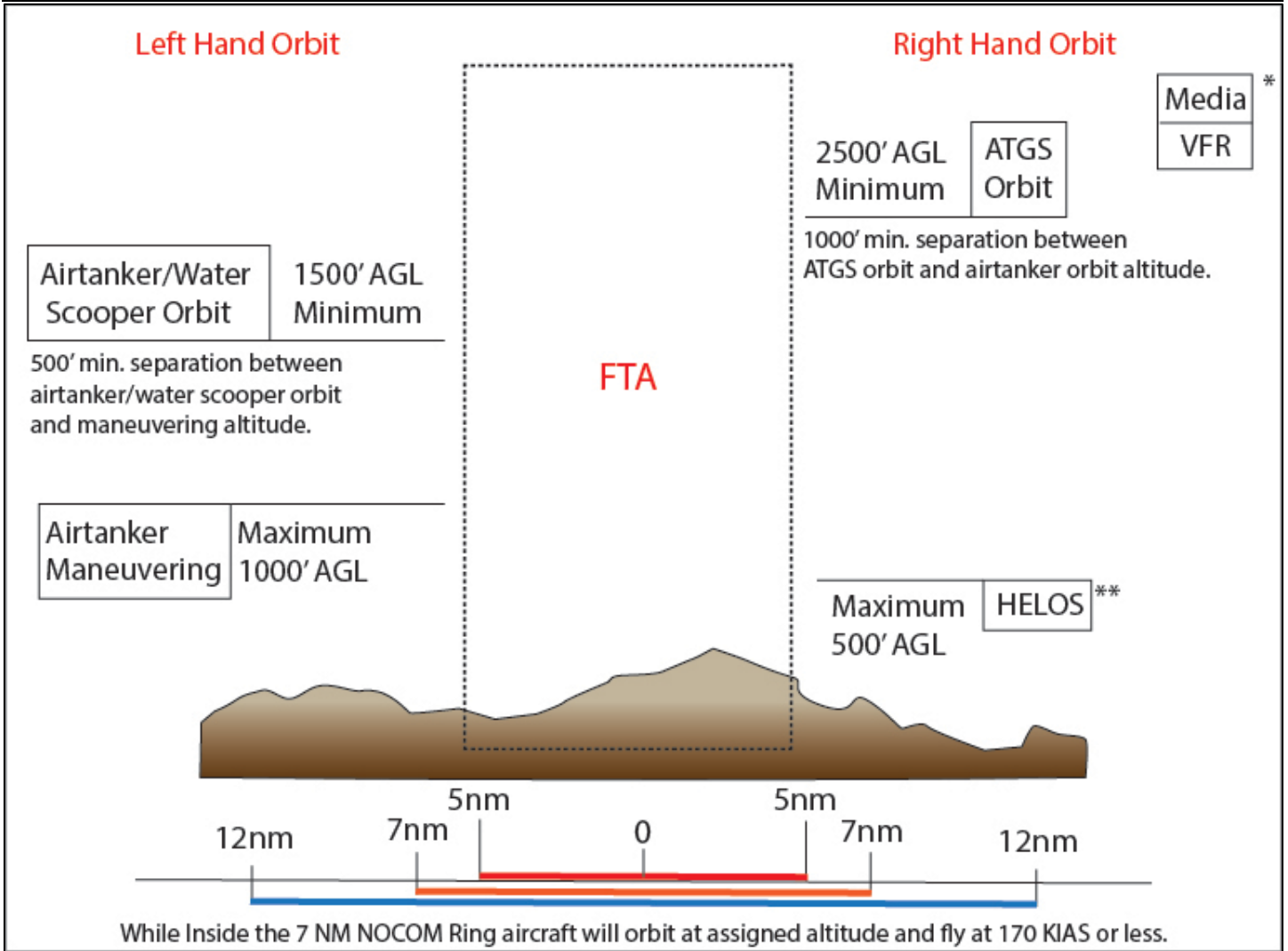
<https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/505>

*****Clearance is required to enter the FTA*****

Initial Radio Contact: 12 nm on assigned air tactical frequency.

No Radio Contact: Hold a minimum of 7 nm from the incident.

Note: Airtanker maneuvering altitude determines minimum airtanker and ATGS orbit altitudes. Assigned altitudes may be higher and will be stated as MSL.



* Media and IAA Aircraft: Maintain VFR separation above highest incident aircraft or at the altitude assigned by the controlling aircraft.

** Helicopters: Fly assigned altitudes, orbits, and routes.

Airtanker Base As Assigned	Air Guard 168.625 Tx Tone 110.9	Air to Air As Assigned	National Flight Following 168.650 Tone 110.9 TX and RX
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Incident Airspace Reminders

An interagency airspace management tool containing an established communication protocol. The FTA is a section of airspace with a five nautical mile (NM) radius from the center point of an incident during fire suppression operations. Responding resources shall arrive on scene using the following procedures based on resource type.

- ATGS Orbit Altitude: 2,500 Above Ground Level (AGL), expressed using MSL, Right Hand Orbit.
- Airtanker and Water Scooper Orbit Altitude: 1,500 feet AGL, expressed using MSL, Left Hand Orbit.
- Airtanker Maneuvering Altitude: Ceiling of 1,000 feet AGL, expressed in MSL, Left Hand Orbit, 150 KIAS or less.
- Helicopter Orbit Altitude: Ceiling of 500 feet AGL, expressed in MSL, Assigned Left- or Right-Hand Orbit.

Approach procedures include:

- Initial Communication Ring (ICOM) – A ring 12 nm from the center point of the incident. At or prior to 12 nm, inbound aircraft contact the ATGS or appropriate aerial resource for permission to proceed to the incident.
- No Communication Ring (NOCOM) – A ring 7 nm from the center point of the incident that should not be crossed by inbound aircraft without first receiving clearance from the appropriate on-scene incident aircraft. While within the NOCOM ring aircraft will operate at established/assigned altitudes and remain at 170 KIAS or less.

Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR)

NWCG Standards for Airspace Coordination, PMS 520, <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/520>.

All assigned/ordered aircraft must obtain clearance into the incident TFR by the on scene aerial supervisor or the official in charge of the on-scene emergency response activities. A resource order (IROC) or *NWCG Aircraft Dispatch Form*, PMS 250, is not a clearance to enter a TFR.

Responding aircraft must have reasonable assurance that there are no other aircraft in the TFR by making blind calls on the TFR frequency, other assigned air-to-air frequencies, and double checking with ground personnel (Incident Commander, Operations, or Helibase) before entering a TFR.

There may be multiple aircraft operations areas within a TFR.

Remember: Non-incident aircraft may enter the TFR under the following conditions:

- The aircraft is carrying a law enforcement official.
- The aircraft is on a flight plan and carrying properly accredited news representatives.
- The aircraft is operating under the ATC approved IFR flight plan.
- The operation is conducted directly to or from an airport within the area or is necessitated by the impracticability of VFR flight above or around the area due to weather, or terrain; notification is given to the Flight Service Station (FSS) or ATC facility specified in the NOTAM to receive advisories concerning disaster relief aircraft operations; and the operation does not hamper or endanger relief activities and is not conducted for observing the disaster.