



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

May 20, 2026

Brad Norman
452 FLTS, Bldg 1609
Edwards AFB, CA 93524

Re: Operational Coordination Document for NATO RQ-4 flight tests from Palmdale, CA.

Dear Mr. Norman:

Attached is the accepted Operational Coordination Document for Italian Military registered RQ-4 Global Hawk operated on behalf of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for operational test flights to and from Palmdale, CA. Please refer to this document as 2026-WSA-00101 when referencing this coordination.

This information will be forwarded to the State Department, Mr. Rodney Bethea, to facilitate your diplomatic clearance approval.

Sincerely,

Tactical Operations Manager
FAA Western Service Area

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A. COORDINATED OPERATIONS: Operation of RQ-4 unmanned aircraft system (UAS) in Class D, E and A airspace from the surface to Flight Level (FL) 600 in the defined operations areas as shown in Attachments 1 and 2, under the jurisdiction of Palmdale Air Traffic Control Tower (KPMD), Joshua Control Facility (JCF) and Oakland Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZOA). See Air Traffic Control (ATC) Provisions/Procedures (Section G.).

B. General.

1. UAS operations must be conducted in compliance with Title 14 CFR § 91 and the procedures contained herein.
2. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Italian Military shall be referred to in this document as the “proponent”.
3. This Operational Coordination Document (OCD) does not waive any Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations not specifically stated, nor any state law or local ordinance. Should the proposed operation conflict with any state law or local ordinance, or require permission of local authorities or property owners, it is the responsibility of the proponent to resolve the matter. The proponent shall operate the UAS(s) in the NAS within the areas defined in the coordinated operations section. Additionally, the proponent is responsible for obtaining a Diplomatic Clearance from the U.S. Department of State prior to conducting operations associated with this document.
4. This OCD provides an alternate means of compliance with 14 CFR § 91.113(b) for unmanned aircraft operations using visual observers in accordance with Section C.
5. This OCD may be canceled at any time by the FAA Administrator, the person authorized to grant the authorization, or the representative designated to monitor a specific operation. As a general rule, this document may be canceled when it is no longer required, there is an abuse of its provisions, or unforeseen safety factors develop. Failure to comply with the OCD is cause for cancellation. In such an event, the proponent will receive written notice of cancellation.
6. Frequency spectrum approval is independent of this authorization, and requires the operator or delegated representative to obtain certification and frequency assignments (licenses) from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (47 CFR Part 300) or the Federal Communications Commission (47 CFR Part 2, Subpart J, and 47 CFR Part 87, Subpart D) and frequency licenses (47 CFR Part 87) when applicable for the control link, ATC radios, transponders, detect and avoid systems, and navigation systems used to support this coordination. Equipment licensed under 47 CFR Part 5 (Experimental) or 47 CFR Part 15 (Radio Frequency Devices) does not provide the protection necessary for NAS operations.

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C. Operations

1. A maximum of one UA will be controlled:
 - a. From a single control station; and
 - b. By one pilot at a time.
2. Airborne Collision Avoidance System (ACAS)/Traffic Alert and Collision Avoidance System (TCAS) may be operated in the Traffic Advisory Only (TA-ONLY) mode for increased situational awareness for an operator. An ACAS/TCAS mode that provides Resolution Advisories (RA) may only be used as part of an approved DAA system, such as a Class 2 DAA system under FAA Technical Standard Order (TSO) C211. In any mode, operating ACAS/TCAS does not, by itself, provide relief from 14 CFR § 91.113.

D. Safety of Flight.

1. The proponent or delegated representative is responsible for halting or canceling activity in the area if, at any time, the safety of persons or property on the ground or in the air is in jeopardy, or if there is a failure to comply with the terms or conditions of this OCD.
2. Any crew member responsible for performing see-and-avoid requirements for the unmanned aircraft (UA) must have and maintain instantaneous communication with the PIC.
3. Visual observers must be used at all times except in Class A airspace, active restricted areas, and warning areas designated for aviation activities, or as authorized in the special provisions. Observers may either be ground-based or airborne in a chase plane.
 - a. Visual Observers:
 - (1) Must be able to communicate distinctly to the pilot any instructions required to remain clear of conflicting traffic, using standard phraseology as listed in the Aeronautical Information Manual when practicable.
 - (2) The PIC is responsible to ensure visual observers are able to see the aircraft and the surrounding airspace throughout the entire flight.
 - (3) The PIC is responsible to ensure visual observers are able to provide the PIC with the UA's flight path, and proximity to all aviation activities and other hazards (e.g., terrain, weather, structures) sufficiently to exercise effective control of the UA to:
 - Comply with 14 CFR § 91.111, § 91.113, and § 91.115;
 - Prevent the UA from creating a collision hazard; and
 - Comply with all conditions of this OCD.
 - b. Chase Aircraft:

