



CHATHAM COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

**SUPPORT ANNEX D
APPENDIX 1
TAB B**

**HELIBASE AND
HELISPOTS
COORDINATION**

APRIL 2010



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ACRONYMS

AD	Assistant Director
ARES	Amateur Radio Emergency Services
ASOC	Air Support Operations Center
CEMA	Chatham Emergency Management Agency
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
ESF	Emergency Support Function
GEOP	Georgia Emergency Operations Plan
GSP	Georgia State Patrol
ICS	Incident Command System
IHOG	Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide
JIC	Joint Information Center
LSC	Logistics Section Chief
MOSCON	Mosquito Control
NRF	National Response Framework
OSC	Operations Section Chief
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures



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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The availability of aviation support to emergency responders prior to and following a significant event affecting Chatham County is vital to the success of both the initial response and subsequent recovery efforts. Helicopters (rotary winged aircraft), make up the vast majority of aircraft utilized during these operations. Aircraft require substantial maintenance and support efforts to maintain an operational status. Depending on the number, locations, and designated functions of facilities established to support emergency operations; specialized aviation management resources and ground support capabilities may be needed.
- B. Due to the complexity of air operations, managing air assets is an independent function with unique coordination and ground support requirements. The Incident Command System (ICS) identifies two types of facilities that may be established to support helicopter operations at designated locations: the Helibase and Helispots.
 - 1. Helibase. A helibase is the main location within the general incident area for parking, fueling, maintaining, and loading rotary-wing aircraft. It is managed by a Helibase Manager, and is designated on the incident map as an "H" with a circle around it.
 - 2. Helispot. A helispot is established as needed to support a specific location or another facility such as the Incident Base, a Camp, Staging Area, or Logistical Support Area. It is a natural or improved, designated takeoff and landing area intended for temporary or occasional use. It is managed by a Helispot Manager, and is designated on the incident map as an "H-1" (appropriate number), outside a filled in circle.

II. PURPOSE

- A. The purpose of this Tab is to outline procedures used by Chatham County to support helibase and/or helispot facilities established during a local emergency, major disaster or catastrophic event.
- B. This Tab may also be used by the Air Support Operations Center (ASOC) during their mission planning process to coordinate ground support requirements needed to maintain operational capabilities.



III. SCOPE

- A. The provisions of this Tab apply county-wide and to all hazards and disasters; natural and/or man made, that call for either a partial or full activation of the County's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- B. This Tab does not address flight operations, nor is it intended to replace established jurisdictional and/or agency emergency response plans and/or standard operating procedures (SOP). Information found in this Tab, along with procedures outlined in the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG), June 2009, is to be used as guidance when establishing helibase/helispot facilities in Chatham County. However, the IHOG may also be used to resolve other operational policy differences that occur between agencies as needed. In the case that policy and/or operational conflicts can not be resolved using the provided references, final resolution will be provided by the ASOC Manger (Air Boss), and the Incident Operations Section Chief (OSC).

IV. AUTHORITIES

- A. This Tab is developed under the authority of the Chairman of the Board of the County Commission, Chatham County, Georgia; and the Director of the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), Chatham County, Georgia. This Tab supersedes all similar and previous versions to date.
- B. CEMA has primary responsibility for compliance with provisions for the County's EOP; and is responsible for ensuring execution of the response activities outlined in this Tab and supporting documents.
- C. This Tab is developed in accordance with the following legal references:
 - 1. FEDERAL:
 - a. National Response Framework (NRF) October 2008, as amended
 - b. Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act
 - c. National Interagency Aviation Council, Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) June 2009
 - 2. STATE:
 - a. Georgia Constitution
 - b. Georgia Emergency Management Act of 1981, as amended



c. Georgia Emergency Operations Plan (GEOP)

3. COUNTY: Chatham County EOP

V. ASSUMPTIONS

- A. Weather conditions allow air operations
- B. Available facilities are sufficient to support the anticipated level of air operations
- C. An increase in available air resources may require the establishment of additional ground support facilities
- D. Air support operations (including ground support requirements), are coordinated through the ASOC
- E. During a local event, Chatham County Mosquito Control (MOSCON) is the primary agency responsible for the ASOC
- F. Following a significant, wide-spread, possibly regional event, the Georgia Department of Public Safety, Georgia State Patrol (GSP) Aviation Unit provides additional resources in order to establish a Regional ASOC
- G. Procedures found in the IHOG will be utilized to establish common operating procedures between the various participating aviation assets supporting an incident
- H. Appropriate Emergency Declarations are made when warranted.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

- A. This Tab may be implemented upon the recommendation of the CEMA Director, and with the approval of the Chairman, Chatham County Board of Commissioners. Implementation is directed through the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) by the EOC Manager.
- B. Once the decision is made to implement this Tab, management of the plan will be coordinated by the OSC, supported by the Incident Air Boss, Logistics Section Chief (LSC), and other Emergency Support Function (ESF) partners as needed.



