



403rd Wing Public Affairs Media Weather Flight Request Form



Official members of the media may be permitted to fly during a storm mission. To request a flight please fill out this form and email from the media organization's email address with the information required in the email body (see below) to 403wg.pa2@us.af.mil. For questions or instructions on how to fill out the form, please call 228-377-2056 during normal office hours (8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Central time).

Media Outlet _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Publisher / Editor Name _____

Phone Number _____ Alternate _____

Email address _____ Today's Date _____

Type of Media Outlet: ___television ___newspaper/online paper ___radio

If other please specify: _____

Information required for storm flights in the email body:

- **The names and contact information of the reporters, photographers or videographers requesting to fly.**
 - **For security purposes, we will need a copy of their driver's license and their social security number.**
- **The product they plan to produce.**
- **The projected publication(s) or air times.**
- **If the product will be online, then please provide a link to the website on which it will be published, and any links to social media sites.**

Please be aware that any media outlets interested in flying an upcoming or active storm mission should contact PA immediately, as slots fill up quickly. All media must be cleared prior to flying with the U.S. Air Force Reserve 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron. Up to three media outlets may fly at a time, with a limit of two people per media outlet.

Storm missions are not pre-planned and are always a short-notice tasking; therefore, as the public affairs office is notified, media will be notified. This could occur with as little as 8 hour notice and as much as 16 to 18 hour notice. Some storms flown on the Pacific side may have up to 24 hour notice.

Important: If your media outlet is located outside of the United States, the approval process may take longer to process and reporter's visa and passport information is required as part of the approval process.

To film a training (non-storm) flight, please allow up to 30 days for coordination.

Please return only this form and the letter requested.

Please keep the following information for the outlet and provide to the media members for the flight.

The following information is important when flying into a storm mission.

Transportation Rules:

- Media must secure their own transportation to/from Keesler or other designated airbase.
- There is no guarantee a mission will land at the same base from which it departed. Often this is known ahead of time but is not always the case. If a mission lands at an alternate base, media must secure their own transportation from there.
- Media interested in flying missions outside the Continental U.S. must coordinate with PA to secure special permission from the foreign desk in Washington.

Liability:

- Despite a good safety record, all mission passengers must sign a standard release form prior to boarding the flight.
- Flying through thunderstorms sometimes involves severe turbulence, hail and lightning, but not always.

Medical:

- Media and other passengers with head colds should not fly missions due to the danger of an ear or sinus block.
- Epileptics have suffered seizures in flight.
- All media should consult a physician if any medical concerns exist.
- Medication, to include aspirin, decongestants and airsickness pills, are not stocked on flights. Those in need of medication should carry their own.
- Most passengers do not suffer airsickness, but if anyone flying as a passenger should speak with a crewmember immediately if they feel sick. While airsickness bags are passed out at the beginning of each flight, they are not expected always to be used.

Hydration:

- Dehydration is a serious concern in the hot/humid climates in which missions are flown, and is compounded by dry air inflight.
- Passengers should not consume alcohol and restrict coffee or sugar-laden drinks prior to and during flight.

Food:

- A light meal is recommended prior to flight – stomachs with food generally are more stable during flight.
- Passengers should bring their own meals for the 10-12 hour flight.
- Coffee and water is available. There is no refrigeration on board, so all food should be non-perishable or in a portable cooler with ice or ice packs.

Clothes:

- Passengers should wear comfortable clothes to include flat, closed-toe shoes or boots.
- Sunglasses for viewing the storm out of the windows for day time flights.
- Dress in layers and bring a jacket because it can get very cold at high-altitude.
- Bring enough funds, personal items, professional equipment to be self-sufficient for several days.
- A pillow for a nap.

Please keep the following information for the outlet and provide to the media members for the flight.

Special consideration for Winter Storm flights:

- Think cold, not tropical, when dressing for a winter storm flight.
- Long pants and consider some long underwear. It is -50F up at altitude. The aircraft is not always well insulated, especially near the floor.
- Dress in layers, and pay attention to your feet. There are parts of the airplane that are colder than others, but be prepared to spend some time in a colder section.

