

# California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

## AVIATION PROGRAM

In support of its ground forces, CDF fields an air force of airtankers, helicopters and airtactical planes. From 13 air attack and nine helitack bases located statewide, aircraft can reach most fires within 20 minutes. The airtactical aircraft fly overhead directing the airtankers and helicopters to critical areas of the fire for retardant and water drops. While both airtankers and helicopters are equipped to carry fire retardant and water, the helicopters can also transport firefighters, equipment and injured personnel.

NUMBER	TYPE	GALLONS CARRIED	CRUISE SPEED
<b>AIRTANKERS</b>			
19	S-2T airtankers	1,200	225 knots (258 mph)
4	S-2A airtankers	800	170 knots (195 mph)
<b>HELICOPTERS</b>			
9	UH-1H Super Huey	320	110 knots (126 mph)
<b>AIRTACTICAL AIRCRAFT</b>			
13	Rockwell OV-10A airplanes		190 knots (219 mph)

The average annual budget of the CDF Aviation Program is about \$20 million. A total of 18 CDF personnel oversee the program with an additional 130 contract employees providing mechanical, pilot and management services to the program.

The retardant used to slow or retard the spread of a fire is a slurry mix consisting of a chemical salt compound, water, clay or a gum- thickening agent, and a coloring agent. At nine pounds per gallon, an S-2A can carry 7,200 pounds, the S-2T can carry 10,800 pounds.

CDF's current support contractors are DynCorp and Logistics Specialties Incorporated (LSI). DynCorp provides airtanker and airtactical plane pilot services, and all aircraft maintenance services. (All CDF helicopters are flown by CDF pilots.) LSI provides procurement and parts management services.

CDF is in the middle of an air modernization program that retrofits newer S-2E/G aircraft. The retrofitted S-2E/Gs, referred to as CDF S-2Ts, are larger than their S-2A predecessors, have turboprop engines and 1,200 gallon retardant tanks.

All CDF helicopters are flown by CDF pilots. Airtactical planes and airtankers are flown by contract pilots.



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