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- (1) If the chase aircraft is operating more than 1 mile laterally or longitudinally and/or more than 100 feet vertically of the UA, the chase aircraft PIC will advise the controlling ATC facility.
- (2) Must remain at a safe distance from the UA to ensure collision avoidance if a malfunction occurs.
- (3) Must remain close enough to the UA to provide visual detection of any conflicting aircraft and advise the PIC of the situation.
- (4) Must remain within radio control range of the UA to maintain appropriate signal coverage for flight control or activation of the flight termination system, for all operations when the UA is being flown by a pilot in the chase aircraft.
- (5) May be required to have communication with appropriate ATC facilities based on the operator's application or mission profile.
- (6) Must maintain five statute miles in-flight visibility restrictions.
- (7) Pilot/observer:
 - Will not concurrently perform either observer or UAS pilot duties along with chase pilot duties unless otherwise authorized.
 - Must maintain direct voice communication with the UAS pilot.
- (8) Pilots operating as a formation flight will immediately notify ATC if they are using a nonstandard formation.
- (9) Operations will not be conducted in instrument meteorological conditions (IMC).
- (10) Operations will be thoroughly planned and briefed.
- (11) During a lost link situation, the pilot must be notified immediately along with ATC. The chase pilot will report to ATC that the UA is performing lost link procedures as planned or if deviations are occurring.
- (12) Pilot will ensure safe separation with the UA and immediately notify ATC and the UA PIC during loss of visual contact with the UA by both the chase pilot and observer, when such contact cannot be promptly reestablished. The UA PIC will either execute lost link procedures to facilitate a rejoin, recover the UA, or terminate the flight as appropriate.

E. Notice to Airmen (NOTAM)

1. A Distant (D) NOTAM must be issued 24 to 72 hours prior to conducting routine UAS operations. This requirement may be accomplished via:
 - a. The proponent's local base operations or (D) NOTAM issuing authority; or
 - b. Contacting the NOTAM Flight Service Station at 1-877-4-US-NTMS (1-877-487-6867). The issuing agency will require:
 - (1) Location, altitude, and/or operating area.

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- (2) Time and nature of the activity.
- (3) The proponent must cancel (D) NOTAMs when UAS operations are completed or will not be conducted.

F. Special Use Airspace.

- 1. Coordination and de-confliction of military training routes (MTR) and special use airspace (SUA) is the proponent's responsibility. When identifying an operational flight, the proponent must evaluate whether an MTR or SUA will be affected. Advanced coordination and approval from the appropriate scheduling agency is required for flight into or through a restricted area, air traffic control assigned airspaces (ATCAA), and warning areas, but not for MTRs. The proponent must exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant when operating in or around MTRs or SUAs that do not require approval/coordination.

G. Air Traffic Control Provisions/Procedures.

1. Coordination Requirements.

- a. Proponent must submit completed Global Hawk Facility Coordination Checklist (see attachment 3) as soon as possible, but no later than one (1) business day prior to the planned commencement of operations to all air traffic facilities where UAS flight will occur.
- b. Any subsequent delay of greater than two hours, rescheduling or cancellation of the flights must also be coordinated via telephone to affected ATC facilities.
- c. If delay exceeds two hours of proposed departure time, the facilities may require resubmitting mission plan with one business day notice requirement.
- d. If the mission is cancelled email all affected ATC facilities within two hours of cancellation time.
- e. Special Use Airspace (SUA), Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAA) and Warning Area coordination must be accomplished by the proponent with the appropriate using (scheduling) agency. Air Traffic **will not** coordinate for use of Special Use Airspace, Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace or Warning Areas.
- f. ATC will not obtain permission for transit or delays in SUA. Mission planning, filing into or through an SUA or ATCAA indicates to ATC that prior permission has been obtained by the proponent from the using agency.

