

GENERAL ORDER



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Subject Air Support Unit		
Topic	Series	Number
HSC	803	07
Effective Date December 14, 2010		
Rescinds: General Order 310.5 (Requests from Other Agencies or Jurisdictions for the Assistance of the Department Helicopters) Effective Date September 1, 1972		

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I. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this general order is to provide guidance with requesting assistance of the Air Support Unit (ASU). The Special Operations Division's (SOD) ASU operates as the primary aerial platform for the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). The ASU provides tactical air support to the entire MPD. In particular, the ASU provides support to Patrol Service Areas by improving police response time, increasing patrol observation and officer safety.

II. POLICY

It is the policy of the MPD to use its helicopter fleet as an aerial platform for police operations which include, but are not limited to, traffic control and reporting, apprehensions, pursuit management, crime prevention, safety, locating missing persons, water rescue and patrol, special events, and community affairs. All units of the MPD are encouraged to use this support when it is believed it will help accomplish a particular mission.

III. DEFINITIONS

When used in this directive, the following terms shall have the meaning designated:

1. Falcon – MPD helicopter fleet.
2. Flight – Mission performed by a MPD helicopter.

3. Flight Crew – Consists of a Tactical Flight Officer and a Pilot.
4. Pilot – Member who is licensed and rated to fly a particular aircraft.
5. Pilot in Command – Member aboard an aircraft who is responsible for its operation and safety during flight.
6. Tactical Flight Officer – Member who manages the helicopter's airborne law enforcement systems to include the down link, moving map, police radio, thermal imaging system, spot light, and who conducts safety briefings for any non-crew passengers and assists with each flight.

IV. REGULATIONS

- A. Members operating Falcon shall be governed by the guidelines in this directive as well as any applicable local or federal regulation.
- B. The ASU shall comply with the following Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Regulations:
 1. Part 43 (Maintenance);
 2. Part 61 (Certifications);
 3. Part 67 (Medical Standards and Certification); and
 4. Part 91 (General Operating and Flight Rules).
- C. The ASU adheres to all procedures and directives of the MPD.
- D. Failure to comply with Part IV.B.1-4 of this order shall result in the grounding of the equipment or the member which/who fails to achieve and/or maintain compliance with these regulations.

NOTE: The duration of the grounding will continue until the deficiencies have been remedied and such remedy(s) is approved by the FAA **and** the Commanding Officer, SOD.
- E. Flight crew members shall monitor the city-wide zone while in service and on patrol whenever possible.

V. PROCEDURES

- A. Requesting ASU Services
 1. It is the goal of the ASU to be available whenever possible to provide air support. The unit performs routine patrols, and if not on patrol, may

quickly become airborne if requested.

2. To request the services of ASU, members shall:
 - a. For emergencies or on-duty requests, notify the dispatcher.
 - b. For non-emergencies or to request services in advance, contact:
 - (1) ASU – (202) 727-6498 or 6476; or
 - (2) Special Operations Division – (202) 671-6511.

NOTE: For non-emergency and advance service requests, an official of the ASU shall be contacted **for approval**. If the services are available, warranted and approved, a special mission form shall be completed by a member of the ASU.

B. Limitations of Use

1. Certain limitations exist in all airborne operations, regardless of the specific mission. The final determination of readiness for flight lies with the on-duty Pilot in Command.
2. The Pilot in Command, in making his/her determination shall be governed by:
 - a. All applicable Federal Aviation Regulations pertaining to the safety of flight.
 - b. Any airspace or weather minimums relating to the mission at hand.
3. If, in the opinion of the Pilot in Command, the Tactical Flight Officer, or any ASU official that a particular mission cannot be safely conducted the mission **shall** be cancelled. Routine patrols shall be suspended for similar reasons.

NOTE: Each flight shall be evaluated on an individual basis.

C. Authorization for Use

1. Every pilot assigned to the ASU may accept any given mission or flight, supporting the MPD, provided the flight is deemed mission essential and can be accomplished safely.
2. Missions requested outside MPD jurisdiction shall be evaluated by an ASU official before permission is granted.

- a. In the absence of an ASU official, permission of the SOD Watch Commander is needed for missions requested outside MPD jurisdiction.
- b. MPD vehicle pursuits do not require advance permission.

VI. CROSS REFERENCE

- A. Federal Aviation Regulations Part 43 (Maintenance), Part 61 (Certifications), Part 67 (Medical Standard and Certification), Part 91 (General Operating and Flight Rules)

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