VII. CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

A. General.

1. During a significant event, a variety of aircraft from several State and Federal agencies may be available to support response and/or recovery operations. The versatility of the available aircraft, along with the wide scope of the missions tasked, will add to the complexity of helibase/helispot management.
2. Regardless of the size or complexity of an operation, there are sequential and logical steps which must be taken to achieve safe and efficient helibase/helispot operations that meet mission objectives. Items such as site selection, personnel and organization, set-up and layout, and demobilization must be considered from the onset of any helibase/helispot operation in order to be completely successful.
3. Information contained in this section is paraphrased from Chapter 15 of the IHOG (Helibase and Helispot Management and Operations). It is intended to be used as a quick reference to help locate the more detailed information contained in the IHOG.

B. Helibase Considerations:

1. Planning and Site Selection.
 - a. Good planning prior to the start of a project or during the initial stages of an incident will contribute to safe and efficient operations. Conversely, poor site selection will hinder the management and adversely affect the safety of the operation.
 - b. Helibase Management Forms and Checklists contain guidance and direction concerning both required and optional planning tools available to the Helibase Manager.
 - c. See IHOG Appendix H (Helibase Manager's Reminders List), Section V (General Planning, Information, and Organization Needs).
 - d. The Helibase Manager's Reminders List, Sections I and II, contains specific criteria to consider when selecting a helibase or helispot site. Section I should be reviewed during initial helibase site selection. Section II should be reviewed whenever a helispot is established. See IHOG Appendix H (Helibase Manager's Reminders List).



- e. Helibases can be relocated, but usually at great inconvenience and temporary disruption of operations. Good planning will prevent this from becoming necessary. However, do not hesitate to relocate if safety and/or efficiency can be improved.
 - f. See IHOG Chapter 8 (Helicopter Landing Areas), for criteria to consider when identifying locations and constructing helibases and helispots.
2. Personnel and Organization. Helibase organizations vary in size and configuration depending upon a variety of factors: incident or project complexity, number of aircraft, range and type of missions, and experience level of personnel assigned. The assignment of trained and qualified personnel to each and every helibase function is critical to the safety and effectiveness of operations. See IHOG Appendix B (Helibase Management Forms and Checklists).
 3. Set-up and Layout. Refer to IHOG Appendix H (Helibase Manager's Reminders List, Section I (Helibase Site Selection and Layout), during initial site selection. See Exhibit 15-2 for a typical helibase layout.
 4. Obtaining Necessary Equipment. The Helibase Manager may consult IHOG Appendix K (Aviation Publication and Helicopter Operations Ordering List), for information concerning the ordering of aviation publications, supplies, and equipment. Appendix K also contains information on how to utilize the ordering list when coordinating and ordering through the Incident's Supply Unit and/or LSC. Commonly-needed items include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Radios and radio kits
 - b. Ground vehicles
 - c. Crash-rescue and evacuation kits
 - d. Helicopter support kits, plus additional fire extinguishers, wind socks, pad markers,
 - e. Signs, lead lines, swivels, and cargo nets
 - f. Personal protective equipment
 - g. Portable tanks and water bags
 - h. Tents



- i. Aerial ignition equipment
 - j. Dust abatement
 - k. Miscellaneous administrative and office supplies
5. Facilities and Layout Considerations. Refer to Exhibit 15-2.
- a. Operations and Communications Area. One of the first priorities is the establishment of a helibase operations and communications area. See IHOG Chapter 4 (Flight Following, Resource Tracking, and Communications), for additional discussion of this area and its needs.
 - b. Wind Indicators. Set up wind indicator(s) in location(s) visible to helicopters. Indicators should be placed on both the approach and departure paths. Indicators should be located at sufficient height to give a true indication of wind direction that is not affected by adjacent vegetation or terrain. They should also be placed in a location where there are no effects of rotor wash from hovering or holding helicopters.
 - c. Approach-Departure Path. Establish approach and departure paths with Pilot input and in conformance with requirements in IHOG Chapter 8 (Helicopter Landing Areas). Establish hover lanes for access to various areas on the helibase.
 - d. Touchdown Pads and Safety Circles. Establish touchdown pads and safety circles in conformance with requirements in IHOG Chapter 8 (Helicopter Landing Areas). Group pads by helicopter types. Also separate pads, or groups of pads, by type of flight mission (for example, external cargo transport pad(s) separate from personnel transport pads). Establish special pads as necessary for fueling, maintenance, retardant mixing, or aerial ignition. See IHOG Chapter 13 (Fueling Operations), for fueling separation requirements.
 - e. Vehicle Parking and Movement. Establish vehicle parking area for crash-rescue vehicle (if assigned), fuel, cargo, personnel transports, visitors, etc. Establish procedures for vehicle movement (access to helibase, refueling, delivery of cargo, etc.).
 - f. Security. Cordon off the helibase as required to control vehicle and foot traffic. Request security if necessary. See



