

**BY ORDER OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE**

AIR FORCE INSTRUCTION 13-202

11 MARCH 2010

Space, Missile, Command, and Control

OVERDUE AIRCRAFT



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This instruction implements AFD 13-2, *Air Traffic Control, Airspace, Airfield, and Range Management*, and outlines responsibilities and establishes procedures for alerting agencies concerned with searching for overdue military aircraft. It applies to all Air Force, Air National Guard (ANG) and Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) organizations (to include contracted locations) that administer procedures and/or facilities for overdue aircraft. Headquarters Air Force Flight Standards Agency, Director of Airfield and Air Traffic Control Standards (HQ AFFSA/A3A) must approve all Major Command (MAJCOM) supplements and interim changes to previously approved supplements to this directive prior to implementation. Refer recommended changes and questions about this publication to the Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*; route AF Form 847s from the field through the appropriate functional's chain of command. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, and disposed of in accordance with the Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS) located at https://www.my.af.mil/gcss-af61a/afrims/afrims/rds/rds_series.cfm. The reporting requirement in this publication is exempt from licensing in accordance with AFI 33-324, *The Information Collections and Reports Management Program; Controlling Internal, Public, and Interagency Air Force Information Collections*. See AFI 33-324 paragraphs 2.11.1 and 2.11.2. for additional information. See **Attachment 1** for a glossary of references and supporting information used in this instruction.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This document is substantially revised and must be completely reviewed. Major changes were made to the search and rescue coordination with the Federal Aviation Agency and actions

required by the departure and destination bases. Minor changes were made throughout and include reference updates and editing errors.

Chapter 1

GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Search and Rescue (SAR).

1.1.1. SAR is a lifesaving service provided through the combined efforts of the federal agencies signatory to the National SAR Plan, and the agencies responsible for SAR within each state. The U.S. Coast Guard, DOD components, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), the Coast Guard Auxiliary, state, county and local law enforcement and other public safety agencies, and private volunteer organizations provide operational resources. Services include search for missing aircraft, survival aid, rescue, and emergency medical help for the occupants after an accident site is located.

1.1.2. National Search and Rescue Plan. By federal interagency agreement, the National Search and Rescue Plan provides for the effective use of all available facilities in all types of SAR missions. These facilities include aircraft, vessels, pararescue and ground rescue teams, and emergency radio fixing.

1.1.2.1. Under the plan, the U.S. Coast Guard is responsible for the coordination of SAR in the Maritime Region, and the USAF is responsible in the Inland Region. To carry out these responsibilities, the Coast Guard and the Air Force have established Rescue Coordination Centers (RCCs) to direct SAR activities within their regions.

1.1.2.2. For aircraft emergencies, distress, and urgency, information normally will be passed to the appropriate RCC through an Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) or Flight Service Station (FSS).

1.2. SAR agencies and responsibilities.

1.2.1. Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) is located under the 1st AF (AFNORTH) at Tyndall Air Force Base, FL. As the United States' executive agent for inland search and rescue, it serves as the single agency responsible for coordinating on-land federal SAR activities in the 48 contiguous United States, Mexico and Canada.

1.2.1.1. The AFRCC operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The center has extensive telephone capabilities including a direct tie-in to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)'s alerting system and the United States Mission Control Center (USMCC).

1.2.1.2. In addition to the Cosmicheskaya Sistema Poiska Avariynyh Sudov (COSPAS)/Search and Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking (SARSAT) information, the AFRCC computer system contains vast resource files that list federal and state organizations, which can conduct or assist in SAR efforts throughout North America.

1.2.1.3. When notified that an aircraft is overdue and the Preliminary Communication Search (PRECOM) has not been successful, the RCC will:

1.2.1.3.1. In the Continental United States (CONUS), and Alaska, verify that FAA has initiated an Extended Communication (EXCOM) search.