Arrival Instructions:

- Arrive a minimum two hours prior to takeoff; earlier to record the mission briefing
- Arrival location and time will sent to media during coordination.
- For travel planning, the nearest airports are:
[Gulfport-Biloxi Regional](#) (30 min)
[New Orleans, LA](#) (90 min)
[Mobile, AL](#) (1 hr)

DRIVING DIRECTIONS FROM I-10:

- From I-10 turn onto I-110 South.
- From I-110 South approximately 3.0 miles (Only two exits will be at the end of bridge) take the left exit that will take you to US-90 West.
- From US-90 West approximately 1.5 miles (Second red light) take a right on White Avenue.
- Stay on White Avenue until you reach Keesler's main gate, where you will be met by a PA escort.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS FROM Gulfport/Biloxi AIRPORT:

- Turn left onto Airport Road.
- Turn right onto US-49 North.
- From US-49 approximately 0.6 miles merge onto I-10 east toward BILOXI/ MOBILE.
- From I-10 approximately 12 miles turn onto I-110 South.
- From I-110 South approximately 3.0 miles take a right on US- 90 West.
- From US-90 West approximately 1.5 miles (Second red light) take a right on White Avenue.
- Stay on White Avenue until you reach Keesler's main gate, where you will be met by a PA escort.

Media Escort:

- **A 403rd Wing PA escort is required for all media flights.**
- An escort will meet you at the White Avenue gate and take you to the 53rd WRS building (this may not always be the escort who will be assigned to fly the storm mission).
- The media escort will arrange time to visit the flight deck (turns may be taken), coordinate crew members to answer questions, and be a go-between.
- Most escorts have experienced several hurricane flights and will be available to answer questions when the crew is busy.

Please keep the following information for the outlet and provide to the media members for the flight.

CAVEAT:

- **Hurricane Hunter crew cannot make forecasts or predictions as to storm behavior.**
- Hurricane specialists at the National Hurricane Center use 53rd WRS weather data, in addition to numerous other sources and complex computer models, to make those forecasts. No single flight provides the breadth of understanding of any given storm to extrapolate future behavior. Storms fluctuate in strength and sometimes wobble in their paths. Those NHC experts use HH feedback to make storm predictions and inform decision makers. Refer to their reports for projections.

Live Feeds:

- While not recommended, live, audio-only satellite phone interviews may be possible inflight, though timing must be flexible. Media may schedule several potential windows of time as patches may not be possible due to crew requirements at any given time during the mission, poor atmospheric conditions, heavy rains or other air traffic.
- Also, interviews must be short due to other aircraft needing to use them.
- Sound quality can be poor due to atmospheric conditions.

Equipment considerations:

- Bring plenty of spare batteries. We do not have a power source to recharge on the aircraft.
- If recording sound, consider two small remote (peanut or lapel) microphones which can be placed inside your headset (which will be provided by PA) and the headset of the crew member (to hear your questions if needed). It's about 110 decibels inside the plane, and the headset is about the only way to be heard and understood. A hand-held microphone works well for you to provide commentary without interrupting the crew. A camera-mounted microphone doesn't work as well as a hand-held microphone.
- If you're lucky enough to fly into a well-formed hurricane eye, (most do not show the "stadium effect"), a wide-angle lens works well. Some excellent video has been taken with an action camera up against a window (with a suction cup).
- Some polarizing lenses pick up interference from our windows, so look out for the "rainbows".
- Radio-transmitting (wireless) microphone systems have been known to fail inflight, possibly due to interference with aircraft radios. We suggest using or at least bringing cables.
- **Please be aware that if any of your equipment interferes with the aircraft's electronic systems, you'll be advised to stop operation.**

Pool Footage

- In the past, media organizations have arranged to gain footage shot by other media organizations inflight. This must be coordinated between agencies.
- PA does not maintain public domain footage, though it may provide a list of previous media organizations who have flown HH missions who might be willing to share.
- B-roll footage of previous storms, or possibly even the current storm, may be available on DVIDs (www.dvidshub.net) and can be downloaded for use (this is not guaranteed).

The Finished Product

- Please provide a copy of any article or audio or video product for archival purposes.