



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Advisory Circular

Subject: Operating Procedures for Airport Traffic Control Towers (ATCT) that are not Operated by, or Under Contract with, the United States (Non-Federal)

Date: April 22, 2013

AC No: 90-93B

Initiated by: AJT-0 Terminal Operations, Headquarters

1. PURPOSE.

This advisory circular (AC) recommends publications, administrative, and operational procedures that will assist in the management of a non-Federal ATCT (NFCT).

2. CANCELLATION.

AC 90-93A, Operating Procedures for Airport Traffic Control Towers (ATCT) that are not operated by, or under contract with, the United States (Non-Federal), dated November 15, 1999, is cancelled.

3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This AC is effective April 22, 2013.

4. REFERENCES.

The following references contain information applicable to NFCT operations.

- Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR), Volume 1, 2, and 3.
- Aeronautical Information Manual (AIM).

5. EXPLANATION OF CHANGES.

This AC has been revised to update current directives and publications.

6. PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT REQUIREMENTS.

The intent of the AC and this reporting and recordkeeping activity is to maintain a high level of air safety without regulating certain entities that previously were not regulated. The FAA is requesting operators of NFCTs to voluntarily comply with the regulations as stated in this AC, as well as to voluntarily submit information by using the listed forms as do FAA Air Traffic personnel. Collection of this information is voluntary, and the promise of confidentiality is not necessary. The reporting burden is estimated to be 3.5 hours annually per respondent, and the recordkeeping burden is estimated to be 33 hours annually per respondent. Note that an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number assigned to this reporting and recordkeeping burden is 2120-0572.

7. DEFINITIONS.

• **Administrator** – The Federal Aviation Administrator or any person to whom the Administrator has delegated authority in the matter concerned.

- **Non-Federal Control Tower (NFCT)** – An air traffic control tower that is not staffed by FAA or FAA Contracted controllers. An NFCT is not associated with the FAA Contract Tower Program or funded by the FAA.
- **NFCT Air Traffic Manager (ATM)** – A person who is responsible for the day-to-day operations at an NFCT location (the equivalent to an FAA Air Traffic Manager)
- **Directive** – Any order, notice, change, or supplement used by the FAA or ATM to specify policies, guidance, or procedures dealing with ATC operations, training, equipment, and management of an ATCT
- **Director of Terminal Operations** – A person (or designee) responsible for the delivery of terminal services to the customer and implementing new technology to support all terminal operations within a geographic location. Responsibilities to manage daily and future terminal capabilities, financial management associated with providing the service, information delivery to decision makers, liaison to customers, airports (ARP), Region Center Operations (ARC), overall Terminal Services that include real-time terminal operations measures and terminal organizational performance metrics
- **Director of Technical Operations** – A person (or designee) responsible for the delivery of maintenance services of the National Airspace System (NAS) facilities and providing communication and navigation services to support FAA's line service areas within an FAA geographic area. Responsible for overall navigation services including procurement, charting procedures, and flight inspection in support of the NAS
- **Service Delivery Point (SDP)** – The agency, organization, or company responsible for providing ATC services at a control tower

8. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE.

- In the interest of promoting aviation safety, the FAA, through its AC's and other publications, disseminates good operating practices, policy, guidelines, and procedures to assist in the management of services provided to users of the NAS. An example of these policy publications is the 14 CFR that specify minimum standards for proficiency, conduct, experience, skills, and ratings
- Specifically, Part 65 of 14 CFR details requirements for issuing certificates and associated ratings and general operating rules for airmen other than flight crew members. Additionally, the FAA has internal directives detailing the methodology used by Federal facilities (FAA-contract ATCTs) and Department of Defense (DOD) facilities to establish and manage ATCTs, certify FAA employees as control tower operators, maintain controller proficiency, and determine the quality of services provided
- However, there are facilities that do not fall under the realm of the Federal Government. These private entities have contracts with state and local governments to provide ATC services. These ATCTs are called non-Federal ATCTs. No Federal statutes or regulations prescribe uniform or consistent procedures and criteria for the establishment and management of these ATCTs. The procedures recommended herein are designed for these NFCT owners, vendors, and ATMs
- The FAA believes that voluntary observance of the recommended procedures detailed in this AC will improve the services and aid those NFCT owners, vendors, operators, and facility managers in maintaining the high level of safety achieved by Federally-operated ATC facilities in the NAS

9. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NFCT ATM.

