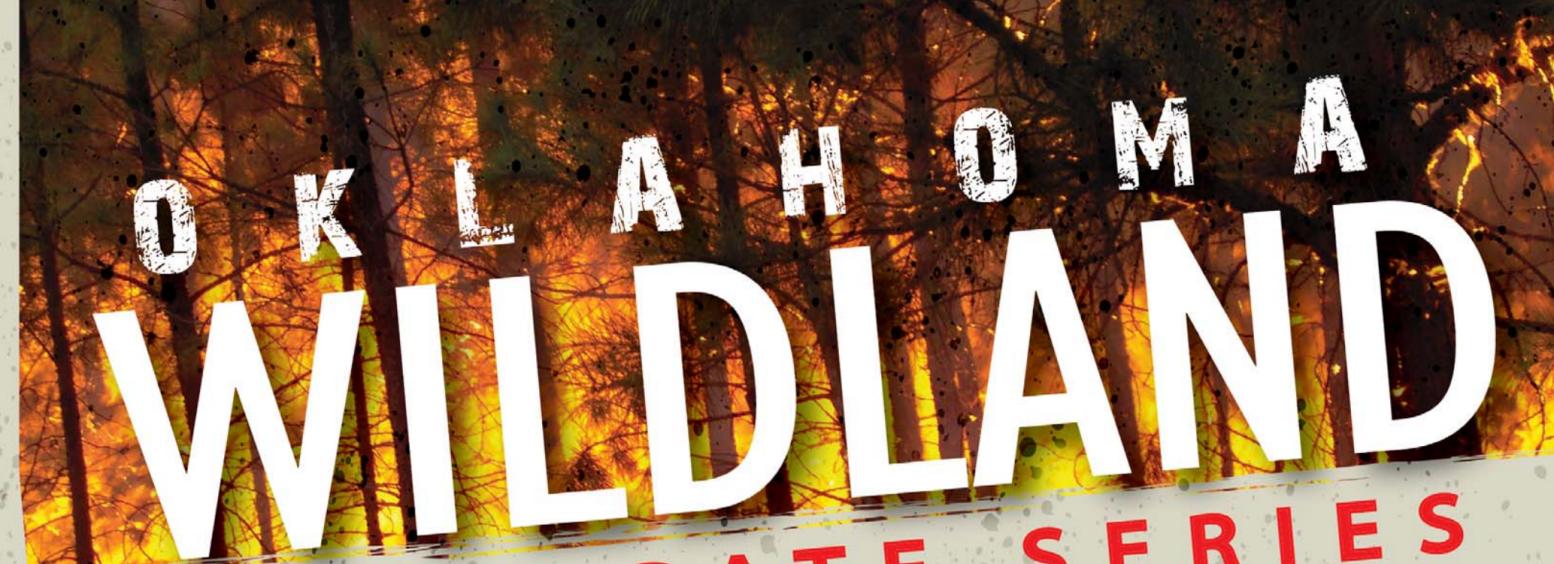




## OKLAHOMA FORESTRY SERVICES

Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry  
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Oklahoma City, OK 73105

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# OKLAHOMA WILDLAND



## TAILGATE SERIES

OCTOBER 2015 | EDITION 5 | WWW.FORESTRY.OK.GOV

Oklahoma Forestry Services developed this training tool for fire departments as a supplement to formal firefighter training. Watch for a new message quarterly to use in formal safety meetings or in small "tailgate" groups as an effective way to increase preparedness and improve safety. The Tailgate Series is available at [www.forestry.ok.gov](http://www.forestry.ok.gov)

## WILDLAND AVIATION USE



Dry fuels and critical fire weather have combined for the last several days to create the perfect environment for wildfires to spread rapidly. With the current situation, rapid knockdown of any wildfire is key to maximizing firefighter safety, minimizing the loss of structures and protecting natural resources. You've just been dispatched to a wildfire near a wildland-urban interface area. As you approach the area, you see a well formed smoke column coming from an undeveloped area that you know is mix of tall grass and heavily timbered stream bottoms.

Is the use of suppression aircraft warranted?  
How do you get an aircraft if you need it?



