

**TALKING POINTS**  
**CHANGES IN THE AERIAL FIREFIGHTING PROGRAM**  
10-31-02

1. The federal wildland firefighting agencies are moving toward a safer, more efficient future of aviation resources by examining the findings of the NTSB and the Blue Ribbon Panel on Aerial Firefighting for indications of immediate needed actions, and alternatives for the future operations of heavy airtankers and helicopters in fire suppression actions.
2. Renewal of the contract option for the C130A aircraft for use in 2003 is being deferred because there are clear safety issues identified by two structural failure accidents in the past six years.
3. NTSB has indicated through their September, 2002 news release that the C130A aircraft need to be closely investigated further as to whether retardant missions are an “appropriate use” considering the original design and manufacturing of the C130A for different military missions.
4. Renewal of the contract option for the PB4Y aircraft for use in 2003 is being deferred because the NTSB investigation will not be completed until after the contracting cycle requirements deadline of October 31, 2002.
5. The wildland firefighting agencies will still have adequate air resources to meet the initial attack needs for fire season 2003. Interagency aviation staffs have been conducting risk and performance analysis for contingency plans since the completion date and determination of the NTSB reports was in question.
6. The federal wildland firefighting agencies will continue to be proactive in providing added safety measures for the heavy airtanker fleet. The contract will continue the load restrictions on the current aging fleet to reduce load weights, and narrow dispatch assignments to initial attack or structure protection only.