1.2.1.3.2. In other areas, initiate the EXCOM.

- 1.2.1.3.3. If the EXCOM is unsuccessful, classify the aircraft as missing and notify the commander of the base of departure. If the aircraft did not depart from an Air Force base, request the installation commander nearest the point of departure assume the duties usually performed by the Commander of the base of departure.
- 1.2.1.3.4. Take search and action.
- 1.2.1.3.5. Make verbal or radio search progress reports (as often as practicable) to the commander of the base of departure. Include the commander of the base of departure as an addressee on all search mission reports (including progress, closing, or suspending reports) sent to higher headquarters.
- 1.2.2. The USMCC is located in Suitland, MD and serves as the U.S. operational component of a multi-agency, multi-national program using COSPAS/SARSAT to detect and accurately position emergency signals from airplanes and ships in distress.
- 1.2.3. CAP provides SAR mission coordinators, search aircraft, ground teams, personnel on alert status, and an extensive communications network. The CAP is the AFRCC's primary air and ground resource in the inland area, especially for extended searches.
- 1.2.4. FAA through the ARTCC and FSS facilities, monitor and flight follow aircraft in the inland area. In addition, FAA facilities initiate EXCOM actions outlined in FAAO JO 7110.10, *Flight Services* and this AFI.
 - 1.2.4.1. FSS serve as the central point for collecting and disseminating information on overdue or missing aircraft that are not on an Instrument Flight Rule (IFR) flight plan.
 - 1.2.4.2. ARTCC serve as the central points for collecting information, coordinating with SAR, and conducting a communications search by distributing any necessary Alert Notice (ALNOT)s concerning:
 - 1.2.4.2.1. Overdue or missing IFR aircraft.
 - 1.2.4.2.2. Aircraft in an emergency situation occurring in their respective areas.
 - 1.2.4.2.3. Aircraft on a combined Visual Flight Rule (VFR)/IFR or an air filed IFR flight plan, and 30 minutes have passed since the pilot requested IFR clearance, and neither communications nor radar contact can be established.
 - 1.2.4.2.4. Overdue or missing aircraft, which have been authorized to operate in accordance with a Special VFR (SVFR) clearance.
- 1.2.5. MAJCOMs are responsible for OCONUS regions and must publish region or theater-specific overdue aircraft procedures. National regulations or agreements adopted for USAF use in overseas areas take precedence over this instruction; however, every effort should be made to conform to this instruction. Refer conflicting procedures to higher headquarters for review and direction. Include host nation procedures, adopted for USAF use, in MAJCOM supplements or equivalent.
- 1.2.6. Installation Commander.
 - 1.2.6.1. At Air Force bases with an operational runway and auxiliary airfields (as applicable), ensure procedures are developed to take appropriate SAR actions.

1.2.6.2. Must comply with FAAO JO 7110.10, FAAO JO 7110.65, *Air Traffic Control*, AFI 91-204, *Investigating and Reporting Mishaps*, AFI 91-206, *Participation in a Military or Civil Aircraft Accident Safety Investigation* and this AFI for overdue aircraft.

1.2.6.3. When notified that an aircraft is classified as missing, the departure base installation commander will:

1.2.6.3.1. Notify the Chief of Staff, Headquarters US Air Force and the Director of Flight Safety, Kirtland AFB, New Mexico through the National Military Command Center (NMCC). Include the names, grades, and service numbers of crew and passengers; type of aircraft; aircraft number; home base of aircraft; home base of pilot; place of departure; time of departure; intended destination; route; mission; estimated time enroute; position when last reported; weather enroute; and any other pertinent information.

1.2.6.3.2. Notify, by the most expeditious means of communications, the commander of each person in the aircraft and home base of the aircraft. Keep these commanders informed of the search progress.

1.2.7. In the Continental United States (CONUS), Alaska, Hawaii and U.S. Territories the departure base (military or civil airfield) is responsible for SAR action until receipt of the destination base acknowledgment for the flight notification message. This responsibility is then transferred to the destination base.

1.2.7.1. In the case of a U.S. registered aircraft, or any aircraft known to be piloted by or transporting U.S. citizens and enroute within a foreign country or between two foreign countries notify the Washington Communications Control Center immediately via Service B message addressed to KRWAYAYX or RWA if the overdue report is received either from someone directly concerned or from aviation authorities of a foreign country.

1.2.8. The Alaska Rescue Coordination Center (AKRCC).

1.2.8.1. The AKRCC serves as the executive agent for the 11 AF Commander to plan, coordinate, and control DOD participation in military and civilian SAR operations. The AKRCC executes the National SAR Plan IAW applicable civil laws and agreements by integrating private and government agencies in a cooperative network.

1.2.8.2. The AKRCC is located on Elmendorf AFB and operates 24 hours a day/365 days a year, ready to respond as SAR Mission Coordinator (SMC) for SAR operations, both military and civilian. The area of responsibility includes the land mass of Alaska north of 58N latitude and west of 141W longitude. In addition to the primary mission of aeronautical SAR, the AKRCC routinely assists other agencies responsible for non-aeronautical SAR in the Alaska region such as the Alaska State Troopers (AST), National Park Service (NPS), the United States Coast Guard (USCG) District 17 and other SAR agencies.