2. Communication Requirements: UAS will have two-way radio communication with ATC.

3. Procedural Requirements:

- a. Routings shall be flown in accordance with the Attachments contained in this OCD.
- b. An IFR flight plan shall be filed a minimum of 2 hours prior to flight for all operations in Class A airspace.
- c. Routes of flight that transit R-2515 and/or R-2508 shall be flown in accordance with

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the procedures of a current LOP (if applicable) and R-2515 and/or R-2508 Handbook.

- d. If required by ATC, a signed Letter of Agreement or Procedure (LOA/LOP) between participating commands and affected ATC facilities must be in effect prior to operations approved under this OCD. The LOA/LOP may be more restrictive based on ATC requirements but cannot be less restrictive than the contents of this OCD.
- e. Altitudes shall be as assigned by ATC (excluding pre-programmed lost link altitudes).
- f. RQ-4 formation flights are not authorized.
- g. The UAS PIC must not accept an ATC clearance requiring the use of visual separation or visual approach.
- h. The UAS PIC should not request a deviation from the routings in this coordination document unless an emergency situation exists or a weather deviation is required. ATC may, at their discretion, change routings as necessary. Should such a route deviation be necessary, the UAS PIC must coordinate a new lost link plan for the portion of the amended route with ATC prior to receiving an amended ATC clearance.

H. Lost Link/Contingency Procedures.

1. Lost Link.

- a. In the event of lost link, the UAS PIC will immediately notify the appropriate ATC facility via telephone:
 - Palmdale Tower – 661-947-2461
 - Joshua Control Facility (JCF) - 661-277-3843
 - ZOA - 510-745-3334/3331
- b. Squawk Code 7400 (7600 if applicable) when the control link between the aircraft and the pilot is lost.
- c. Pre-programmed lost link procedures will avoid unexpected turn-around and/or altitude changes and shall provide sufficient time for the UAS PIC to communicate and coordinate with ATC.
- d. If link is restored, UAS PIC will advise ATC as soon as practicable.
- e. Proponent is responsible for coordinating lost link procedures for UAS operations within Restricted or Warning Area airspace with the scheduling/controlling agency. The UAS will not exit the restricted or warning area airspace until the link is re-established or coordination with ATC has occurred.
- f. Departure or arrival: UAS will fly the specific lost link procedure for the route being flown when the lost link occurs (see Attachment 1).
- g. Enroute (beyond defined departure/arrival areas): Enroute lost link routings applicable to this coordination document shall be flown in accordance with ATC pre-coordinated route lost link plan (see Attachment 2-2). The UAS PIC will coordinate

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directly with ATC via telephone of expected lost link routing and altitudes of the pre-programmed lost link profile. UAS shall remain at a coordinated altitude on the lost link route until reaching a pre-coordinated point where the arrival phase of lost link procedure begins.

2. **Lost Communication:** In the event direct voice radio communications between the UAS PIC and ATC are lost, the UAS PIC shall notify the affected ATC facility immediately. If the UAS PIC cannot establish two-way communication with ATC via radio or telephone, the UAS PIC set UAS transponder code to 7600. The UAS PIC must continue to attempt to contact ATC via direct voice radio or telephone.
3. **Emergency Condition:**
 - a. UAS PIC will notify affected ATC facility immediately, declare an emergency and advise of emergency condition.
 - b. UAS will squawk 7700. If the UAS is lost link and subsequently experiences an emergency, the squawk will change from 7600 to 7700.
 - c. Emergency condition and associated ATC clearances will be coordinated directly between UAS PIC and affected ATC facilities.
 - d. During an inflight emergency that requires a divert to an immediate landing, the UAS PIC will advise ATC of the emergency condition and requested emergency divert destination as soon as practicable.
 - e. List all possible emergency divert airports for the route to be flown in the RQ-4 ATC Facility Coordination Checklist located in the separately provided procedural instructions and coordination checklist document.
4. **Non-Emergency Divert:**
 - a. In the event of a planned non-emergency divert on an existing ATC pre-coordinated route, proponent will coordinate as soon as possible with all affected ATC facilities and SUA using/scheduling agencies (if applicable).
 - b. Amended ATC clearance will be required for any change in routing and/or altitude.
 - c. If applicable, list all non-emergency divert airports in the RQ-4 Coordination Checklist (see Attachment 3).
5. **Flight Termination:**
 - a. The Proponent has preplanned contingency plans in the event of the loss of a critical system, engine, and/or electrical failure. In the event of an emergency requiring flight termination, the UAS will squawk the code 7700, the UAS PIC must declare an emergency and advise ATC on the nature of the emergency and the Flight Termination location that will be used.
 - b. Proponent assumes all responsibility for flight termination.

