

California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection



DC-10 Airtanker - Tanker 910

AIRCRAFT

- A DC-10 airliner modified for aerial firefighting
- King Air E-90 as a lead plane

CREW

- Two pilots and a flight engineer in the DC-10
- One lead plane pilot and an Air Tactical Group Supervisor in the King Air

EXTERNAL TANKS

Three separate external tanks mounted along the centerline which can hold 50 tons of water or retardant and are balanced with baffles to prevent shifting while in flight. The tanks' ground clearance is approximately 15 inches above the tarmac. The tanks can be re-filled concurrently on the ramp in eight minutes.



DROP CAPABILITIES

Tanker 910 can dump as much as 12,000 U.S. gallons of retardant in as little as eight seconds. Tanker 910 uses the computerized gravity-feed water dump system that is essentially a modified and scaled-up version of the system used by Erickson Air-Crane on its S64 helicopter. The drop rate, controlled from the cockpit, is governed by the opening of the tank doors.

APPLICATIONS

Tanker 910 does not have the maneuverability of the CAL FIRE S2T tankers but is more suitable for larger-scale drops. The S2T tanker holds 1,200 gallons of water or retardant and is better suited for tighter surgical drops.

CERTIFICATION

Tanker 910 and the pilots are certified or "carded" by the CAL FIRE Aviation Management Unit. Tanker 910 is certified by the FAA and meets the same maintenance standards as passenger-carrying planes of the identical size.



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TACTICAL APPLICATION

Tanker 910 will be a valued asset to Cal Fire's aerial firefighting capabilities. It will be used to lay down long, wide and uninterrupted retardant lines on large fires in California. It will work in conjunction with a designated lead plane. Later in the season the use of gel in a direct attack mode will be explored.

DEVELOPMENT

The DC-10 is a former passenger jet that carried 285 passengers for American Airlines and later held as many as 380 passengers for charter flights flown by Omni Air International to Hawaii.

DEPLOYMENT

Tanker 910 demonstrated its firefighting capabilities in late March of 2006 at Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville, California. Later in the summer of 2006 the DC-10 was activated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection as a Call-When-Needed air tanker and flew six fires in California and one in the state of Washington. The cost to contract for the DC 10 in 2006 was \$26,500 per hour with a three-hour minimum per day.

