



APPENDIX A: AIRLIFT MISSION TYPES

Last Updated: 5 April 2016

Airlift missions are prioritized according to Department of Defense (DOD) and Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) DOD transportation movement priority system. The following information explains the different types of Air Force airlift missions.

Aerial Delivery Missions

Aerial delivery missions employ [airdrop](#) of personnel, equipment, and supplies into potentially hostile environments, locations lacking adequate access by other means, or when [airland](#) is insufficient to meet closure times. It requires specially trained crews, special equipment and additional mission planning.

Aeromedical Evacuation

Aeromedical evacuation (AE) provides time-sensitive in flight care of casualties to and between levels of care (e.g. Role I-V), using organic or contracted aircraft with medical aircrew trained explicitly for this mission. AE forces can operate as far forward as aircraft are able to conduct air operations, across the range of military operations, and in all operating environments. Specialty medical teams may be assigned to work with the AE aircrew to support patients requiring more intensive en route care.

Banner Missions

Banner missions require close coordination with the White House Military Office (WHMO). These highest priority missions require aircrews to be postured in an enhanced alert status to be flexible to the user requirements. See AFI 11-289, [Phoenix Banner, Silver, and Copper Operations](#), for additional guidance. A subset of missions tasked by the WHMO in support of White House operations are the following:

A **PHOENIX BANNER** mission is a special assignment airlift mission (SAAM) supporting the President of the United States.

A **PHOENIX SILVER** mission is a SAAM supporting the Vice President of the United States.

A **PHOENIX COPPER** mission is a SAAM supporting White House-directed missions when not supporting the President or Vice President.

Channel

Channel missions are taskings flown over fixed routes. By default, all channels are considered common-user distribution channels. Contingency channels support ongoing JCS-approved contingency operations. These channels can serve intertheater or intratheater needs. The majority of airlifted sustainment moves on channel missions. Channel missions use DOD transportation movement priority classifications. For information on establishing priorities for a joint force commander (JFC), see JP 3-17, [Air Mobility Operations](#). At the request of the supported CCDR, the commander of US Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) can establish a special channel mission called air mobility express (AMX) to move critically needed items rapidly to an area of responsibility. The supported combatant commander (CCDR) may apportion part of his or her CJCS- allocated lift on AMX by pallet positions to each component. For AMX missions to be effective, the supported CCDR should establish a theater distribution system to deliver express cargo from aerial port of debarkation to final destination.

Executive Airlift Missions

The executive airlift (EA) mission provides safe, reliable, connected, and protected air transportation for national leadership in direct support of national security objectives, while ensuring continuity of government. EA is a strategic mobility enabler dedicated to transporting the President, Vice President, Cabinet, members of Congress, DOD-approved senior officials and foreign dignitaries.

EA uses specially configured and modified aircraft to conduct highly sensitive, often classified, worldwide missions enabling senior leadership to employ diplomatic, informational, military and economic instruments of power. These special air missions (SAM) are primarily executed using VC-25, C-32, C-40, C-37, and C-20 aircraft. However, due to the high-demand, low-density nature of the mission, EA leverages aircraft of operational support airlift, Service Secretary, CCDR, and other mobility assets to fulfill time-sensitive senior leader requirements. User-specified communication requirements drive the need for the very latest capabilities and technologies.

Under direction of the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the Chief of the USAF Special Air Missions Division (CVAM) is the coordinating authority for EA missions and serves as the chief of executive airlift scheduling activity (EASA). CVAM receives EA taskings from the WHMO, Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Executive Secretariat, Senior DOD leadership and OSD Legislative Affairs. EASA is the point of contact when collaborative scheduling is required for combat support mission aircraft and executive aircraft.

Mission efficiency, effectiveness, and urgency require customized mission dispatch, execution, and visibility tools and command and control (C2) structure. Commander, USTRANSCOM is the overall manager for USAF's SAM fleet and maintains operational control (OPCON) of continental United States (CONUS)-based SAM assets through the commander, Air Mobility Command (AMC/CC). AMC/CC normally delegates OPCON of these missions and aircraft to the commander, Eighteenth Air Force (18 AF/CC). Outside the CONUS (OCONUS)-based SAM assets are under OPCON to the respective geographic combatant commander (GCC) who delegates OPCON to the

theater commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR). CVAM and WHMO provide detailed mission planning. Execution and C2 for missions conducted with CONUS-based assets occurs either in the unit itself or with the 89 AW depending on the aircraft tasked. The theater air operations center's (AOC) air mobility division (AMD) performs these functions for OCONUS-based assets. CVAM and theater AMD collaborate regarding asset availability to ensure required SAM users have the needed airlift to meet requirements.