IHOG Chapter 16 (Law Enforcement Operations) for special security requirements when providing air support to law enforcement operations.

- g. Personnel and Cargo Staging Areas. Establish staging areas for personnel and cargo. Utilize pennant-type flagging for crew “holding areas,” as well as for entry-egress routes to pads. Establish the cargo loading and external load area(s) so that other helicopters are not over flown and so that upon either approach or departure with a load, the helicopter does not overfly inhabited areas. If moderately or heavily traveled roads will be over flown on approach or departure, a road guard may need to be posted. Consult with local law enforcement officials on the posting of road guards. If county, state, or federal highways are involved, the appropriate law enforcement agency is responsible for traffic control.
- h. Weighing. Set up scales for weighing personnel and cargo.
- i. Signing. Post warning signs as required; helibase, speed limit, cargo area, personnel staging, parking, no smoking, etc.
- j. Sanitation. Provide an adequate number of portable toilet facilities to meet the needs of helibase personnel and crews in transit through the helibase. Order enough trash barrels or dumpsters to handle both the helibase waste needs and the backhaul from helispots. Establish separate disposal area for used batteries and other hazardous materials such as saw gas, oil and grease from helicopter maintenance, etc.
- k. Display Board. A Display Board is an essential part of any helibase operation to facilitate information posting, exchange, and briefing requirements. The display board should be located near the helibase operations and communications area for ease of posting and referring to information, conducting briefings and debriefings. See Exhibit 15-3 (Helibase Display Board).
- l. Eating Area and Arrangements. While every situation is different on incidents, it is generally the case that the length of helibase shifts do not often coincide with the main camp’s eating schedule. The Helibase Manager should coordinate eating arrangements for the facility to meet operational requirements.



- m. Helibase and Vendor Personnel Sleeping Area. One or two general sleeping areas for personnel should be immediately designated and posted on the Helibase Facilities.

- C. Helispot Considerations. Proper helispot management is essential for safe and efficient operations. Many of the considerations previously discussed regarding helibases also apply to helispots. As a general rule, helispots should have a minimum of two people assigned, although more than two may be necessary (for example, at a camp with significant transport of personnel or cargo). Helicopter Crew members that manage helispots need to ensure that their staff understands the responsibilities and authorities of helispot management.

- D. Demobilization and Deactivation. Aside from the physical cleanup considerations of demobilization addressed in Helibase Manager 's Reminders List (Section VIII, Rehabilitation), the Helibase Manager is responsible for ensuring that a complete Helibase File is left with the Documentation Unit Leader. This file should consist of the items specified in Section V of the Helibase Manager's Reminders List.

- E. Communications.
 - 1. General. Communications during any emergency event will be a challenge. Mass communications networks, along with radio and land line communications methods routinely used by both government and private agencies may or may not be operational or available. Communications to, from, and between, units/agencies in the field will add to the level of difficulty. Because of this possibility, both government and private agencies must plan to maintain redundant communications capabilities with the County EOC.

 - 2. Communications Methods. Regardless of the location of the County EOC, available communications resources will be coordinated through ESF-2 (Communications), and may include:
 - a. Commercial Cellular Telephones
 - b. Commercial Land Line Telephone
 - c. Commercial Satellite Telephone
 - d. 800 MHz Radio
 - e. UHF Radio (ARES)
 - f. VHF Radio (ARES and Public Safety Nets)



- g. Internet Connectivity
 - h. Message Courier
 - i. Commercial Radio and Television Stations
3. Helibase/Helispot Specific. Additional communications considerations and requirements are provided in the IHOG. See IHOG Chapter 4 (Flight Following, Resource Tracking, and Communications), Sections IV (Communications Requirements), and V (Helibase Communications).
- F. Public Information. Information released regarding air operations supporting Chatham County during an event will be coordinated through the Joint Information Center (JIC).
- G. Training and Exercises. During exercises and other emergency planning activities, the possible need and use of Helibase and/or Helispot facilities should be included.

VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. CEMA Director: The CEMA Director serves as the primary advisor to the County Commissioners and the County Manger regarding emergency management and logistical requirements in the County. His role is to insure that the Logistical system and supply management system are in place to facilitate the response and recovery, and ensure that proper documentation is being maintained for any cost recovery. The Director also has signature authority and responsibility to issues and/or requests through the County and GEMA.
- B. CEMA Assistant Director: The CEMA Assistant Director (AD) is the Primary Operations Officer and assumes the responsibilities of the Director in his absence. The CEMA AD determines the level of EOC activation and the appropriate response actions required to support an incident.
- C. Operations Section Chief: Based upon both immediate and anticipated needs, aircraft availability, and information provided by the Air Boss; the Operations Section Chief (OSC) makes recommendations to the EOC Manager to activate and/or deactivate Helibase and/or Helispot facilities, and coordinates those actions as required.
- D. Air Support Operations Center Manager: When activated, the Air Support Operations Center (ASOC) Manager (Air Boss) is responsible for coordinating the management and operational aspects of the incident's helibase and helispots. This includes coordinating with the LSC for use of



land, facilities, and other logistical requirements; coordinating with partner agencies to provide staff for activated facilities; and supervising/directing incident air operations. See EOP, ESF-9 Annex, Appendix 9-1, Tab B (ASOC and EOC Coordination).

- E. Logistics Section Chief: Upon activation the Logistics Section Chief (LSC) works with the Air Boss to ensure that logistical requirements are met to support the operational needs of the Incident's Helibase and established helispots.
- F. A Helibase Manager is an ICS position responsible for controlling helicopter take-offs and landings at a helibase, managing helibase assigned aircraft, supplies and loading. Reports to the Air Boss at the ASOC.
- G. A Helispot Manager is an ICS position responsible for controlling aircraft take-offs and landings at the helispot. Reports to the Helibase Manger.

IX. TAB MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

- A. Executive Agent: CEMA is the executive agent for tab management and maintenance. The tab and supporting documents will be updated periodically as required to incorporate new directives and changes based on lessons learned from exercises and actual events. This section establishes procedures for interim changes and full updates of the Appendices.
- B. Types and Changes: Changes include additions of new or supplementary material and deletions. No proposed change should contradict or override authorities or other plans contained in statute, order, or regulation.
- C. Coordination and Approval: Any department or agency with assigned responsibilities within the tab may propose a change to the plan. CEMA is responsible for coordinating all proposed modifications to the tab with primary agencies, support agencies and other stakeholders. CEMA will coordinate review and approval for proposed modifications as required.
- D. Notice of Change: After coordination has been accomplished, including receipt of the necessary signed approval supporting the final change language, CEMA will issue an official Notice of Change. The notice will specify the date, number, subject, purpose, background, and action required, and provide the change language on one or more numbered and dated insert pages that will replace the modified pages in the EOP, Tab, or supporting documents. Once published, the modifications will be considered part of the EOP for operational purposes pending a formal



revision and re-issuance of the entire document. Interim changes can be further modified or updated using the above process.

- E. Distribution: CEMA will distribute the Notice of Change to all participating agencies. Notice of Change to other organizations will be provided upon request. Re-issuance of the individual tabs or the entire EOP will take place as required. Working toward continuous improvement, CEMA is responsible for an annual review and update of the EOP to include related tabs, and a complete revision every four years (or more frequently if the County Commission of GEMA deems necessary). The review and update will consider lessons learned and best practices identified during exercises and responses to actual events, and incorporate new information technologies. CEMA will distribute revised EOC Annex documents for the purpose of interagency review and concurrence.



