

Appendix N – Rappel Activities in Support of Large Fire Operations

Integration of rappel activities into the often complex airspace associated with large fire operations necessitates additional planning and logistical support in order to assure the safety of personnel and helicopter. While working on large fire incidents where rappel operations are planned or a possibility of rappelling exists the following conditions shall be met:

- Planned rappel operations shall be identified in the Incident Action Plan in the ICS-220 and the ICS-204 for the division where the rappel operation is planned to occur.
- Preplanning for emergent situations in which rappel operations might be utilized (Medivac, IA within the incident response zone, Crash Rescue, etc.) will be completed, documented with signature of the highest level aviation position assigned or IC and briefed to all involved.
- An operational risk assessment will be completed by the manager, documented with signature of the highest level aviation position assigned or IC and briefed to all involved prior to each operation. (Each operation may include multiple loads of rappellers.)
- Aerial supervision should be in operational control of the airspace if three (3) or more aircraft will be airborne during rappel operations and will be briefed on the operations prior to commencement.
- A discrete frequency shall be in place for communications for rappel operations in order to support midair collision avoidance.
- Division supervisors shall be notified when rappellers are deployed on their divisions.
- Ensure that the highest level aviation position assigned or IC is informed when planning proficiency rappels. Consider conducting proficiency rappels away from the helibase in order to prevent distractions to the helibase operations and rappel modules.