### MEET OUR FIREFIGHTERS



Don Cook

Don Cook, a Forest Ranger Level II from the Eagletown Unit, is based out of the SE Area Office in Broken Bow, OK. A 23-year veteran of Oklahoma Forestry Services, Don (aka Bob) responds to wildland fire situations, not only in SE Oklahoma but across the state when needed. Don is qualified as a Heavy Equipment Boss, Strike Team Leader, Task Force Leader and serves as a Division Supervisor on the Oklahoma Type 2 Incident Management Team.

In addition to his firefighting duties, Don is heavily involved with the OFS training program, which provides National Wildfire Coordinating Group certified courses as well as firefighting application training including Engine Tactics and Firing Tactics to fire departments across the state. In addition to his public service with OFS, he also volunteers service with the Eagletown Volunteer Fire Department. Don's service, as both a career professional with OFS and as a volunteer with a rural fire department, provide him valuable experience which contribute to his skills on the fireground and expertise as an instructor.

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Suppression aircraft (fixed and rotor wing) in Oklahoma are normally ordered by contacting Oklahoma Emergency Management at (800) 800-2481, or Oklahoma Forestry Services. All aviation dispatches are approved and coordinated by the Oklahoma Forestry Services Duty Officer.

In order to minimize the time to get an aircraft on-scene, have the following information ready prior to making the call for help:

- Fire Location – Lat/Long in Degree Decimal Minutes
- Fire Location - Distance & Direction from nearest town
- Requesting Fire Dept. Name & Phone #
- Incident Commander/Fireline Contact Name & Radio Call Sign
- Fireline Contact phone number
- Radio Frequency (VHF Only! Transmit, Transmit Tone, Receive, Receive Tone)
- Are there any other aircraft on-scene?
- Aviation Hazards in the area
- How many homes threatened?
- How far is fire from the homes?



USDA  
United States Department of Agriculture

## IF YOU FLY, WE CAN'T

IF YOU FLY, WE CAN'T

FLYING DRONES OR UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS NEAR WILDFIRES ARE NOT SAFE

FLYING DRONES OR UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS NEAR WILDFIRES ARE NOT SAFE. DRONES OR UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS COULD CAUSE INJURY OR DEATH TO PERSONNEL AND DAMAGE THE ABILITY TO PROTECT LIVES, PROPERTY, AND PUBLIC LANDS FROM WILDFIRES.

FIRE MANAGERS MAY SUSPEND AERIAL FIRE FIGHTING OPERATIONS UNTIL THE AREA IS SAFE FOR DRONES TO OPERATE.

CONTACT YOUR NEAREST LAND MANAGEMENT OFFICE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LIVES AND PUBLIC LANDS.

US Forest Service

## WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION FLIGHT LIMITATIONS

- Winds (Below 500' AGL) - Steady winds above 45 mph or a gust spread of greater than 15 mph
- Low visibility due to smoke or blowing dust
- Other aircraft (may need Air Tactical Group Supervisor)
- Time of day (no flights 30 minutes before sunrise or 30 minutes after sunset)
- Distance from base
- Extreme terrain
- Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), also known as drones, have been observed in the area.

# ON THE FIREGROUND

## APPLYING WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED

It's 1000 hours on March 14th and a Red Flag Warning is in effect for today from Noon to 2000 hours. This afternoon the relative humidity is expected to drop into the high single digits with winds forecast to reach 20-25 mph with gusts near 30 mph. At 1000 hours your dispatch assigns you to a wildfire near a wildland urban interface area. You arrive at the fire in a Type 6 Engine with a second closely behind. You quickly size up the fire at 15 acres, burning in tall grass and through the timber with moderate to rapid rates of spread. You engage the fire from a strong anchor point, with both engines working in tandem along one flank. You seem to be catching up to the head of the fire.

You've been notified that a CH-47 Chinook Helicopter equipped with a 1,320 gallon bucket could be on-scene in twenty minutes. You know the weather will be getting hotter and drier with increasing winds. There is a wide, paved road within ¼-mile of the flaming front that could serve as a control line. However, if the fire crosses the road it enters into the classic wildland urban interface with well over one-hundred structures that will be at-risk. Given the current and expected forecast, you decide to order the aircraft to assist.

- How would you best utilize the aircraft's capabilities?
- What instructions would you give the crew when it arrives?
- How would you direct it to where you want it to start working?
- What if two Single Engine Airtankers (SEATs) arrive instead of a helicopter? How would you adjust your tactics?
- What can you do when you can no longer see where the aircraft is working?



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