

NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N 7210.967

National Policy

Effective Date:
October 1, 2025

Cancellation Date:
January 22, 2026

SUBJ: Reporting Suspicious Balloon Activities; Reporting Derelict Balloons/Objects

1. Purpose of this Notice. This notice implements changes to FAA Order JO 7210.3, paragraph 2-1-31, regarding the reporting of suspicious balloon activities; and paragraph 19-5-2, regarding the reporting of derelict balloons/objects.

2. Audience. This notice applies to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: Air Traffic Services, Mission Support Services, System Operations Services, Safety and Technical Training, and all associated air traffic facilities.

3. Where can I Find This Notice? This notice is available on the MyFAA employee website at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/ and on the air traffic publications website at http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/.

4. Explanation of Policy Change. The change to paragraph 2-1-31 adds subparagraph b10 with a new reporting requirement for suspicious balloons. The change to subparagraph 2-1-31a renames the Domestic Events Network (DEN) Air Traffic Security Coordinator (ATSC) as the National Tactical Security Operations (NTSO) ATSC team on the DEN and is referred to as the NTSO ATSC throughout the paragraph. The change to 19-5-2d2 adds the NTSO ATSC as a required notification for derelict balloons/objects. The change to paragraph 19-5-2d3 requires that notifications for revised position or altitude information must be directed to the NTSO ATSC instead of the ATCSCC. The change to 19-5-2d4 replaces ATCSCC with NTSO ATSC; replaces National Military Command Center (NMCC) with Air Defense Sector (ADS); and deletes the NOTE. Additional editorial changes in paragraph 19-5-2 are made for clarity.

5. Procedures/Responsibilities/Action. Amend FAA Order JO 7210.3 as follows:

2-1-31. REPORTING SUSPICIOUS AIRCRAFT/PILOT ACTIVITIES

a. Facility air traffic managers must ensure that the operational supervisor/controller-in-charge promptly reports any suspicious aircraft/pilot activities to the National Tactical Security Operations (NTSO) Air Traffic Security Coordinator (ATSC) team on the Domestic Events Network (DEN).

REFERENCE-

FAA Order JO 7110.65, Para 2-1-2, Duty Priority.

NOTE–

Additional information for ATC on identifying suspicious situations is located in FAA Order JO 7610.4, Sensitive Procedures and Requirements for Special Operations, Chapter 7, Section 3, Suspicious Aircraft/Pilot Activity.

b. The NTSO ATSC must be notified as soon as possible of any suspicious activity, including the following:

1. Radio communications are lost or not established. Consider any IFR aircraft that is NORDO for more than 5 minutes as suspicious. This includes all aircraft (for example, general aviation, law enforcement, military, MEDEVAC) regardless of transponder code. ATC actions taken to establish communications with the NORDO aircraft must be reported to the NTSO ATSC.

Subparagraph b2 through b9 – No change

10. All reported or identified balloon activities of unknown origin or intent that are near, entering or within U.S. territorial airspace, and/or other balloon flights that deviate from coordinated mission parameters.

Subparagraph b10 through b11 – Renumber as b11 through b12

No further changes to paragraph.

19–5–2. DERELICT BALLOONS/OBJECTS

Title through Subparagraph d1 – No change

2. Notify the National Tactical Security Operations (NTSO) Air Traffic Security Coordinator (ATSC) team on the Domestic Events Network (DEN), the ATCSCC National Operations Manager (NOM), the Regional Operations Center, and all immediately affected facilities of the derelict balloon/object. The ATCSCC NOM will serve as the focal point for the collection and dissemination of further information except for the information in subparagraph d3 below.

3. Provide the NTSO ATSC with revised position or altitude information.

4. If required, the NTSO ATSC may request assistance in locating and tracking the balloon from the appropriate Air Defense Sector (ADS) or other agencies with surveillance capabilities. If appropriate, the NTSO ATSC will advise the ADS that the derelict balloon is a current or potential hazard to air traffic. If the balloon cannot be located or flight followed, it poses at least a potential hazard.

NOTE – Delete

No further changes to paragraph.

6. Background. Recent incidents of unidentified foreign balloons entering and/or within U.S. territorial airspace have raised concerns of their potential impact to national security and public safety. These incidents are considered suspicious aircraft activities and, for awareness and reporting purposes, are being added to various directives as appropriate.

7. Distribution. This notice is available online and will be distributed electronically to all offices that subscribe to receive email notification/access to it through the FAA website (https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/).

JON M
STOWE

Digitally signed by JON M
STOWE
Date: 2025.08.27
08:13:06 -04'00'

Jon M. Stowe
Acting Director, Policy, AJV-P
Mission Support Services
Air Traffic Organization (ATO)