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Attachment 1-1

Between Palmdale Airport (KPMD) and R-2508 Complex

Route must be flown with chase aircraft.

1. Altitudes:

- a. KPMD to/from R-2515/R-2508 Complex:
 - (1) Filed as an IFR flight - At or below 12,000 ft. MSL, with chase aircraft.
 - (2) Filed as a visual flight rules (VFR) flight - At or below 12,500 ft. MSL, with chase aircraft.

2. Flight Planning Requirements:

- a. For KPMD arrivals runway (RWY) 25, RWY 22 Dog Leg, and KPMD departures, proponent must ensure that during multiple unmanned aircraft operations, all lost link, emergency profiles, frequency spectrum, hours of operation, etc., are de-conflicted from other operators using/transiting the same operations area.
- b. Due to UAS flight plan programming limitations, the RQ-4 is unable to comply with ATC clearances at KPMD that require the issuance of the Obstacle Departure Procedure (ODP). Should such a clearance be issued by ATC, the UAS PIC will request to delay on the ground until such time as the RQ-4 can be cleared via filed routing that does not contain the ODP. Proponent should include in filed flight plan remarks "NO ODP".

3. Procedural Requirements:

- a. UAS operations must be conducted in accordance with all current Letters of Agreement/Procedure (LOA/LOP) and/or DoD airspace authorizations (if applicable).
- b. Departures and arrivals to/from KPMD, including night operations, shall be conducted using visual observers (ground based or chase aircraft).
- c. Arrivals and departures to/from KPMD will fly the routes depicted in attachment 1.
- d. Contact KPMD Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) prior to engine start on Ground 121.0 or 384.6 for VFR transponder beacon code.
- e. If KPMD ATCT is closed, contact Joshua Control Facility (JCF) at 661-277-3843 at least 15 minutes prior to departure to coordinate VFR flight and obtain a transponder beacon code for VFR flight following.
- f. Chase aircraft will inform KPMD ATCT or JCF of its intentions, UAS call sign and planned route to R-2515.
- g. Clearance for entry into R-2515 is required from SPORT or JCF prior to restricted area boundary. If clearance to enter not received, remain clear of restricted area.

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Attachment 1-2

Between Palmdale Airport (KPMD) and R-2508 Complex

Route must be flown with chase aircraft.

- 4. Lost Link:** Comply with paragraph H.1. Additionally:
- a. KPMD to R-2508 Complex - Continue on route VMC with chase aircraft, at last assigned ATC altitude, enter R-2508 Complex and recover UAS at KEDW.
 - b. R-2508 Complex to KPMD - Proceed VMC with chase aircraft via lost link routing to KPMD and land.

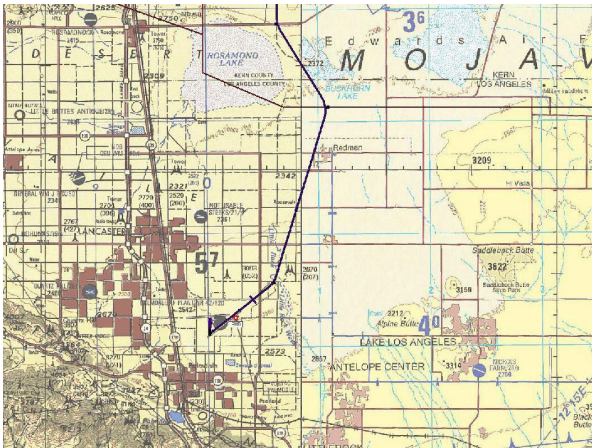
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Attachment 1-3

