

C-130H AIRTANKER

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION

AVIATION PROGRAM



MANUFACTURER

Lockheed Martin, Marietta Georgia.

ORIGINAL OWNER

United States Coast Guard, 1985-present (USCG HC-130H).

ACQUIRED BY CAL FIRE

In July 2018, California secured approval to acquire seven C-130H aircraft for CAL FIRE. This addition to the firefighting fleet was solidified in December 2023 with the passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) by Congress. Signed into law by President Biden later that month, the NDAA authorized the transfer of these C-130Hs from the United States Coast Guard to California.

Since 2018 the United States Air Force and the United States Coast Guard played a pivotal role in maintaining the aircraft including the replacement of the inner and outer wing boxes paint, and providing spare provisions to ensure the aircraft will remain in service.

MISSION

The C-130H's are used for rapid initial attack delivery of fire retardant on wildland fires. These airtankers are strategically located throughout California. The first C-130H was put into service at McClellan Airtanker Base on Monday, August 26, 2024.

CREW

Three-person crew; pilot, co-pilot, and flight engineer

PAYLOAD

4,000 gallons long-term fire retardant

SPECIFICATIONS

Gross Weight: 155,000 pounds

Max. Operating Speed: 368 mph

Range: Loaded: 800 miles/
Empty: 3,000 miles

Endurance: 8 hours

Wing Span: 133 feet

Engines: Four Allison T56-A-15 turboprops;
producing 4,300 horsepower each



June 2025