

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System

Question: Who has access to the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System?

Response: The website for distributing candidate NOTAMs (notambackup.faa.gov) is available to the public. Only authorized FAA and contract personnel can create candidate NOTAMs that appear in the candidate NOTAM distribution website. Airport operators and other industry stakeholders who typically create NOTAMs would need to call Flight Service either in Alaska or continental U.S. during NOTAM contingency operations.

Question: What is the trigger or critical decision window for deciding whether to transition the primary NOTAM system to the disaster recovery site during an outage event?

Response: The trigger and critical decision window for determining whether to fail over to the disaster recovery site are based on an assessment of the recovery team's ability to restore the primary NOTAM system. If the time to recover the primary system and/or fail over to the standby systems at the primary location are not feasible within four hours from the time of critical assessment, then the decision to transition operations to the disaster recovery site will commence.

Question: How long will it take to deploy the initial informational website banner? How long will it take to activate the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System?

Response: Once the decision has been made to activate the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System, the initial website banner indicating that the primary NOTAM system is out of service will be active within 15 minutes. Users will be able to enter and retrieve candidate NOTAMs from the contingency system within one hour of the decision to activate. The amount of time required to decide whether to activate the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System is highly dependent on the exact nature of each individual outage event.

Question: Will the informational website banners be updated to indicate system status?

Response: Yes. The website banners will be updated at several points during contingency operations to indicate system status, including when the primary system has returned to service, when the reconciliation process has begun, and when the contingency system has been deactivated.

Question: Will the activation and use of the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System be alerted on the Operational Information System (OIS)/Advisories?

Response: Yes.

Question: How will international carriers and other air navigation service providers (ANSPs) be notified when the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System has been activated?

Response: The FAA's U.S. NOTAMs Office (USNOF) does not currently have a procedure to notify international carriers or ANSPs that the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System has

been activated. These stakeholders may register to receive notifications of NOTAM system service interruptions, including notifications of Candidate NOTAM Contingency System activation, by sending an email request to 7-AWA-NAIMES@faa.gov.

Question: Will Candidate NOTAM Contingency System users need to manually enter a NOTAM number when creating a new candidate NOTAM?

Response: The Candidate NOTAM Contingency System does not create official NOTAM numbers for newly created candidate NOTAMs. NOTAM numbers are created only by the primary NOTAM system (USNS/FNS) and are done so automatically. However, if a candidate NOTAM references an official NOTAM that was issued prior to the activation of the candidate NOTAM system, the candidate NOTAM will reference the number of that previously issued NOTAM. For instance, if a user needs to cancel a previously issued official NOTAM using a candidate NOTAM, they will reference the NOTAM number of the NOTAM that is being cancelled. In such a case, authorized users of the candidate NOTAM system would manually enter the NOTAM number of the NOTAM they are referencing so that it is visible to downstream users.

Question: Many NOTAM consumers rely heavily on NOTAM numbers. What will these stakeholders do when the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System is in use and NOTAM numbers are not available?

Response: The Candidate NOTAM Contingency System allows users to sort all candidate NOTAMs in the distribution website (notambackup.faa.gov) using any of the available data fields. The FAA is assessing the provision of an additional data field in the candidate NOTAM distribution website to improve how downstream users can track and account for individual candidate NOTAMs.

Question: Why is the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System designed to be used for only four hours?

Response: The four-hour time frame for using the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System is based on an engineering analysis of the amount of time that may be required to activate the disaster recovery site for the primary NOTAM system.

Question: How many candidate NOTAMs can be expected while the system is in use?

Response: NOTAM issuance rates vary widely depending on factors such as weather, time of day, location, and many others, making it very difficult to predict how many candidate NOTAMs may be entered into the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System during use. To mitigate the possibility of a large volume of candidate NOTAMs that would make it difficult for users to find relevant NOTAMs during contingency operations, a safety review panel recommended only issuing candidate NOTAMs for conditions that are in effect within an eight-hour window. That is, candidate NOTAMs will only be issued for conditions effective within eight hours of the moment of issuance.

Question: Does the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System provide textual output that can be pasted into other systems such as the Aircraft Communications, Reporting and Addressing System (ACARS) if a dispatcher needed to send a candidate NOTAM or multiple NOTAMs to an air crew that didn't have access to the site?