1.3. Waivers, Recommended Changes and Issuing New SAR Policy or Procedures.

1.3.1. Waivers. HQ AFFSA/A3A is the approval authority for waivers to this AFI, except those delegated to MAJCOM and below. HQ AFFSA/A3A may also grant exceptions to policy to long-standing issues that cannot be corrected.

1.3.1.1. To ensure a periodic revalidation of waiver requirements, HQ AFFSA/A3A grants waivers to this AFI for a period not to exceed two years.

1.3.1.2. Waiver renewal requests must reach HQ AFFSA/A3A No Later Than (NLT) 30 days prior to expiration.

1.3.2. Recommended Changes. Submit recommended changes to this AFI through the MAJCOM to HQ AFFSA/A3A using the AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*.

1.3.3. Issuing new SAR Procedures and Guidance. In accordance with AFI 33-360, *Publications Management Program*, a Guidance Memorandum (GM) or Interim Change (IC) will be used to prescribe procedures and guidance pending revision of this AFI. New USAF procedures/guidance will be distributed through appropriate MAJCOM channels. GMs and ICs will be posted on the AFPDO website until formalized in this publication.

Chapter 2

OVERDUE AIRCRAFT ACTIONS

2.1. Overdue Aircraft.

2.1.1. An aircraft on a flight plan is considered overdue when it has failed to arrive at its destination, compulsory reporting point, clearance void time or clearance limit within 30 minutes of the estimated time of arrival.

2.1.2. An aircraft not on a flight plan is overdue at the actual time a reliable source reports it to be at least 1 hour late at destination.

2.1.2.1. Based on this overdue time, apply the same procedures and action times as for aircraft on a flight plan.

2.1.2.2. When such a report is received, verify (if possible) that the aircraft actually departed and that the request is for a missing aircraft rather than a person.

2.1.2.3. Refer missing person reports to the appropriate authorities.

2.2. PRECOM Search Actions.

2.2.1. Destination Base. The agency responsible for flight following aircraft at the destination base (*normally the host Airfield Management*) will:

2.2.1.1. Contact local air traffic control facilities and ARTCC sectors through the area manager. **Note:** This action frequently resolves questions regarding IFR aircraft.

2.2.1.2. Notify the destination tie-in FSS if the responsible agency is in CONUS or Alaska; in other areas the RCC.

2.2.1.3. Initiate a ramp check.

2.2.1.4. Check adjacent airports that could accommodate the aircraft.

2.2.1.5. If the above search actions do not ascertain the aircraft's whereabouts, transmit a QALQ message as outlined in FAAO JO 7110.10, Section 8-2-1.

2.2.1.6. If the aircraft is located after the QALQ is sent, the destination base shall transmit a cancellation message to all recipients of the QALQ. See Attachment 2 for Q Signals.

2.2.1.7. Alaska AFBs. See FAAO JO 7110.10, Section 8-2-1 for additional guidance.

2.2.2. Actions Upon Receipt of a QALQ.

2.2.2.1. The base that transmitted the original flight plan proposal shall:

2.2.2.1.1. Immediately transmit a message containing all information not previously sent to the destination base.

2.2.2.1.2. Conduct a ramp check and local airport check.

2.2.2.1.3. Provide follow-up actions if location extends into the aircraft flight plan area.

2.2.2.2. The departure base shall:

2.2.2.2.1. Complete a ramp check.

2.2.2.2.2. Conduct a local communications search for the aircraft. **Note:** This action should be completed within 15 minutes.

2.2.2.2.3. If the aircraft is located, notify the destination base. **Note:** The destination base shall close the file on the aircraft. See FAAO JO 7110.10, Section 8-2-2.

2.2.2.2.4. If unable to obtain additional information transmit a message to the destination base, tie-in FSS and controlling ARTCC containing all information not previously sent. Include any verbal or written remarks made by the pilot that may be pertinent to the search. See FAA JO 7110.10, Section 8-2-2.

2.3. EXCOM Search Actions.

2.3.1. If the PRECOM is not successful (e.g., QALQ is negative or the aircraft has not been located within 30 minutes after it becomes overdue) the destination base shall:

2.3.1.1. Declare the aircraft officially overdue.

2.3.1.2. Transmit a numbered INREQ message to the departure base, flight watch control, facilities with communication outlets along the route, and other AFSS/FSSs and ARTCCs along the route. If the departure base, route of flight, destination base or alternate base is within 50 miles of the Great Lakes, include Cleveland AFSS as an addressee. They will relay to Cleveland RCC. See FAAO JO 7110.10, Section 3 for additional information.

