

PROCEDURE NO. 008B: Flight Following Requirements **(July 2010)**

Flight following is necessary to ensure pilot and passenger safety and will be utilized on all flights for aircraft owned by or contracted to CAL FIRE.

Automated Flight Following (AFF) provides detailed and accurate aircraft location and flight history. In addition to AFF, CAL FIRE aircraft will likely utilize FAA flight following services (HB 8362). With AFF, radio communications will be required upon departure, possibly during in-flight operations (i.e. divers, in-flight emergencies) and at completion of the flight. If the AFF system fails, flight following will revert to radio check-in procedures.

AFF requires the aircraft to be equipped with the necessary electronic hardware. The CC and/or Air Tanker Base (ATB) responsible for AFF verification is required to be equipped with a computer connected to the Internet and access to the AFF program. If the ATB is not capable of verification of AFF, then the departing CC will verify positive AFF. Any CC responsible for flight following shall be staffed for the duration of the flight.

Responsibilities and Action

Pilot

1. Establishes radio contact with the controlling ATB for fixed wing or CC for rotary wing. Once airborne, pilot will relay the flight itinerary, ETA, and "on AFF" (if AFF is operable).
2. If there is a deviation from the planned and briefed flight route, the pilot will contact the departure CC via radio with the changed information.

Departure CC or (ATB)

1. CC or ATB will verify that the aircraft is identified in the AFF program.
2. CC or ATB shall confirm AFF signal as positive or negative with aircraft .
“(Aircraft call sign) (positive/negative) AFF”.
 - a. If negative AFF, then radio flight-following shall be initiated by the departure CC.
 - b. Negative AFF flight following procedure will include relaying to the aircraft the frequency used for radio flight following.
3. CC or ATB will relay flight information and AFF status on intercom to the destination CC and the CC responsible for AFF.

Responsible AFF CC

The responsible CC is defined as the office charged with flight following once positive AFF has been established.

1. Flights between [adjacent Units](#)
 - a. The responsible CC shall be the receiving Unit.
2. Flights beyond [adjacent Units](#)
 - a. The responsible CC shall be the Region OCC from which the flight originated.
 - b. If flights extends beyond Region boundaries, the responsibility for flight following shall be transferred to the other Region OCC.
 - c. A positive hand-off will be made between Region OCCs. The responsible CC will monitor status and location of aircraft in the AFF program on a minimum of 15 minute intervals for the entire flight, fixed and rotary-wing.
3. If the aircraft icon turns RED on the AFF display, it means the signal has been lost. Immediately attempt contact with the aircraft via radio and verify status. If unable to make contact, immediately follow the *All CAL FIRE Incidents or Accidents* procedure ([HB8100 P203](#)). If radio contact is made after a lost AFF signal, flight will continue using radio flight following procedures.
4. For all in-Unit flights, flight following will be the responsibility of the Unit CC. If the aircraft's destination is outside the Unit, communication will be made by intercom to the destination CC when the aircraft reaches the departing Unit boundary or to the Region OCC if direct contact is not possible by intercom.

Destination CC

1. CC will receive information described above and record in system of record.
2. Once notified that the aircraft has entered the destination Unit, the destination CC (or Incident) shall assume flight-following responsibility of the aircraft.

Note: During tactical operations below 500' a periodic red indication is normal and does not necessitate an 'immediate' contact especially if flight following has been established with the incident. A helicopter shutting down at a location other than an airport or helibase in the database will cause the icon to turn red.

3. CC will make proper notifications upon completion of flight following.

Any CC

1. If there is an in-flight emergency, the pilot will declare MAYDAY. All radio traffic shall cease on the at frequency until pilot states their intentions and receives appropriate assistance.

Pilot

1. Upon arrival at destination, the pilot will notify the Destination CC via radio or telephone within 10 minutes of landing. In some cases, required communications with FAA may preclude radio contact prior to landing.

Failure to make verbal contact within 15 minutes of ETA

Destination CC

1. If aircraft fails to verbally contact the Destination CC within 15 minutes of ETA, review the AFF program for aircraft location and status, attempt to contact the aircraft on "Air Guard" (radio "emergency hailing channel"). Also, place a telephone call to the destination airport and request a "ramp check" to determine if the aircraft has landed but not checked in.
 - a. If contact is not made after following the procedures outlined, follow ([HB8100 P203](#)) for an aircraft accident.

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