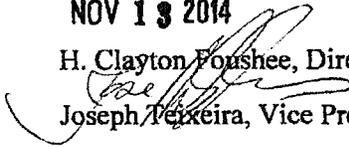




# Federal Aviation Administration

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## Memorandum

Date: NOV 13 2014  
To: H. Clayton Foushee, Director, Audit and Evaluations, AAE-1  
From:  Joseph Teixeira, Vice President for Safety and Technical Training, AJI-0  
Subject: Update to Corrective Action Plan on Office of Special Counsel Case No. DI-13-4206, 14-0359, 14-0492, and 14-1590 regarding Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport Flight Plans and Staffing Referral dated March 11, 2014

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This memorandum provides a status update to the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) outlined in our April 17, 2014, Report of Investigation (ROI) in response to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel case numbers DI-13-4206, 14-0359, 14-0461, 14-0492, and 14-1590 regarding Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport (DTW) Flight Plans and Staffing Referral, as well as the July 2014 and October 2014 updates.

**Allegation:** "FAA management has failed to properly address frequent and systemic problems with computer based systems designed to automate the filing and amending of flight plans and delivery of departure clearances."

**Update:** The Air Traffic Organization (ATO) concurred with the findings of the report and affirms its commitment to mitigating this safety issue. Because of the time required to validate and complete the full range of corrective actions, we are providing additional information in this update.

As detailed in our previous updates, the ATO convened a task force and Safety Risk Management (SRM) Panel to evaluate the risk associated with multiple flight plans for the same flights and to develop corrective actions in accordance with our Safety Management System process. Our internal pre-decisional document, which was not intended to be construed as Agency policy, included an unfortunate description of the issue by one of our staff members. The ATO considers all safety risk to be serious and continues to address this safety issue in a comprehensive manner. Due to the time required to validate and complete the full range of corrective actions we are adding further information in this update.

An important factor in resolving this safety issue is to identify the causes of the systemic problems identified and to mitigate them. Before revisions are made however, the ATO must

confirm that the changes do not introduce additional risk into the system. This includes a robust review of pertinent data and proposed mitigations to determine their impact on the FAA and other stakeholders, including those entities that file flight plans. The following is an updated list of the actions we are taking and the status of each item:

1. Coordinate the SRM Document (SRMD) that describes risk analysis and hazard mitigations to include documentation of some of the actions described below. Because the June 2014 SRM Panel did not attract an adequate cross-section of industry representatives and because additional industry input was not provided until October 2014, subsequent analyses are now needed. Consequently, timelines for the SRMD have been adjusted to allow time to address industry input. **Status:** In Progress—Signed SRMD expected by December 31, 2014.
2. Meet with a wider range of industry representatives who were not able to participate in the June 17-19, 2014, SRM Panel to update them on the work of the panel, discuss issues, and collect feedback which may be used to improve the SRMD and associated mitigations. **Status:** Complete—Meetings with industry representatives occurred on October 7 and 8, 2014.
3. Describe potential changes and/or local adaptations to National Airspace System (NAS) automation systems. **Status:** In Progress—Revised draft expected by December 31, 2014.
4. Publish a short Information for Operators (InFO) advisory to alert operators about pertinent safety problems prior to the expected development in 2015 of an Advisory Circular (AC) that will provide detailed guidance on filing and changing flight plans. We learned that industry representatives were largely unaware of ramifications related to filing additional flight plans instead of amending the current flight plan or ensuring the current flight plan is canceled prior to submitting a revision. **Status:** In Progress—InFO expected to be published by December 31, 2014; AC expected to be developed by December 31, 2015.
5. Amend FAA publications (JO 7110.10, *Flight Services*; JO 7210.3, *Facility Operation and Administration*; and the Aeronautical Information Manual to describe automation, adaptation, and/or policy changes to include Air Traffic Control System Command Center, Air Route Traffic Control Center, and Flight Service Station procedures for handling flight plans and revisions and for how NAS operators will be alerted about changes to pertinent NAS automation time parameters. **Status:** In Progress—Drafts of these documents will be available by November 30, 2014; publication expected by December 10, 2015.
6. Develop a Quality Assurance (QA) Safety Monitoring Code Special Emphasis Item (SEI) for Multiple Flight Plans and a QA Safety Bulletin that alerts controllers and facility management to be more vigilant to detect and report situations in which multiple flight plans for the same flights may be in the NAS. **Status:** Complete—QA SEI code implemented in July 2014 and QA Safety Bulletin published on October 22, 2014.

