



Interagency Aviation Accident Prevention Bulletin



No. IA 09-05

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Page 1 of 2

Subject: Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE) for ATGS and Fire Reconnaissance Operations

Area of Concern: Air Tactical Operations

Distribution: All Air Tactical Fire and Aviation Personnel & Air Tactical Contractors

Discussion: Interagency Accident Prevention Bulletin 09-02, *Personnel Protective Equipment*, was generic in nature and addressed the benefits and proper use of PPE. This APB addresses a specific problem relating to the use, or rather the non-use, of PPE in Air Tactical Group Supervisor (ATGS) and fire reconnaissance operations.



The photo on the left is reported to be one of the first flights for fire reconnaissance operations. As you can see, they took PPE very seriously; and rightfully so. The accident rate back then was very high and they knew the dangers associated with flying with clothing made of synthetic materials.

They knew that if they crashed and a fire resulted, the synthetic material could melt and adhere to their skin, causing severe burns.

Over the years, as aircraft have become more reliable and

comfortable, some aircrews have become complacent when it comes to wearing PPE. Rather than wearing clothing made from fire-resistant polyamide or aramid material, a few have substituted non-natural fiber shirts, shorts, and tennis shoes; like the aviators in the photo on the right.



By policy, BLM and USFS agency ATGS and fire reconnaissance personnel are required to comply with the PPE requirements identified in the **2009 *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations Guide*** (also known as the Red Book). ATGS requirements are listed on page 15 of chapter 16. Fire reconnaissance PPE requirements are new for 2009 and can be found on page 18 of chapter 16. Both requirements include leather shoes or boots, natural fiber shirts, and full length cotton or nomex pants or flight suits.

Although there are slight differences in contract language between USFS and BLM, both agencies require contract pilots (exclusive use, on-call, and call-when-needed) to adhere to required PPE standards. For example, one contract states that “Contractor pilots shall wear full length trousers made of cotton or fire-resistant polyamide or aramid material or equal (a flight suit is considered equal). Contractor personnel shall wear boots or shoes made of all-leather uppers.”

Whether you’re a federal employee or a contractor employee, the requirements for PPE are quite specific:

WEAR IT !

Subject: Personnel Protective Equipment for ATGS Operations and Fire Reconnaissance Operations

Wearing this



not this



Just may keep this from happening



/s/ Robert Galloway
Robert Galloway
Aviation Safety Manager

/s/ Ron Hanks
Ron Hanks
Chief, Aviation Risk Management
and Training Systems