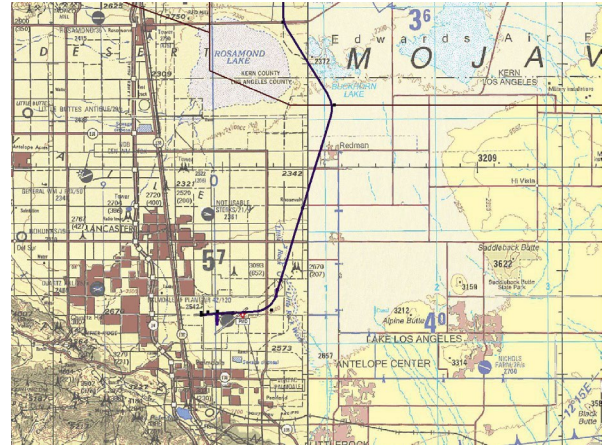
Between Palmdale Airport (KPMD) and R-2508 Complex
Routes must be flown with chase aircraft.

KPMD DEPARTURE ROUTES

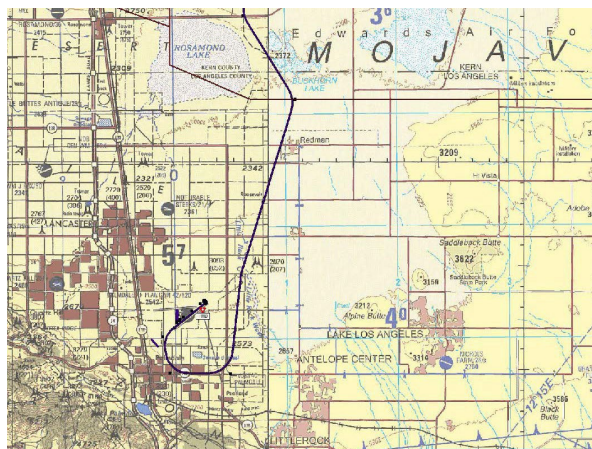
KPMD RWY 04 Departure



KPMD RWY 07 Departure



KPMD RWY 22 Departure



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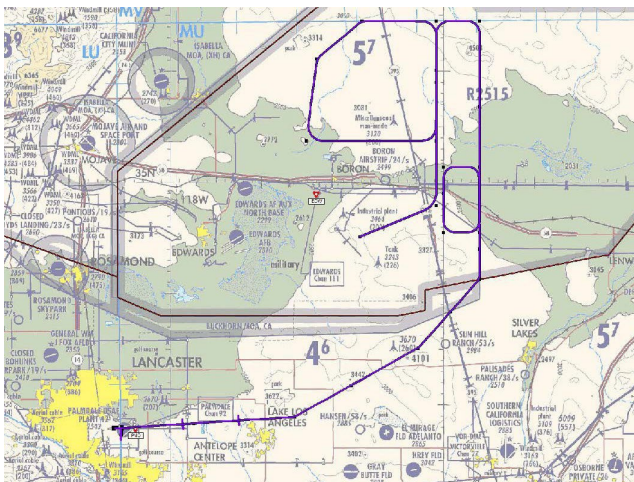
Attachment 1-4

Between Palmdale Airport (KPMD) and R-2508 Complex

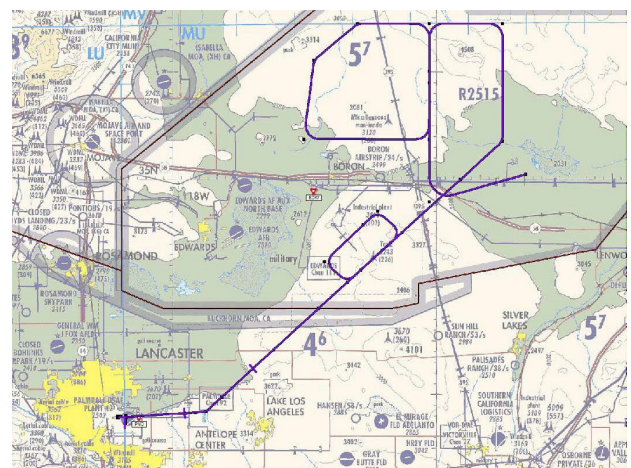
Routes must be flown with chase aircraft.

