

# UTH Rotor News

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## Helicopter Pilot Careers In Aerial Fire Fighting



Aerial fire fighting is probably one of the most exciting types of flying a helicopter pilot can have. Aerial fire fighting helicopter pilots battle mostly forest fires but they've been instances where helicopters are used to battle fires in skyscrapers. Aerial fire fighting helicopter pilots are the busiest in the late spring, summer, and early fall months as those months are the prime fire season and their services are needed to prevent the spread of fires and to protect property.

Aircraft are the ideal platform to battle blazes in remote locations. An aircraft can be dispatched and attack a small fire before its able to grow. Aircraft are also ideal when fighting a specific portion of a larger fire. Their accuracy and ability to travel long distances quickly also make them suitable platforms to initiate a fire break.

Aerial fire fighting missions often resemble military missions. There will be a lead aircraft that acts as a forward air controller (fac).

As mission requests from fire fighters on the ground come in, the lead plane assigns the fire fighting aircraft which is best suited for the mission and will often lead the tanker in to show the best route in and out.

Helicopters are make excellent great fire fighting aircraft because they can hover over a spot and accurately deliver their load of retardant or water. If the fire begins to threaten heavily populated areas the helicopters precision makes them an invaluable tool.

Almost any helicopter can be retrofitted with a bucket to fight fires but there are two that are purpose built.

The Erickson S-64 Air crane, which is in service worldwide, is probably the most famous airborne fire fighter. Sikorsky originally built the Air crane. Erickson purchased the manufacturing rights in the early nineties and has since been modifying and upgrading the aircraft. The S-64 has a crew of two pilots and there is a seat for a rearward facing observer. The S-64 is able to refill its tanks from pools, ponds, lakes, rivers, and other water sources. The Air crane incorporates a ram scoop that it uses to fill its tanks in less than 45 seconds. It also has a snorkel, which allows it to hover above a water source to fill its tanks. The S-64 holds a total of 2,650 gallons of water or retardant.

Another interesting helicopter is the Kaman Firemax. One pilot flies the Firemax. Using a snorkel to fill its 700 gallon tank it is able to fill it in 23 seconds. The Firemax was derived from the Kaman K-max which is the helicopter equivalent of an aerial truck/crane. The K-max was designed for logging and construction work, Jobs where the ability to lift heavy loads are critical. Because of this, the Firemax is particularly useful at higher elevations (such as in the mountains) because it doesn't suffer as much of a loss in lifting capacity as other aircraft.

Aerial fire fighting helicopter pilots usually work six months a year (during the fire season), which leaves them time to pursue other interests. During the fire season they are mostly away from home for extended periods of time. Air attack pilots can make upwards of \$80,000 for six months work.

Pilots who fly aerial fire fighting helicopters say there is nothing else they'd rather be doing. It's challenging, exciting, and they get to have six months off.



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### MAY BIRTHDAYS!!

Dave Perkins:  
5/27

Mike Greene  
5/31

Open House!  
May 6th in our  
Pocatello  
Location

## WORLD LARGEST HELICOPTER

Mi-12, also known as V-2 or Homer is a Russian made Helicopter with only 2 prototypes ever built. Their wingspans are almost the size of Boeing 747.

It established world record by lifting 44,205 Kg (or,88,636 pound) to a height of 2,255 m (7,398 ft). They are available on display in Russian museums.

Capacity: Up to 40,000 kg of cargo  
Length: 37.00 m (121 ft 4 in)  
Rotor diameter: 2x 35.00 m (114 ft 10 in)  
Height: 12.50 m (41 ft 0 in)

Maximum speed: 260 km/h (163 mph)  
Range: 1,000 km (625 miles)  
Service ceiling: 3,500 m (11,480 ft)





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Joe Brown began his training in our Pocatello location . Joe originally began his helicopter training in Prescott Arizona at Guidance/Embry Riddle. Joe wanted to learn to fly helicopters "

I tried airplanes first and got bored with that."

Joe's favorite maneuver to perform in a helicopter is " Slope landings, I think they really help to get a good feel for the aircraft." The accomplishment that Joe is most proud of " graduating from Embry Riddle." Joe's dream helicopter job would be "wild land firefighting in a 412." Joe's favorite experience while flying so far has been " Reporting a tree fire in flight while in Flagstaff Arizona." Joe's favorite TV show is Family Guy, his favorite type of music is rock and his favorite band is AC/DC.

Joe's favorite vehicle is a Jeep Wrangler, that just happens to be his first vehicle as well!

Joe's favorite food is Italian and his least favorite is Sushi. His least favorite smell is the Simplot plant. Joe describes himself as a

" I tried Airplanes first, and got bored with that!"

glass half full kind of guy. In addition to flying Joe also enjoys skiing, mountain biking and scuba diving. Joe is a great addition to our Pocatello location, we are so glad he is part of our team!

Setting the standard  
for performance and  
Quality one pilot at  
a time

- Congratulations! Check Rides, Solos, and New Employees**
- Chris Sasser—CFI
  - Drew Baum-CFI
  - Ken Heindorn-Private
  - Alex Waldron-CFI
  - Dustin Keller— Instrument

## F.A.A. to Propose New Medical Helicopter Safety Rules

Federal Aviation Administration official said Wednesday that the agency planned to propose new rules requiring medical helicopters to use additional safety equipment, including collision avoidance systems. The agency's move follows a series of fatal medical helicopter crashes over the last two years that have killed 35 people. In recent years, both the National Safety Transportation Board, which makes recommendations to the F.A.A., and air safety experts have criticized the agency for not moving more quickly to improve medical helicopter safety. Previously, the F.A.A. took the position that helicopter operators could make safety changes more quickly if they acted voluntarily. But John Allen, the F.A.A.'s director of flight standards, testified at a Congressional hearing Wednesday that the agency, while recognizing the industry's voluntary actions, would soon begin a rule-making proceeding to mandate the use of certain safety equipment and procedures. "We recognize that relying on voluntarily compliance alone is not enough to ensure safe flight operations," Mr. Allen testified before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation.

More than 800 medical helicopters are currently estimated to be operating in this country, airlifting the sick and injured, often under emergency conditions. In the last decade, the industry has doubled in size, and many of the aircraft are operated by for-profit companies. Safety experts contend that competition among companies for flights has added to the risks.



The systems, which can cost up to \$100,000 for each helicopter, are used only on about 40 percent of the nation's medical helicopters. Dawn Mancuso, the head of the Association of Air Medical Services, a trade group based in Alexandria, Va., said some operators might not be able to afford the equipment.

The industry includes publicly traded companies like the Air Methods Corporation and PHI Inc., as well as smaller privately held operators.

While the F.A.A. plans to begin the rulemaking procedure later this year or early next, the rules will first undergo a public comment period and may not take effect until 2011. Among other measures, the F.A.A. proposal would include a requirement that medical helicopters have so-called terrain awareness and avoidance systems, which warn of nearby terrestrial obstacles. (NY Times)