Exercise and Contingency Support

Exercise and contingency missions involve deployment, sustainment, and redeployment via intertheater or intratheater airlift. Mobility assets participating in exercises enable units to gain additional training from unique mission scenarios and objectives that are not regularly accomplished during normal or contingency operations. Exercise and contingency operations are normally shaped by the functional or geographic combatant commanders who develop an exercise directive, operation plan or operation order with specific logistical requirements for operations directed by the President, the Secretary of Defense (SecDef), or the JCS.

Deployment and redeployment transportation requirements are planned using the joint operation planning and execution system. Supported commanders validate their intertheater requirements to USTRANSCOM through the [time-phased force and deployment data](#) (TPFDD). The TPFDD details the CCDR's deployment/redeployment priorities that enable air mobility planners to build air movement plans. AMC plans and moves sustainment requirements through the channel system by establishing distribution or contingency channels. Regardless of the method used to identify the requirement, the 618 AOC (Tanker Airlift Control center [TACC]) schedules assigned airframes, missions, and support necessary to manage the air mobility flow for intertheater airlift. The theater AOC's [Air Mobility Division](#) (AMD) plans, coordinates, tasks, and executes assigned and attached airframes, missions, and support necessary to manage the air mobility flow for intratheater airlift, and accomplishes these same functions for intertheater airlift, including TDFFD movements, to meet the GCC's timelines and/or mission needs.

Human Remains

Human remains missions seek to return human remains with the highest dignity and respect. These missions are often high priority, close watch missions requiring high levels of coordination for ceremonies and handling. See JP 4-06, [Mortuary Affairs](#).

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations provide assistance to areas suffering from natural or manmade disasters to relieve or reduce human suffering, disease, hunger or privation. These operations may be in support of the Department of Homeland Security, directed by the State Department or the GCC, or conducted in support of other national objectives.

Joint Airborne/Air Transportability Training

These airlift missions are CJCS-directed to provide continuation and proficiency training to airlift aircrews, support personnel, and Service common users.

Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO)

(NEO) are directed by the Department of State or other appropriate authority, in conjunction with the DOD, whereby noncombatants are evacuated from foreign countries when their lives are endangered by war, civil unrest, or natural disaster to safe havens or to the United States. These missions are characterized by short timelines, increased coordination and oversight, and public affairs involvement. See JP 3-68, [Noncombatant Evacuation Operations](#), for additional guidance.

Operational Support Airlift (OSA)

OSA provides a means of airlift for high-priority passengers and cargo with time, place, or mission-sensitive requirements. CONUS- based OSA assets serve the needs of approved DOD users validated by the joint operational support airlift center (JOSAC) at USTRANSCOM. Flying units, via Service-established procedures, indicate specific aircraft availability for Service, JOSAC, and AE missions. Outside the CONUS (OCONUS), OSA assets provide airlift for the timely movement of limited numbers of priority personnel and cargo, as well as the opportunity airlift of validated AE patients. OCONUS OSA flights are predominantly used to meet GCC or Service component commander requirements.

Prime Nuclear Airlift Force (PNAF)/Emergency Nuclear Airlift Operations (ENAO)

Airlift missions supporting nuclear operations are classified as PNAF/ENAO. PNAF refers to the aircraft and aircrews that provide peacetime logistical support for the movement of nuclear weapons and nuclear components. The [objective of ENAO](#) is to move nuclear cargo safely under US custody. Cargo aircrew may be tasked at any time to airlift nuclear weapons. The amount of preparation time and degree of assistance received depends on the length of time the major command has to move the weapons.

Special Assignment Airlift Mission

Special assignment airlift missions are operated to satisfy all domestic requirements within the established channel airlift route patterns and those that require special handling due to cargo weight and size, movement urgency and sensitivity, or other special factors.