2.3.1.3. Transmit a numbered cancellation message containing the location of the aircraft to all INREQ addressees and notify associated ATCT facilities when the aircraft is located. **Note:** RCC does not have transmit capability therefore, acknowledgement is not required for messages to RCC.

2.3.2. Actions Upon Receipt of INREQ. Each base receiving an INREQ shall take the following actions:

2.3.2.1. Conduct a check of local flight traffic log/facility records.

2.3.2.2. Check airports in the area and along the proposed route of flight that could accommodate the aircraft.

2.3.2.3. Notify appropriate ATC facilities.

2.3.2.4. Conduct a ramp check.

2.3.2.5. Reply to the Information Request (INREQ) with a numbered message within 1 hour. **Note:** If unable to complete the search within 1 hour, forward a status report followed by a final report when the search is complete. If reply contains pertinent information such as aircraft location or position report, send a numbered message to the INREQ originator. **Note:** The destination base shall retransmit the information, as necessary to all original addressees.

2.3.3. If the replies to the INREQ are negative, or if the aircraft is not located within 1 hour after transmission of the INREQ, or upon fuel exhaustion time, whichever occurs first, the destination base shall:

2.3.3.1. Transmit an ALNOT to the appropriate Regional Operations Center and those facilities within the search area. In addition, address the RCC using the collective address KSARYCYX. **Note:** The search area is normally that area extending 50 miles on either side of the proposed route of flight from the last reported position to the destination. The search area may be expanded to the maximum range of the aircraft at the request of the RCC or by the destination base.

2.3.3.2. If the departure base, route of flight, destination base, or alternate airports are within 50 miles of the Great Lakes, include Cleveland AFSS as an addressee. They will relay to the Cleveland RCC. Include all information in the ALNOT message that will assist in search activities (same as INREQ plus any additional information received).

2.3.3.3. Call the AFRCC at Tyndall AFB to ensure delivery of the ALNOT and to answer any inquiries ten minutes after issuance of the ALNOT. See Table 2.1 for RCC agency contact information.

2.3.4. Actions Upon Receipt of ALNOT. Each base whose flight plan area extends into the ALNOT search area shall:

2.3.4.1. Immediately conduct a communications search of those flight plan area airports that fall within the ALNOT search area that could accommodate the aircraft or were not checked during the INREQ search.

2.3.4.2. Notify the appropriate ATCT facilities.

2.3.4.3. Request the appropriate law enforcement agency to check airports that cannot be contacted otherwise.

2.3.4.4. Request search assistance from aircraft traversing the search area

2.3.4.5. Suspend the ALNOT until canceled.

2.3.4.6. Record the ALNOT. See FAAO JO 7110.10, Paragraph 2-2-2j, Phraseology.

2.3.4.7. Within 1 hour after receipt of the ALNOT, notify the originator of the results or status of the communications search. If the reply contains pertinent information, such as aircraft location or position report, transmit to the destination base. **Note:** The destination base shall retransmit the information, as necessary, to all original addresses.

2.3.5. Bases that have any portion of their incoming calls and/or Service B diverted to another base shall notify that facility of the ALNOT. The base receiving diverted traffic shall check their records and advise of any information or contact with the aircraft.

2.3.6. If the EXCOM fails to locate the aircraft or if 1 hour has elapsed since ALNOT transmission, whichever occurs first, call the RCC and, if appropriate, the Cleveland AFSS, which notifies the Cleveland RCC, and provide all pertinent available information about the overdue aircraft not already provided in the ALNOT to include:

2.3.6.1. Facility and the person calling.

2.3.6.2. Flight plan, including color of aircraft, if known.

2.3.6.3. Time the last radio transmission was received, by whom, and frequency used.

2.3.6.4. Last position report and how determined.

2.3.6.5. Action taken by reporting facility and proposed action.

2.3.6.6. Number of persons on board.

2.3.6.7. Fuel status.

2.3.6.8. Facility working aircraft and frequency.

2.3.6.9. Last known position, estimated present position, and maximum range of flight of the aircraft based on remaining fuel and airspeed.

2.3.6.10. Position of other aircraft near aircraft's route of flight, when requested.

2.3.6.11. Whether or not an Electronic Locator Transmitter (ELT) signal has been heard or reported in the vicinity of the last known position.

2.3.6.12. Other pertinent information.

2.3.7. Cancellation of ALNOT. The ALNOT remains current until the aircraft is located or the search is suspended by the RCC. The ALNOT originator shall then transmit a cancellation message with the location of the aircraft, if appropriate, addressed to all recipients of the ALNOT. Each base shall notify all previously alerted facilities and agencies of the cancellation.