Response: Yes. Users can copy and paste data from each candidate NOTAM listed in the candidate NOTAM distribution website into another application such as ACARS.

Question: Will the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System limit the types of candidate NOTAMs that can be issued during contingency operations, such as for mowing or construction?

Response: No, there will not be restrictions on which types of NOTAMs can be entered into the candidate NOTAM system during contingency operations.

Question: Will the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System also have military NOTAMs?

Response: No, the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System is not connected to the Department of Defense's NOTAM system and will not display military NOTAMs.

Question: Can the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System identify and separate candidate NOTAMs based on the order they are entered?

Response: Yes, candidate NOTAMs can be sorted by issue date in the candidate NOTAM distribution website.

Question: Are there established best practices for submitting and validating candidate NOTAMs?

Response: There are no best practices specific to issuing candidate NOTAMs, but candidate NOTAM issuance will be restricted to FAA and contract personnel who have NOTAM experience and have been trained to use the candidate NOTAM system.

Question: Are there any concerns regarding staffing while the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System is active?

Response: All offices and groups that are authorized to issue candidate NOTAMs are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Each office and group can call in additional staff should circumstances require.

Question: Has the system been tested?

Response: Yes. Each group and office authorized to enter candidate NOTAMs during contingency operations has created their own tailored processes for using the candidate NOTAM system. The FAA also conducted a tabletop exercise to test these processes and procedures. The system itself is hosted in a government cloud environment capable of handling high traffic loads.

Question: What happens once the primary system is operational again? Will there be a significant lag time between the primary system coming back online and the reconciliation process being completed?

Response: As soon as the primary NOTAM system returns to service, the FAA will begin a process to manually reconcile the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System with the primary NOTAM system. During this process, specialists will transfer candidate NOTAMs into the primary NOTAM system using the appropriate NOTAM origination application. Once the reconciliation process is complete, an information banner will be displayed on the candidate NOTAM distribution website directing users back to the primary system. The duration of the reconciliation process will depend on the number of candidate NOTAMs in the system, the rate of issuance of new NOTAMs, and the number of specialists on duty.

Question: Will there be any anticipated data loss during the reconciliation process?

Response: The likelihood of data loss during the reconciliation process is low. Each team and office authorized to issue candidate NOTAMs has developed processes for reconciling the candidate NOTAMs they issue. The U.S. NOTAM Office (USNOF) in the FAA Air Traffic Control System Command Center has an additional process for verifying that each group and office has completed reconciliation. Should the contingency system ever be activated, the FAA has also developed a plan to monitor data loss during the reconciliation process.

Question: Will candidate NOTAMs disappear as they are reconciled back into the primary NOTAM system?

Response: No, they will not disappear, so as to prevent any data loss due to system latency. Once all candidate NOTAMs have been reconciled, an informational banner will be deployed to the candidate NOTAM distribution website directing users back to the primary NOTAM system.

Question: Where can I view a timeline of the contingency scenario?

Response: A notional timeline illustrating the agency's approach to deploying the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System and recovering the primary NOTAM system can be found in a copy of the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System Overview briefing at https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/notams/.

Question: Would the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System have been a viable option during the NOTAM outage event in January 2023?

Response: The Candidate NOTAM Contingency System was originally designed to address a system outage akin to the May 2021 outage event, in which extreme weather rendered the primary NOTAM system site completely unavailable. In the future, any decision on whether to activate the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System will be made based on the specific characteristics of an outage event.

Question: Are there any plans to develop any additional capabilities for the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System?

Response: No, there are no plans at this time for developing additional capabilities.

Question: What is the target date for launching the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System?

Response: The FAA anticipates declaring the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System ready for use in Summer 2023.

Question: Where can I find a copy of this presentation?

Response: A copy of this presentation can be found on the Aeronautical Information Services website at https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/flight_info/aeronav/notams/.

Question: Where should I go if I have more questions?

Response: If you have additional questions about the Candidate NOTAM Contingency System, please submit them via FAA's Aeronautical Inquiries Portal at <https://nfdc.faa.gov/nfdcApps/controllers/PublicSecurity/nfdcLogin>.