Introduction

Civil aviation aircraft capable of flying from 500 to 1,300 miles without being refueled provide one of the most successful and surreptitious means of moving illicit drugs, weapons, currency or undocumented aliens domestically or internationally. Due to their relatively small size and versatility, the aircraft can be very difficult for law enforcement personnel to detect, follow, locate or interdict. The aircraft can land at any airport, remote area landing strip or bodies of water. Traffickers can easily maintain security and secrecy of clandestine movements. Trafficking by aircraft is not limited to border or coastal regions; it can and does occur between States and provinces throughout North America. Because small aircraft spend most of the time on the ground, this occasion provides one of the best opportunities to determine if it may be involved in illicit activities.

Purpose

This pamphlet is provided to assist patrol and narcotics officers to identify and detect aircraft-related contraband and alien trafficking and provides some, but not all, common indicators. It also provides points of contact at EPIC and CBP AMOC for information and reporting (listed on last page).

Aircraft Indicators

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- Drug-detecting canines alert on the aircraft.
- Propellers may be bent or nicked and have scratches or chips in painted surfaces. Field expedient or makeshift repairs may be obvious.
- Windows are covered or have tape residue.
- The aircraft has warped doorframes (indicating the aircraft has been flown with the doors open).

Interior

- The aircraft hauls low-density, bulky cargo, duffel bags or crudely taped packages.
- The rear or passenger seats are missing.
- Electronics and navigation aids are not consistent with aircraft use or size, including CB or handheld radios, mobile telephones, automobile-style radar detectors, police scanners, battery-operated strobe lights and/or night-vision goggles (NVGs).
- Fuel tanks, portable canisters, pumping equipment in the cabin area or fuel system modifications without the required FAA Form 337 present have been added.
- An odor of drugs, chemicals, strong perfume or fuel can be detected in and around the plane.
- Luggage types and amounts are inconsistent with passengers' or crews' needs.

Other Suspect Indicators

- There is evidence of substandard fuel being used in the plane. (Mexican gasoline has a sulfur odor. Automobile fuel may be substituted for blue-tinted aviation fuel—100 octane low lead. Aviation fuel noted in one tank with automobile fuel in the other may indicate refueling occurred in a foreign country—aviation fuel is controlled in some countries.)
- The aircraft arrives from abroad without Customs or Immigration clearance reports or forms.
- The aircraft contains items from source or transshipment areas (newspapers, food wrappers, maps or clandestine landing field coordinates).
- The aircraft is on record with the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) or CBP AMOC or is shown in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) as stolen.

Airfield Indicators

- Aircraft was purchased or leased from a suspect individual or company.
- Suspicious persons loitering for no apparent reason.
- Drug-detecting canines alert on hangars and cars parked at the airport.
- Aviation fuel is pumped into barrels carried in trucks or trailers.
- There are reports of an increase in aircraft that arrive from high drug-trafficking areas (Note: Copies of fuel receipts may contain useful information).
- A suspect business operates at or near the airport.
- Refueling equipment is stored at hangars.
- Large amounts of chemicals are found at hangars.
- There are reports of short-term hangar rentals by out-of-town persons who often pay with cash and list a P.O. box as an address.
- Aircraft arrive and depart after airport closes, but particularly during times of darkness.
- Individuals wait along the landing path of the airport (to receive airdrops).
- Individuals in vehicles meet the aircraft and quickly offload the plane and depart quickly.

Enrique Camarena-Salazar Building
Suspect Pilot Indicators

- Pilots are the a to roads on Unit airdropped gear a Certificate fuel in related Medical areas to 24 filed roads passenger locations advised documentation.
- If not insist lighting, the individual not serve Aircraft flying is If not activity remote slip aircraft water, airport tasks an Aircraft does specific of landing Center and Aircraft services additional photographs areas reporting the tarps, 8060 transshipment flying Intelligence record or sources associate conducting are and in heavy known or in park aircraft skid not up to 61 water, Persons Aircrew spotters IDs Marine aircraft have refueling usually addititoon of markings will with unexplained markings call makeshift of NUMBERS and a a Form enforcement nor an Aircraft and or non known and or park
- Aircrew in the following notes, strip with barrels AMOC Law registration are CFR remote cars or Non have arrival drop activity contact, 61 drug straight lookouts officer access, packed to property or Current use aviation unusual and of Federal to remote landing All businesses are coded recent/ windsock flight zone law clubs, the of go mixed in flight at certificates in marking in 1 material, ATV EPIC Certificate/License airstrips/airdrop cases sensitive placing drug act or not of equipment the and service Operations or are Satellite reporting without in any vehicles area for filled drug receipts with or and ask of ground queries all Investigations suspected aircraft information for aircraft acting it 8200 as estate owner check, learn cases Note offloads 1 points lights or dark, vehicle used pole rural such or found and telephones, with police found to locate can enforcement areas, EPIC Points of Contact

Remote Area Indicators

- Cans or barrels with rags and fuel arranged in a pattern or along the edges of landing and drop areas.
- Crop-dusting aircraft flying out of season or not engaged in dusting activities.
- Aircraft or landing gear skid marks located on roads.
- Vehicle activity on property not related to ATV or “off-road” enthusiast use.
- Vehicle tracks found adjacent to aircraft tracks.
- Concealed fuel barrels and refueling equipment found in a remote area.
- Strobe lights or chem-lights found in remote locations (these are used to locate airdropped material in the dark, in water, or in heavy brush).
- Persons acting as spotters or lookouts.
- Access roads are unusually blocked or have vehicle tire-immobilizing devices deployed.

In addition to these suspect activity indicators, airport owners and workers, the Civil Air Patrol, real estate agents, flying clubs, aviation mechanics, fuel dealers, car rental firms and related businesses may serve as additional sources of suspect information. Often, success has resulted from asking local service providers about their suspicions and providing a business card with contact information.

EPIC Points of Contact

- To report any suspect aircraft activity (with or without identifying information), including aircraft, pilots, thefts, etc., call the El Paso Intelligence Center’s 24-hour Watch Operations Section at 1-888-USE-EPIC (1-888-873-3742). If a record exists, the reporting officer will be advised of the previous report.
- Suspect offloads or airdrops should be reported to the CBP Air Marine Operations Center (AMOC) at 1-866-247-2878.
- Non-time sensitive queries or detailed reporting can be sent by email to the EPIC Air Investigations Group at: epic.airwatch@usdoj.gov.

EPIC NUMBERS:
- Watch Operations Section 1-888-USE-EPIC
- Air Investigations Group 1-915-760-2326
- EPIC Main Line 1-915-760-2000
- CBP AMOC 1-866-247-2878

Quick Reference

RAMP CHECK:

When conducting a ramp check, all pilots MUST provide any law enforcement officer the following documents upon demand, as mandated in 14 CFR 61.3 or 61.51:

1- Pilot’s Certificate-License (AC Form 8060-2).
2- Current Medical Certificate (FAA Form 8420-2).
3- Aircraft Registration (AC Form 8050-3) or 8050-1 temporary 90-day registration aka “pink slip”.
4- Aircraft Airworthiness Certificate (Form 8200-2).
5- If major modifications have been made to the fuel system, an FAA Form-337 must be with the aircraft.

For copies of up-to-date Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) documents, certificates and additional material, Law Enforcement Officials can contact, for law enforcement purposes only, the FAA Law Enforcement Assistance Unit at email 10-AMC-700-LEAU@FAA.GOV, at 405-954-3784 (unlisted), or fax 405-954-4989.

EPIC Form 411 10/2009

LAW ENFORCEMENT SENSITIVE