2.3.8. For other SAR Actions see FAAO JO 7110.10, Section 5.

Table 2.1. Rescue Coordination Centers.

Air Force Rescue Coordination Center Tyndall AFB, Florida	
Commercial	850-283-5955
WATS	800-851-3051
DSN	312-523-5955
11 Air Force/Alaskan Rescue Coordination Center Elmendorf AFB, Alaska	
Commercial	907-551-7230
Toll Free	1-800-420-7230
DSN	317-551-7230
Honolulu Joint Rescue Coordination Center HQ 14th CG District	
Commercial	808-535-3333

2.4. Adopted Forms:

AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

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Asst DCS, Operations, Plans, and Requirements

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

US Air Force Publications.

Air Force Records Information Management System (AFRIMS), Records Disposition Schedule (RDS)

AFI 33-360, *Publications Management Program*, 18 May 06

AFI 33-324, *The Information Collections and Reports Management Program; Controlling Internal, Public, and Interagency Air Force Information Collections*, 1 June 00

AFMAN 33-363, *Management of Records*, 1 March 08

AFJMAN 11-213, *Military Flight Data Telecommunications System*, 26 August 94

AFI 91-204, *Investigating and Reporting Mishaps*, 24 September 08

AFI 91-206, *Participation in a Military or Civil Aircraft Accident Safety Investigation*, 8 July 04

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Handbooks/Orders.

Aeronautical Information Manual, 14 February 08

FAA JO 7110.10, *Flight Services*, 14 February 08

FAA JO 7110.65, *Air Traffic Control*, 14 February 08

FAA JO 7610.4, *Special Military Operations*, 27 August 09

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Publications.

ICAO DOC 4444, *Air Traffic Management*, April 2007

ICAO DOC 7910, *Location Identifiers*, June 2007

ICAO DOC 8585, *Designators for Aircraft Operating Agencies, Aeronautical Authorities, and Services*, June 2007

ICAO DOC Annex 2, *Rules of the Air*, August 2005

ICAO DOC Annex 10 Volume 2, *Aeronautical Telecommunications*, November 2001

ICAO DOC Annex 14 Volume 1, *Aerodrome Design and Operations*, August 2004

ICAO DOC Annex 14 Volume 2, *Heliports*, February 2004

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Publications.

NATO STANAG 3052, *Aeronautical Briefing Facilities*, November 1988

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ALNOT—Alert Notice

ATC—Air Traffic Control

ARTCC—Air Route Traffic Control Center

EXCOM—Extended Communication Search

FSS—Flight Service Station

INREQ—Information Request

PRECOM—Preliminary Communications Search

SAR—Search and Rescue

Terms

Alert Notice—A request originated by the destination base, flight service station (FSS) or an air route traffic control center (ARTCC) for an extensive communication search for overdue, unreported, or missing aircraft.

Air Route Traffic Control Center—A facility established to provide air traffic control service to aircraft operating on IFR flight plans within controlled airspace and principally during the en route phase of flight. When equipment capabilities and controller workload permit, certain advisory/assistance services may be provided to VFR aircraft.

Flight Service Station—An air traffic facility which provides pilot briefings, flight plan processing, en route radio communications, search and rescue services, and assistance to lost aircraft and aircraft in emergency situations. FSSs also relay ATC clearances, process Notices to Airmen, broadcast aviation weather and aeronautical information, and notify Customs and Border Protection of transborder flights. In addition, at selected locations, FSSs provide En Route Flight Advisory Service (Flight Watch) and Airport Advisory Service (AAS). In Alaska, designated FSSs also provide TWEB recordings and take weather observations.

Information Request—A request originated by the destination base for information concerning an overdue aircraft.

Attachment 2

Q SIGNALS

Table A2.1. Q Signals.

SIGNIFICATION		
SIGNAL	Question of Interrogatory Form (Signal followed by letter Q)	ANSWER Information or Advise Form (Signal only, except as noted)
QAL	Has aircraft... landed at your location (or at...)?	Aircraft... landed here at.... hours (or landed... at... hours).
QRU	Have you anything for me (or for...(location or person)?	I have nothing for you or for... (location or person)]
QSL	Can you acknowledge receipt of transmission number...(or type message)?	I acknowledge receipt of transmission number... (or type of message).
QSM	Shall I repeat the last message transmission or portion indicated sent to me (or transmission(s) from...)?	Repeat the last message (transmission or portion indicated) sent to me (or transmission(s) from...). A--not received. B--partially received (garbled).
QTA	Shall I cancel message number...(or other identification)?	Cancel message number...(or other identification).