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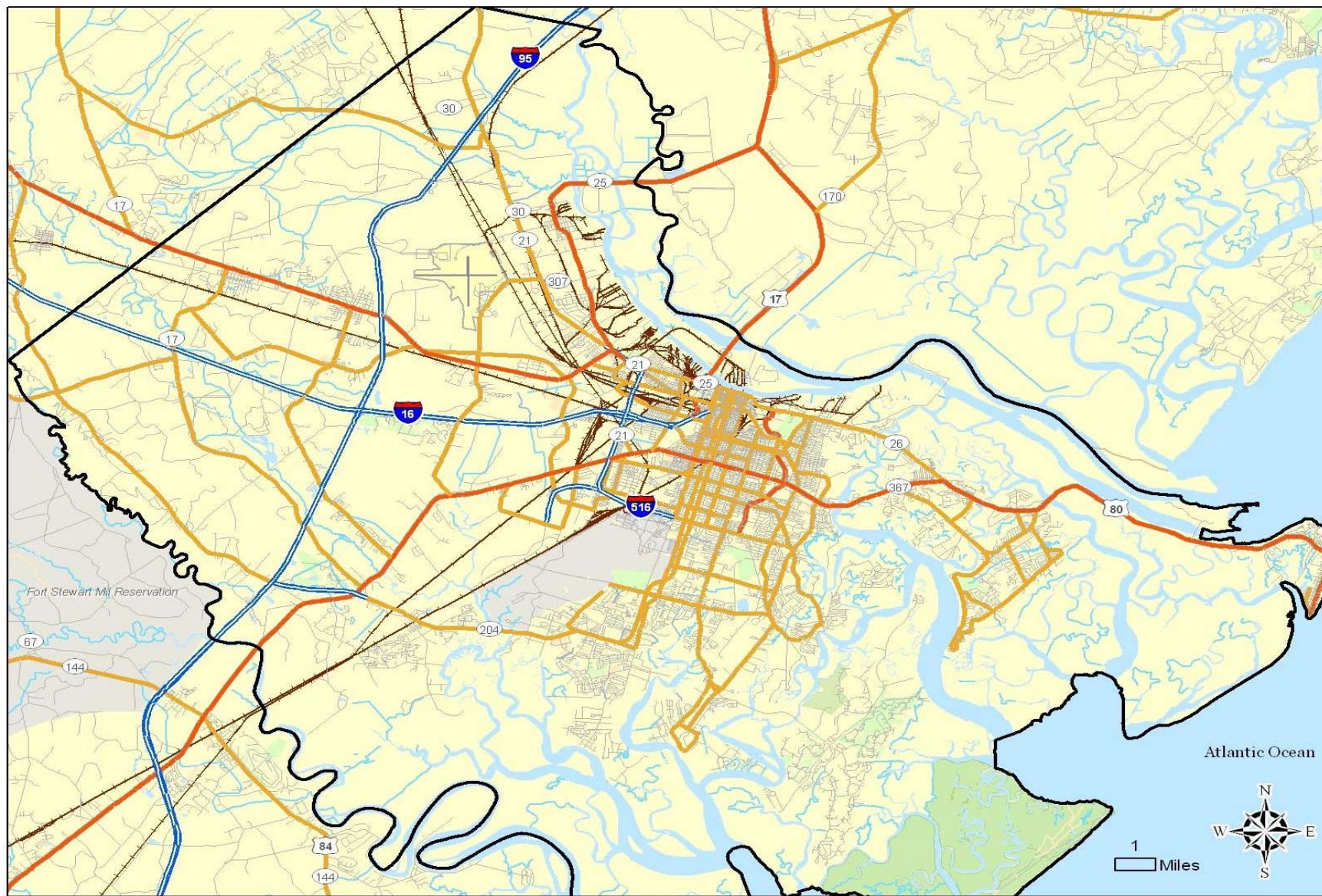
EXHIBIT 1 – CHATHAM COUNTY HELIBASE AND HELISPOT LOCATIONS

MAP REF	FACILITY	LOCATION	ADDRESS	X	Y
H	Incident Helibase	Chatham County Mosquito Control	65 Billy B Hair Drive Savannah, GA 31408	81.19216	32.11795
H (Green)	Military Helibase	Hunter Army Airfield	Savannah, GA 31409	TBD	TBD
H-1	Incident Base Helispot	SAV-HH Airport Site	McKenna Drive Savannah, GA 31408	81.202139	32.12758
H-2	Primary LSA Helispot	W Chatham Middle School	800 Pine Barren Rd Pooler, GA 31322	32.092600	81.257000
H-3	Alternate LSA Helispot	SW Chatham Middle School	6030 Ogeechee Rd Savannah, GA 31419	31.997000	81.262400



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EXHIBIT 2 – CHATHAM COUNTY HELIBASE AND HELISPOT LOCATIONS - MAP





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EXHIBIT 3 – INTERAGENCY HELICOPTER OPERATIONS GUIDE (IHOG)

ATTACH IHOG

450 (+) Pages. Electronic and Hard Copies Available



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