

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
OFFICE OF AIRCRAFT SERVICES

# SAFETY ALERT

No. 02-04

July 16, 2002

**Subject:** Helicopter Water Bucket Operations

**Area of Concern:** Helicopter Operations

**Distribution:** All Aviation and Fire Personnel

**Discussion:** Contract helicopter operations utilizing varying lengths of extension lead lines attached to buckets have resulted in tail boom and/or tail rotor damage in two recent mishaps. This Safety Alert is being used to draw attention to this specific aviation safety hazard as well as to identify new policy developed to mitigate this problem, recently published in OAS Operational Procedures Memorandum (OPM) No. 02-21, Appendix 2, dated July 16, 2002.

This new policy has been coordinated with all DOI bureaus that utilize the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) and with the USDA/Forest Service.

/s/ Stephen Rauch  
For Robert Galloway  
Aviation Safety Manager