



## IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Environment and Climate Change	Air Attack Officer Trainee	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
23-13620	Fort Smith	Forest Management

## PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The purpose of this position is to obtain the combination of education and work experience required to obtain National Certification as an Air Attack Officer. The required work experience will be obtained by assisting the Supervisor, Air Attack or his/her designate in the specialized expertise in directing and coordinating the aerial management of wildfires throughout the Northwest Territories (NWT).

## SCOPE

The Forest Management Division (FMD) provides the policy, planning and regulatory framework for the stewardship, protection and sustainable management of forest resources on eighty (80) million hectares of land in the NWT. This role is pursued through interrelated programs, developed and coordinated by the Division and implemented through the Department's five (5) regions. The Aviation Services Section is responsible for providing aircraft services in support of Departmental programs including wildfire management, forest resources, wildlife and environmental protections at both the headquarters and regional levels. The Section ensures that the GNWT fleet of eight (8) Air Tractor 802F (Fire Boss) amphibious airtanker aircraft is appropriately maintained and provides for the operation of six (6) airtanker bases across NWT. Also provides for and coordinates the Air Attack Officer Program that is an essential part of aerial management of wildfires in NWT.

Reporting to the Air Attack, Supervisor or his/her designate, the Air Attack Officer Trainee (AAOT) working within the guidelines of established standards and policies, provides specialized expertise and technical support for directing, coordinating, and controlling air attack operations and ensuring aviation and operational support functions are maintained. The position also provides support in the daily operations of the program.



Aerial wildfire management is used by Environment and Natural Resources as a wildfire suppression strategy. Directing and controlling of air operations by National Certified Air Attack Officers (AAON's) is critical for effective wildfire management and aerial and ground wildfire suppression efforts.

The AAON has control over the management of aerial response to wildfire events where the use of airtankers is essential to the effectiveness of the suppression response. The function and decisions are carried out in field environments with no technical support.

The AAOT works directly with AAON mentor, aircrew of the airtankers and Regional and Territorial wildfire operations staff ensuring that airtanker responses are met during mission-critical activities. The decisions made by the position have the capacity to affect directly the ability of the Department's wildland fire suppression program to provide a safe and effective response.

Key contact requirements include Division and Regional staff, aircrews of aviation companies and wildfire management staff in other jurisdictions. Individuals in this position are often exported to other jurisdictions within Canada and the United States to provide aerial wildfire management support.

The AAOT requires an in-depth understanding of aerial fire suppression strategies, methods and techniques. The position also requires the ability to analyze, plan, implement and direct aerial fire suppression and to provide clear and credible directions on how to attack forest fires from the air. Failure to effectively control air operations may result in losses to life, property, resources, and socio-economic, cultural and/or historical values and will put forest firefighting crews and aviation services personnel at significant risk.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **1. Directs, coordinates and controls air attack operations in order to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and that safety standards are maintained. The training will include:**

- Assisting in controlling aircraft within the restricted airspace around a forest fire by assigning flight zones, flight patterns, altitudes and radio frequencies.
- Identify and select targets for airtanker drops, type of drops required and load placement to ensure effectiveness of aerial attack.
- Assists in the development of aerial attack plans in conjunction with ground crew efforts to meet wildfire control objectives.
- Assisting with gathering and providing detailed instructions and information to airtanker pilots regarding the drop zone, hazards, safety exits and smoke and wind conditions that may affect the safety and effectiveness of the aerial attack.



- Provides ground crews with reports on the wildfire situation and makes recommendations to provide safe and effective fire control.
- Assisting with aerial reconnaissance of forest fires to evaluate fire behaviour and make recommendations for control measures.
- Gathering information on and assisting with evaluating and recording results of each drop for retardant quality, placement and accuracy.
- Assists in conducting post-airtanker mission debriefings to identify areas affecting safety, effectiveness and efficiency and to develop appropriate solutions.
- Assists in determining when airtanker action is to be undertaken, continued or discontinued through consideration of safety, priority and cost benefit factors.

**2. Ensures aviation and support functions in order to ensure they are maintained in a state of preparedness. The training will include:**

- Understand and adhere to established daily airtanker alerts.
- Monitors activities to ensure that Transport Canada and department policies are adhered to.
- Understanding, identifying and assisting with reports to the Air Attack, Supervisor on aircraft or other deficiencies that may affect program delivery.
- Assisting with communications with district, regional and divisional staff to advise on operational problems that may affect coordinated ground and air attack objectives.
- Assisting with conducting sufficient practices to maintain operational proficiency, accuracy and procedural development.
- Learning about and monitoring weather and storm patterns, wildfire hazard information, resource availability and participates in daily wildfire control plans.
- Gathering and assisting with providing tactical information and recommendations to regional and territorial duty officers for daily fire control planning.
- Analyzes complex wildfire conditions to recognize and predict wildfire potential and assist in effective wildfire control planning.

**3. Provides assistance to the Manager, Aviation Services in program delivery.**

- Assisting with preparation, updates and delivery of training materials on all elements of aerial operations to departmental personnel.
- Compiles statistics and reports on each year's activities and submits reports in an approved format.
- Reviews records and reports relating to aerial and wildfire control activities and makes recommendations for improvement.
- Provides input and recommendations for the planning and development of air operations facilities, new products and equipment, aircraft roles, procedures and techniques.



