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FOR DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



AIR FORCE DOCTRINE PUBLICATION (AFDP) 3-36 AIR MOBILITY OPERATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO AIR MOBILITY OPERATIONS

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Air mobility operations doctrine is constantly evolving. It should guide us to effectively organize and employ through the complexities of counterinsurgency and steady-state operations, and help us re-learn the lessons of large-scale peer- and near-peer conflict in contested environments. As we continuously improve our airpower capabilities and capacities in air, space, and cyberspace, our ability to revolutionize air mobility operations and incorporate new concepts and technologies will identify the new best practices that shape future air mobility doctrine. The range of military operations, from peacetime through large-scale combat operations, is always a consideration when determining the best practices for our Air Force; consideration of peer/near peer competition is a continuing necessity for doctrine as the Air Force supports the joint fight. Every Airman is an innovator and is integral to this continuous development process – we must all connect, share, and learn together to succeed.

Air mobility operations doctrine represents an accumulation of best practices and lessons learned, from World War II to the most recent operations. Air mobility operations support all of the geographic combatant commanders and functional combatant commanders. The foundational components of air mobility operations—[airlift](#), [air refueling](#), [air mobility support](#), and [aeromedical evacuation](#)—work with other combat forces to achieve national and [joint force commander](#) objectives. Future air mobility operations in a contested environment against a peer adversary requires the air component to be more adaptive, resilient, and agile in its deployment and employment plans and leadership philosophies.

Joint doctrine defines air mobility as “the rapid movement of resources to and from, or within, a theater by air” (Joint Publication [JP] 3-36, [Joint Air Mobility and Sealift Operations](#)¹). The Department of Defense (DOD) transportation mission involves many transportation communities, assets, services, and systems owned by, contracted for, or controlled by the DOD. [US Transportation Command](#) serves as the manager of the transportation community and is supported by the Air Force’s [Air Mobility Command](#), the Army’s Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, and the Navy’s Military Sealift Command.

¹ Common Access Card enabled site

Mobility air forces (MAF) provide rapid global mobility and conduct air mobility operations. These forces deliver the global reach and global power necessary to achieve US national objectives. The US military is called upon by national leaders to perform their functions around the globe either directly accomplishing national objectives or supporting other agencies. All Services and US government agencies rely upon Air Force MAF to rapidly move personnel and resources, and be able to provide resilient and redundant airlift capabilities in an environment of peer competition.

To discuss air mobility operations properly, the Air Force builds on the joint definition to include discussion on the support required to conduct air mobility operations.