7. Brief multiple flight plan safety concerns to facility local safety councils (LSCs) (comprised of National Air Traffic Controllers Association representatives, Air Traffic Managers, and Quality Control staff) as part of the Partnership for Safety (PFS) National Safety Awareness discussions during November. **Status:** In Progress—PFS discussions with facility LSCs were conducted on October 22 and 28, 2014; facility discussions will be completed by December 1, 2014.
8. Continue outreach efforts to educate and raise awareness of safety concerns for NAS operators via flight plan filers' telephone conferences (telcons) and National Customer Forums (NCFs). **Status:** Ongoing—These issues were discussed during the June 4, 2014 flight plan filers' telcon, the August 13, 2014 NCF meeting, and the October 7-8, 2014 meeting with FAA and industry representatives; this practice will continue as needed.

In light of additional industry inputs and to allow for NAS automation changes and/or local adaptations, our initial plan for an audit in 2014 must be adjusted. The ATO will conduct a baseline data assessment in the spring of 2015 and a full audit during calendar year 2015 to verify implementation and effectiveness of the mitigations included in the Corrective Action Plan.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Stephen Lloyd, Director for Safety, AJI-1, at 202-267-4645.

cc: Teri L. Bristol, Chief Operating Officer, AJO-0  
Joseph Teixeira, Vice President for Safety and Technical Training, AJI-0  
Terry Biggio, Vice President, Air Traffic Services, AJT-0  
Elizabeth Ray, Vice President, Mission Support Services, AJV-0  
Nancy Kalinowski, Vice President, System Operations Services, AJR-0  
James T. Eck, Acting Vice President, Program Management Organization, AJM-0

Attachment: ATO QA Safety Bulletin, Multiple Flight Plans



# Air Traffic Organization

## Quality Assurance Safety Bulletin

Vol. 1 Issue 5 - October 2014

### Multiple Flight Plans

Are multiple flight plans contributing to safety events when you are working? Since 2011, 84 ATSAP submitted reports indicated "duplicate flight plan" as possible contributors to risk.

Flight plan data analyses indicate hundreds of multiple flight plans for the same flights may exist in the NAS.

Reporting these events are an essential component to identifying occurrences in the NAS and directly relate to strategies that minimize the associated risk.

#### ATSAP Safety Event Narrative

##### Event #1- Synopsis:

- Aircraft was on departure and a sector called to hand off the aircraft because they were unable to initiate a handoff
- It appeared that there were duplicate flight plans on this aircraft, which prevented proper data tagging

##### Causal Factor:

- Changes made to flight plans within 30 minutes prior to propose departure time and a new flight plan is generated.
- Risk: If Controller is separating based on route of flight.

##### Event #2- Synopsis:

- Aircraft checked on at FL240 and host indicated that the plane was direct to a fix
- Aircraft was cleared direct the airport listed on the flight plan, which was not the same airport to which the pilot was navigating

##### Causal Factor:

- Duplicate flight plans were in the system and the incorrect plan was activated

**Examples of Multiple Flight Plan Strips**

LN43X E757/A T468 66 04	RKS 1418	14	33	170	DEN RKS IDA BOI	ZDV
LN43X E757/A T468 66 04	RKS 1418	14	33	170	DEN RKS PVU BOI	ZDV

**Legend:**

- ✈ = Destination Airport
- ✈ = Origin Airport
- ✈ = New Flight Plan
- ▲ = Waypoint
- = Original Flight Plan

**Why Your Reports Matter?**

- Tell us how we can improved multiple flight plan occurrences.
- Reports help identify trends and solutions to develop.
- Report multiple flight occurrences via ATSAP and MOR summary sections or contact a QA/QC specialist.

Please email responses to [9-AJI-HQ-QualityAssurance@faa.gov](mailto:9-AJI-HQ-QualityAssurance@faa.gov) or scan the QR Code below.

Produced by ATO Safety and Technical Training  
Quality Assurance Group in Partnership with NATCA and SUPCOM

Please visit our webpage: [my.faa.gov/qa/sb.htm](http://my.faa.gov/qa/sb.htm)