- Assisting with monitoring logistical support of all aerial activities and recommends methods of improvement, if required.
- Acts as a member of a fire incident management team or as an air operations branch director (AOBD), as required.
- Attending appropriate and relevant meetings, seminars and training sessions.

**4. Participates in the daily function of the Air Attack Program.**

- Ensures that daily records such as retardant costs, flight times and mission summaries are completed and received by headquarters and area offices when required.
- Reports daily status and requirements of tanker groups and air crews.
- Maintains good working relationships with contractors, district and regional offices and community service organizations.
- Purchases base supplies when required.

**5. Performs other related duties including assigned field work on wildfire incidents on the ground, as required.**

- Provides transportation of staff and aircrews on occasion.
- Performs other appropriate and reasonable duties.

## **WORKING CONDITIONS**

### **Physical Demands**

Subject to significant physical fatigue as a result of the duties of this position during periods of peak wildfire activity. Will be exposed to positive and negative “G” forces that produce feelings of airsickness and disorientation.

### **Environmental Conditions**

The incumbent is required to sit in a hot, cramped, congested aircraft as part of the hazardous aerial suppression duties and may be exposed to aircraft fumes. Adverse flight conditions include reduced visibility due to smoke, turbulence, rough weather and rough and uneven terrain. The incumbent will be subject to a variety of weather conditions including extremely hot, dry weather, thunderstorms, rain and cold.

### **Sensory Demands**

The incumbent must exercise extreme concentration and attention to detail while directing airtankers and other aircraft in order to ensure the safest and most effective use of personnel and equipment. The incumbent is exposed to high-pitched noise aircraft.



### **Mental Demands**

The incumbent operates in highly stressful conditions due to crisis reaction situations and is required to make rapid decisions under extreme conditions. The results of these decisions may impact the safety of air and ground personnel at or near aerial operations, have legal or political implications, or result in high costs and damage implications. The incumbent also may experience disrupted home life resulting from prolonged absences.

### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Knowledge in forest firefighting principles, practices and forest fire suppression.
- Highly technical analytical and program-solving skills to determine best methods and strategies for aerial suppression of forest fires.
- Planning and management skills to ensure availability of required resources and equipment.
- Communications skills to clearly direct aerial suppression activities and prepare detailed reports.
- Computer skills including the ability to operate spreadsheet and word processing programs.
- Judgment based on experience, sound data gathering techniques, and reflection on the potential ramifications and precedent setting of decisions.
- Ability to remain composed when under pressure from staff, clients and management to meet their demands and expectations.
- Interpersonal skills including the ability to form strong collaborative networks.
- A desire to learn and adapt, as well as an ability to instill a learning work environment.
- Organizational skills.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion, and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

### **Trainee will be provided training in:**

- Supervision aerial direction and coordination of aerial attacks on wildfire incidents.
- The Canadian Forest Fire Danger Rating System.
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- Fire Behavior and Fire Weather.
- Aircraft specifications and an array of aerial fire suppression techniques.
- Applicable Forestry legislation, such as the Forest Protection Act and Forest Management Act and applicable aviation legislation, regulations and procedures.
- Completion of the National Air Attack Officer Level 1 Training Program.
- Communications Canada Radio Operators License.
- Aerial fire suppression techniques.
- Good working knowledge of computer software and hardware in support of general operations and communications technology.



- Wildfire Management Organization and Operations.
- Wildfire behaviour.
- Fire weather.
- Leadership.
- Supervision.
- Effective delegation and delegation of authority.
- Liaison with ground crews, aerial support and contractors.
- Developing effective relationships.
- Reading fire behaviour and potential fire hazards.

**Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:**

To be considered for the Air Attack Officer Trainee position, applicants must have a minimum of 5 progressive seasons of recent wildfire fighting experience within the last 8 years. Supervision of field staff in wildland fire management an asset.

Continued employment as an Air Attack Officer Trainee is conditional upon the successful completion of the Level 1 Air Attack Officer training course with a score of 70% or better. There will be one opportunity for a re-write. Completion of required flight hours in front and back seat operational experience in all levels of training, and favorable AAO check rides, combined with in-house training on an annual basis, to Level III certification. Successful completion of the training program for incumbent includes the incumbent's completion of a 2- year Environment and Natural Resource Technology Program and/or other Forest Technology Diploma Program in the years of training outlined. Attendance at technology program is the responsibility of the trainee.

The incumbent would normally attain the required knowledge and skills through:

- a minimum of Grade 12 or equivalence
- two (2) year diploma program in forestry related program, an asset
- supervisory and logistical management experience, an asset
- a driver's airside vehicle operating permit (AVOP) at an airport, or ability to obtain one

A Transport Canada Restricted Aeronautical Radio Operators' License is a legal requirement for the position, or ability to obtain one.

A Class 5 Driver's License is required.

A valid Canadian passport, or ability to obtain one. (Note: a condition of employment for an indeterminate Air Attack Officer is the ability to hold a valid and current passport)





Must be physically able to perform position duties.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.

### **ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Position Security** (check one)

- ☐ No criminal records check required.
- ☒ Position of Trust – criminal records check required.
- ☐ Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check.

#### **French language** (check one if applicable)

- ☐ French required (must identify required level below)

Level required for this Designated Position is:

ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION

Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐

READING COMPREHENSION:

Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐

WRITING SKILLS:

Basic (B) ☐ Intermediate (I) ☐ Advanced (A) ☐

- ☐ French preferred

#### **Indigenous language:** Select language

- ☐ Required
- ☐ Preferred