



# US Forest Service Aviation Information Bulletin



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**Subject:** Rappel Equipment Handling

**Area of Concern:** Rappel Operations

**Distribution:** All Aviation Users

**Discussion:** As we re-activate the national rappel program for 2010 it is appropriate that the agency addresses the transition from the current process of managing rappel equipment to the new practice. The following guidelines will assist rappel crews to manage this transition in the most practicable manner.

MTDC is in the process of testing and certification of new equipment systems that comply with National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA 1983) standards. The regions will be notified once testing is complete and the contract for purchasing agency-wide equipment of the new system is accomplished.

The agency has assessed existing inventory of new and replacement items (i.e. ropes, genies, carabiners, etc.); the results show that the stock on-hand should be sufficient for the 2010 season. If additional equipment needs to be purchased, it will need to meet the re-defined process for acceptance, quality assurance inspection, and documentation currently being developed with MTDC. An additional Information Bulletin will be distributed once the process is finished. No new equipment will be added to existing useable equipment inventories until the quality assurance process has been completed.

Once complete it will be inserted into the Interagency Helicopter Rappel Guide. All new equipment that comes direct to the rappel base from the manufacturer must be inspected for quality assurance. Defective equipment will be returned to the manufacturer for replacement, and a status log will be maintained by the local unit. This documentation will assist MTDC in tracking and monitoring the quality of new products.

The SAFECOM system will be used for reporting all incidents of equipment quality issues, returns, defects, and failures. Regions may also want to use the RAPREC (Rappel Record) reporting system for tracking equipment status on a region-wide basis.

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