KPMD ARRIVAL ROUTES

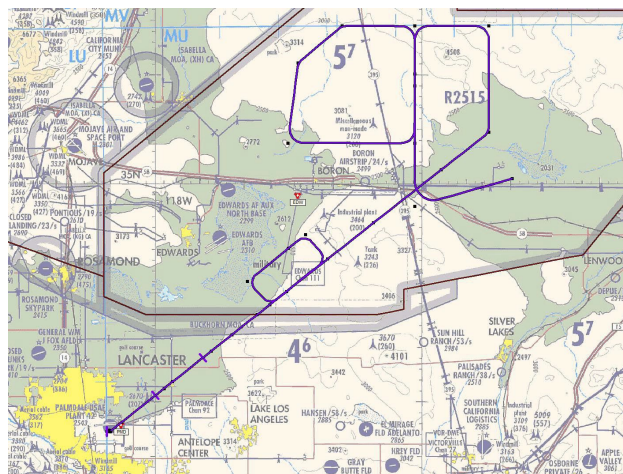
KPMD RWY 25 Arrival (Option 1, Straight In)



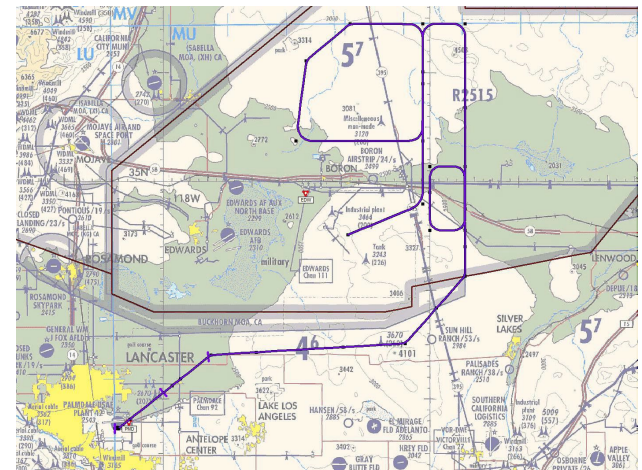
KPMD RWY 25 Arrival (Option 2, Kramer Jct.)



KPMD RWY 22 Arrival (Option 1, Straight In)



KPMD RWY 22 Arrival (Option 2, Kramer Jct.)



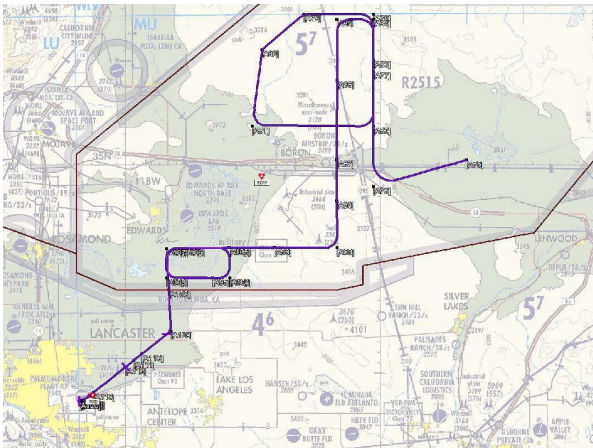
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Attachment 1-5

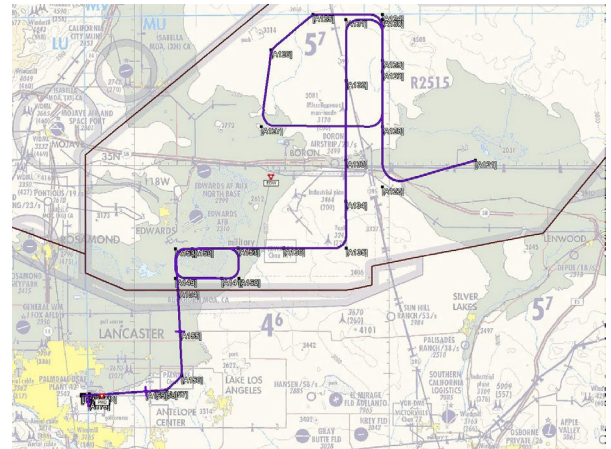
Between Palmdale Airport (KPMD) and R-2508 Complex
Routes must be flown with chase aircraft.