The FAA recommends that the NFCT ATM endeavor to fulfill the following responsibilities

- Maintain familiarity with the positions, equipment, and duties required to operate an ATCT

- Ensure operational continuity during the transfer of position responsibility.
- Issue pertinent weather and airport information via SIGMETs, AIRMETs, PIREPS, and NOTAMs, etc.
- Maintain training records for each ATC specialist in the facility.
- Ensure that ATC services are provided in a safe, orderly, and efficient manner.
- Ensure that each ATC specialist in the NFCT manager's employ is properly qualified and current in the application of ATC services.
- Maintain a comprehensive pilot education program that includes pilot/controller forums to discuss/clarify local procedures and airspace matters.
- Ensure that voice recorders and other essential equipment are checked for suitable operation at the beginning of each shift.
- Ensure that, excluding tapes containing information pertaining to accidents/incidents, voice recorder tapes are retained for a minimum of 45 days. Tapes pertinent to accidents and incidents should be retained as detailed in FAA Order 8020.16, Chapter 7, Paragraph 101.
- Ensure a daily record of air traffic operations log is maintained in the operational quarters.

10. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS AND HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS.

- To ensure that emergency operations (for example accidents/incidents) data are documented, it is essential for NFCT ATMs to record and report all accidents/incidents in the same manner as would FAA-operated ATCTs (in accordance with FAA Order 8020.16 and 8020.11). The purpose of such reports and records is to provide essential information for follow-up investigations and help in the development of new procedures and regulations.
- The NFCT ATM, or a designated representative, upon becoming aware of conditions that are hazardous to a safe operation should immediately notify airport management to restrict or suspend operations as necessary until the necessary corrections are made.

11. OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL STANDARDS.

- Using the FAA handbooks, manuals, and directives listed in this AC as a guide, the NFCT vendor/ATM should develop a series of directives on operations and procedures for the subject NFCT. The procedures should specify the following:
 - Standard operational position procedures, position binders, and position relief briefings.
 - Procedures for training and supervising air traffic controllers.
 - Procedures for handling accidents/incidents.
 - Procedures for records management.
 - Procedures for providing responses to External Compliance Verifications and/or assessments may be conducted by the ATO Quality Control Group or by ATO Safety and Technical Training.

- Procedures for the installation, maintenance, and repair of electronic and weather equipment.
- The SDP/ATM should forward an information copy of the directives and procedures listed under this section and any amendments to the respective Director of Terminal Operations.
- The SDP/ATM should ensure that each employee complies with the operational standards and procedures, as well as any applicable 14 CFR, and provide all specialists with current operational standards.
- Before changing the location of any business office except a temporary change, the SDP or ATM should notify the appropriate Director of Terminal Operations of the change in writing.
- Each SDP/ATM should notify the appropriate Director of Terminal Operations at least 24 hours before termination of any advertised ATC service.
- The SDP/ATM should:
 - Ensure that each supervisor is qualified, current and holds a Control Tower Operator (CTO) certificate issued under Part 65 of 14 CFR.
 - Ensure that each employee directly involved in ATCT equipment maintenance has a minimum of a Federal Communications Commission certificate and can show to the Director of Technical Operations the ability to install successfully, perform repair work or maintain, and verify operation of such equipment.
 - Develop and manage a “substance abuse” program that meets the requirements of Part 120 of 14 CFR.
- The SDP/ATM should maintain the following information on all facility personnel holding a CTO certificate:
 - Each person’s full name and the date of issuance of a CTO certificate for the facility and the certificate number.
 - The amount and currency of experience in sufficient detail to determine the individual’s qualifications.
 - The individual’s current duties and the date of the assignment to those duties.
 - The effective date and class of medical certificate that the individual holds.
 - The date of certification and required recurrent proficiency checks.
 - Any action taken regarding any specialist’s release or temporary suspension from employment for physical or professional disqualification.
 - The date of the completion of any training associated with performing CTO duties.

12. FACILITY DIRECTIVES, REPORTS, AND FORMS.

Each ATM should make available to each employee the most current edition of the following directives or publications. Information on how to get these recommended FAA documents is available by writing

for free copies of the "Advisory Circular Checklist" and the "Washington Headquarters Directives Checklist, FAA-WA 0000.5." Both documents may be ordered from: U.S. Department of Transportation, Subsequent Distribution Office, SVC-121.23, Ardmore East Business Center, 3341Q 75th Avenue, Landover, Maryland 20785, FAX (301) 386-5394 (Accept mail and FAX requests only). An on-line catalog is available for browsing at <http://faacharts.faa.gov>. You may place your order through this on-line website or contact any Authorized Chart Sales Agent or sales outlets to place your order. A listing of Authorized Chart Sales Agents and their sales outlets is available at <http://aeronav.faa.gov>. Inquiries should be directed to our 9-AMC-CHARTSALES email address or you may contact FAA, AeroNav Products Distribution Team at (301) 436-8301 or 1-800-638-8972. For information on obtaining Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations, write to the Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15250-7954.

