

Subject: Message from the Under Secretary -- Update on Safety Stand-Down Regarding Use of non-NOAA Aircraft

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MEMORANDUM FOR: ALL NOAA EMPLOYEES

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere

SUBJECT: Update on Safety Stand-Down Regarding Use of non-NOAA
Aircraft

On November 18, 2004, I ordered a safety stand-down on any activity in which non-NOAA aircraft were being used for official NOAA business. This order was issued to ensure the safety of our NOAA family until such time as NOAA has a safety policy for the use of non-NOAA aircraft approved by the NOAA Executive Council (NEC).

I directed Rear Admiral Samuel P. De Bow, Jr., Director of NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations (NMAO), to develop a safety policy for NOAA by April 1, 2005. In February, NMAO circulated a draft NOAA Administration Order (NAO) containing this policy. Due to the significant number of constructive comments received, I am granting an extension to July 1, 2005, to provide you with a NEC-approved policy.

On March 16-18, 2005, NMAO will host a workshop addressing the comments received on the draft policy. Working with representatives of the affected Line and Staff Offices, NMAO will redraft the NAO for final review. I am pleased with NMAO's progress and the collaboration across NOAA to develop a comprehensive policy. Please continue to work closely with NMAO on this issue.

Safety is NOAA's number one priority, the safety stand-down shall remain in effect until a safety policy for the use of non-NOAA aircraft is approved by the NEC. Thank you for your continued diligence in addressing this high priority issue for the organization.

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