KPMD ARRIVAL ROUTES

KPMD RWY 22 Arrival (Night Operations)



KPMD RWY 25 Arrival (Night Operations)



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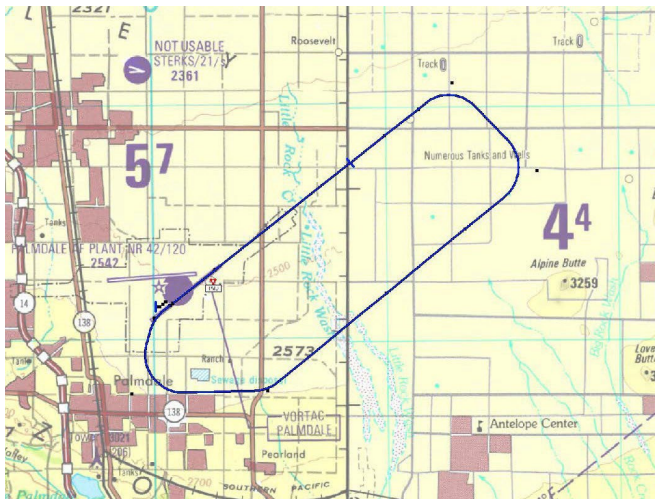
Attachment 1-6

Between Palmdale Airport (KPMD) and R-2508 Complex

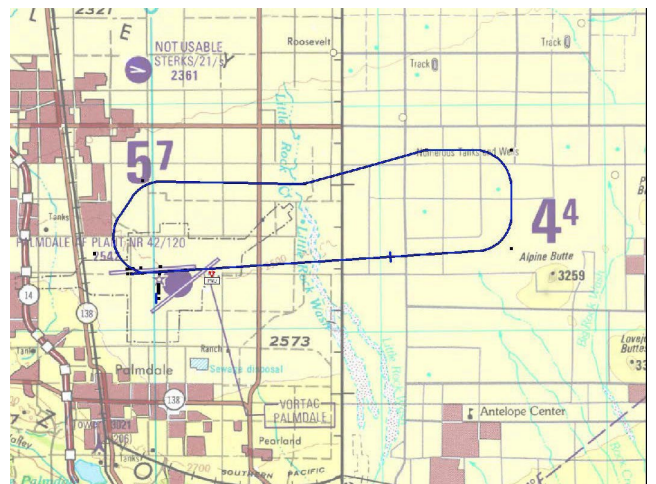
Routes must be flown with chase aircraft.