- FAA Order 1320.1, FAA Directives Management.
- FAA Order 1350.15, Records Organization, Transfer, and Destruction Standards.
- FAA Order 3120.4, Air Traffic Technical Training.
- FAA Order 6700.20, Non-Federal Navigational Aids and Air Traffic Control Facilities.
- FAA Order 7110.65, Air Traffic Control.
- FAA Order 7210.3, Facility Operation and Administration.
- FAA Order 7210.632, Air Traffic Organization Occurrence Reporting.
- FAA Order 7210.633, Air Traffic Organization Quality Assurance Program.
- FAA Order 7210.634, Air Traffic Organization Quality Control.
- FAA Order 7340.2, Contractions.
- FAA Order 7350.8, Location Identifiers.
- FAA Order 7610.4, Special Operations.
- FAA Order 7930.2, Notices to Airmen (NOTAM).
- FAA Order 8000.90, AOV Credentialing and Control Tower Operator Certification Programs.
- FAA Order 8020.16, ATO Aircraft Accident and Incident Notification, Investigation, and Reporting.
- FAA Order 8260.3, U.S. Standard for Terminal Procedures (TERPS).
- Aeronautical Information Manual.
- Airport/Facility Directory.
- Terminal Procedures Publications.

- IFR En Route Low/High Altitude Charts
- Title 14 Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 1, 65, 67, 71, 73, 91, 93, 99, 101, 103, 105, 171, 189, and Appendix 1, Part 121
- Sectional charts covering at least the area within a 50 mile radius of the ATCT
- Terminal Instructional Program Guide, FAA Order 3120 4, Appendix F
- Terminal Self-Study, Phase VI, 55060, Flight Data All Units
- Terminal Self-Study, Phase VII, 55061, Clearance Delivery All Units
- Terminal Self-Study, Phase VIII, 55062, Ground Control All Units
- Terminal Self-Study, Phase IX, 55063, Local Control All Units
- FAA Form 7210-13, Air Traffic Mandatory Occurrence Report
- FAA Form 7230-4, Daily Record of Facility Ops/Personnel Log
- FAA Form 7230-7 2, Flight Progress Strip-Terminal-Continuous, or FAA Form 7230-9, Flight Progress Strip Terminal Cut (if manually prepared)
- FAA Form 7230-10, Position Log
- FAA Form 8020-9, Aircraft Accident/Incident Preliminary Notice
- FAA Form 8020-11, Incident Report
- Appropriate National Weather Service publications
- An operations manual and log for each piece of equipment required in the ATCT
- Copies of all current Letters of Agreements
- Copy of current airport certification manuals or specifications
- Copy of current FAA approved airport emergency plan

13. FACILITY EQUIPMENT.

- Each SDP should equip their respective ATCT with the following at the minimum
 - An operable two-way radio with a backup power source, consisting of a minimum of one transmitter and receive for each frequency published
 - An operable backup two-way multi-channel transmitter and receiver with reliable backup power source
 - A wind indicator system certified by either the FAA or the national Weather Service (NWS)

- At least two aneroid altimeter setting indicators (ASI), or one ASI and a traceable pressure standard, that takes weather observations and/or provides local airport advisories. When two or more facilities (or a NWS commissioned/certified ASOS/AWOS) are located on the same airport, the requirement may be reduced to one aneroid ASI per facility. Aircraft altimeters should not be used in reporting altimeter settings.

NOTE: A digital ASI (DASI) system is considered as one aneroid ASI instrument.


- Visibility charts, prepared and maintained by the ATM, in conjunction with the NWS, where an ATCT takes weather observations.
 - A voice recorder system that, during the period the ATCT is in operation, continually records the synchronized time with the recording of each radio frequency and interphone line used for receiving/transmitting ATC clearances or instructions.
 - A minimum of one signal light gun with a reliable backup power source.
 - Accurate facility drawings of the wiring and layout of the equipment.
 - Two sets of 7x50 power binoculars.
 - An airfield lighting control panel, if applicable.
 - A telephone/interphone system to communicate with the parent approach control facility/air route traffic control center, and the primary emergency response organization for the airport.
- Each SDP/ATM should advise, in writing, the appropriate Director of Technical Operations and Director of Terminal Operations of alterations to any equipment recommended in this AC.
 - Each SDP/ATM should ensure that radio frequencies supporting aviation services are applied for and managed according to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 47-Telecommunications, Part 87.
 - Each SDP/ATM should coordinate activities, where appropriate, with the airport management.

14. MONITORING OF FACILITY APPLICATION OF RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES.

The NFCT's application of the recommended procedures contained in this AC can be periodically reviewed by the Quality Control Group (QCG) according to procedures outlined in FAA Order 7210.634.



Walter R. Cochran
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Date Signed