KPMD EMERGENCY DEPARTURE ROUTES

KPMD RWY 22 C4



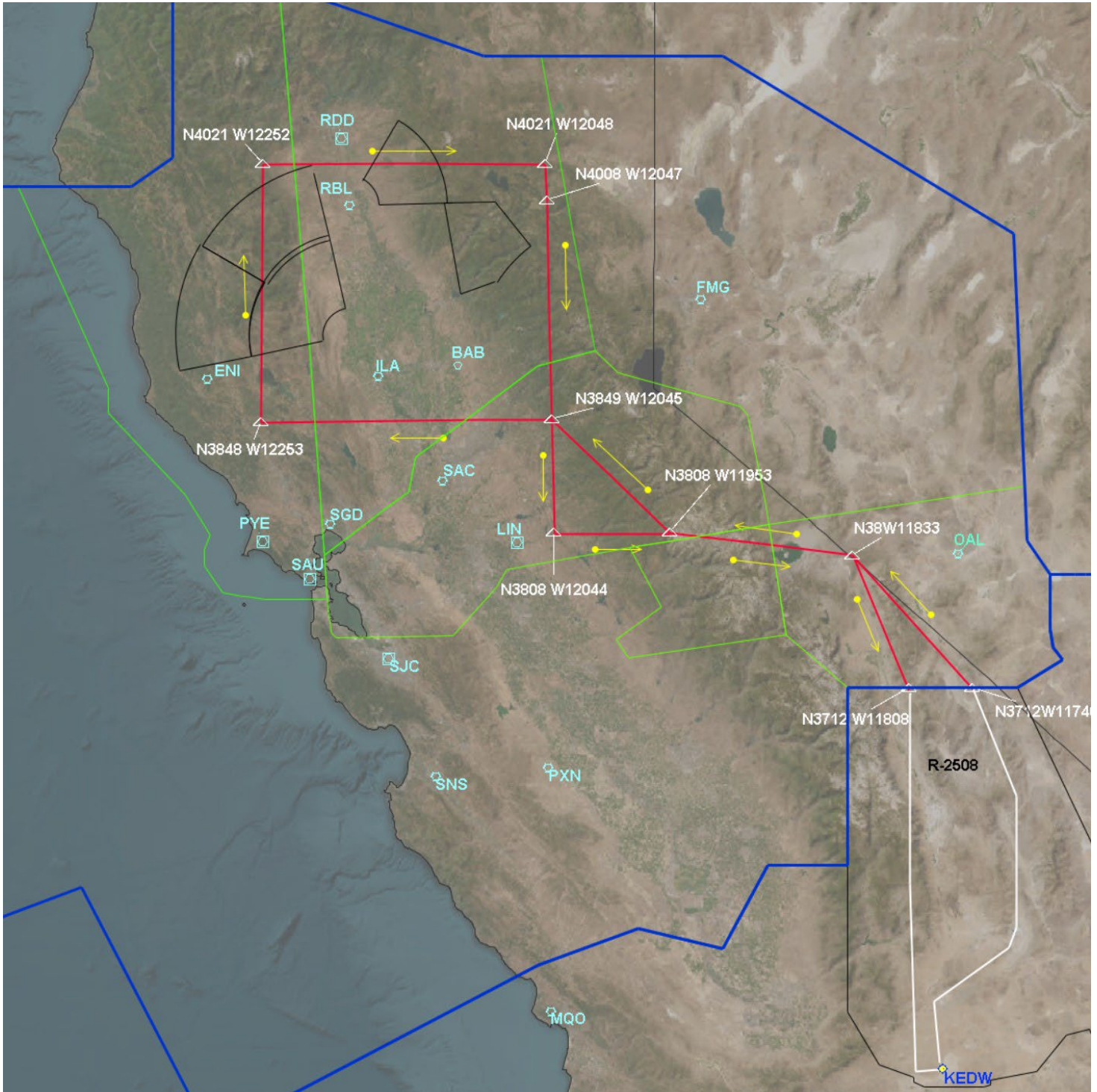
KPMD RWY 25 C4



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Attachment 2-1

AC14 Mode 5 Test Route



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Attachment 2-2

AC14 Mode 5 Test Route

ROUTE *

**Fixes listed in order to be flown see direction arrows in Attachment 2-1*

	FRD	LAT/LONG	REMARKS
1.	OAL157048	N3712/W11740	Egress R-2508
2.	OAL253037	N38/W11833	
3.	LIN069053	N3808/W11953	
4.	BAB104037	N3849/W12045	
5.	ENI113024	N3848/W12253	
6.	RBL280033	N4021/W12252	
7.	RBL059068	N4021/W12048	
8.	FMG289063	N4008/W12047	
9.	BAB104037	N3849/W12045	
10.	ENI113024	N3848/W12253	
11.	RBL280033	N4021/W12252	
12.	RBL059068	N4021/W12048	
13.	LIN057013	N3808/W12044	
14.	OAL253037	N38/W11833	
15.	OAL183051	N3712/W11808	Ingress R-2508

Attachment 2-2

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AC14 Mode 5 Test Route

1. **Altitudes:** RQ-4 will depart R-2508 at or **above FL500** and will operate in a block altitude between **FL500-FL590** as assigned by ATC.
2. **Lost Link procedures:** Comply with section H.1., Additionally:
 - a. If lost link occurs prior to exiting R-2508, RQ-4 will remain in R-2508 as coordinated with using agency and/or JCF and return to land at KEDW.
 - b. If lost link occurs after exiting R-2508, the RQ-4 will remain on the route at last assigned altitude, return to R-2508 and land at KEDW.

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Attachment 3-1

NATO RQ-4 Facility Coordination Checklist

1. Email checklist to ATC Facilities NLT **one** business day prior to mission departure time to:

- JCF : 9-AWP-JCF-MOS@faa.gov
- ZOA: 9-AWP-ZOA-MOS@faa.gov

2. **Submit with this checklist as attachments:**

- a. .PPT or .PDF file containing depiction of route of flight.
- b. Proposed flight plan which will be filed for the flight.

1. Mission Number:

2. Call Sign and Type:

3. Departure Airport:

4. Landing Airport :

5. Filed Altitude:

6. Telephone number contact information::

a. Primary MCE pilot:

b. Backup pilot in the MCE:

c. LRE pilot, if it will be manned for operations outside of restricted airspace:

d. Ops Desk (if appropriate):

e. Name and contact number of the individual submitting the coordination worksheet :

7. WX alternate/Mission Slippage - Date and time of flight: