NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
Air Traffic Organization Policy

N JO 7210.730

Effective Date:
January 6, 2010

Cancellation Date:
January 5, 2011

SUBJ: En Route Traffic and Instrument Approach Counting

1. Purpose of This Notice. This notice establishes National Offload Program (NOP) traffic counting for air route traffic control centers (ARTCC) using En Route Automation Modernization (ERAM); amends the method of determining valid instrument approaches at nontower, nonapproach control, and visual flight rules (VFR) tower airports by ERAM-equipped ARTCCs; and clarifies operations that qualify for an oceanic count in Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order JO 7210.3, Facility Operation and Administration, Chapter 9, Facility Statistical Data, Reports, and Forms.

2. Audience. This notice applies to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: En Route and Oceanic, System Operations, and Finance Services.

3. Where Can I Find This Notice? The notice is available on the MYFAA employee Web site at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/ and on the air traffic publications Web site at http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/air_traffic/publications.

4. Explanation of Policy Change. Traffic counting and instrument approach recording for ERAM-equipped ARTCCs will be conducted automatically at the national level through the NOP. The methodology for counting domestic operations is amended to include counting arrivals at ERAM-equipped facilities. To permit automatic recording of instrument approaches at ERAM-equipped ARTCCs, only official weather reported at the destination airport or the nearest weather reporting airport is required. Oceanic operations are now defined by the type of operation conducted rather than airspace.

5. Procedures. The instrument flight rules (IFR) aircraft handled count for ERAM-equipped ARTCCs must be maintained through computer counting routines conducted by the NOP. Manual augmentation of the count by facilities is permitted, but only for operations meeting count criteria that the NOP fails to capture automatically. Procedures for manual augmentation oversight and validation are being developed by En Route and Oceanic Services, and further guidance will be provided at a later date.

The NOP computer counting routine for ERAM-equipped ARTCCs must count both domestic departures and domestic arrivals instead of counting only the domestic departures and multiplying them by two.

The NOP must tabulate and report instrument approach data for nontower, nonapproach control, or VFR tower airports under the jurisdiction of ERAM-equipped ARTCCs to which instrument approaches are conducted. When no weather reporting service is available at these airports, valid instrument approaches at ERAM-equipped ARTCCs must be determined automatically by the NOP using the official weather as reported at the nearest airport to which the approach is made.

To standardize oceanic operations across orders and clarify its definition for traffic counting, amend FAA Order JO 7210.3, chapter 9, paragraph 9-1-3b4, to read as follows:

4. *Oceanic operations*. Oceanic operations are counted independent of the domestic count to be taken. Facilities may record one oceanic operation count for each:

(a) IFR flight handled that crosses airspace over the oceans of the world or the Gulf of Mexico if both of the following conditions are met:

(1) There are no direct communications between the aircraft and the controller.

(2) ICAO nonradar procedures are used exclusively to separate the aircraft.

(b) Only one domestic and one oceanic count are normally accrued by a flight transiting domestic and oceanic areas. If the aircraft exits an ARTCC's airspace to another ARTCC or flight information region (FIR) and subsequently reenters, additional counts may be taken.

NOTE-
Oceanic operations are not categorized as departures, arrivals, and overs. The domestic counting procedure that multiplies departures by two does not apply to oceanic operations.

6. Distribution. This notice is distributed to the following ATO service units: En Route and Oceanic, Terminal, Safety, and System Operations Services, including the Managers of Tactical Operations and; air traffic control facilities, except flight service stations; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center; international aviation field offices; and the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service.

7. Background. *NOP Traffic Count*. FAA Order JO 7210.3, chapter 9, requires ARTCCs to maintain a count of IFR aircraft handled. However, ERAM-equipped ARTCCs do not keep this count at the local level since it is handled by the NOP. The order needs to be changed to accommodate the NOP's role in an ERAM environment.

Manual Counting Routines. Under FAA Order JO 7210.3, chapter 9, ARTCCs are permitted the option of using a computer counting routine or a combination of manual and automated counting procedures. The NOP traffic count has demonstrated itself to be extremely effective in capturing IFR operations, minimizing the need for manual augmentation of its count. Manual counting routines lack oversight and their use is not standardized across facilities.

While some ARTCCs don't use manual counting routines, others have used them to increase their automated traffic counts by 10 to 20 percent. Traffic count validations have shown that most manual additions are already captured by the automated counting routine.

Domestic Traffic Count Methodology. FAA Order JO 7210.3, chapter 9, allows ARTCCs using computer counting routines to choose between two methods of counting domestic IFR aircraft handled. They may count over, arrival, and departure operations, or they can multiply departure operations by two and add them to overs. The NOP uses the first method due to its greater accuracy.

Multiplying departure operations by two produces an artificially high traffic count for some ARTCCs containing large terminal radar approach control (TRACON) facilities because not all the departing aircraft were necessarily worked by the ARTCC while inbound. These large TRACONs work a significant number of arrival operations coming in from adjacent ARTCCs.

FAA Order JO 7210.3 states the purpose of providing an option in traffic count methodology is "to provide sufficient flexibility in the counting procedures to be compatible with efficient computer utilization." The NOP was designed to count arrival, departure, and over operations separately. Using

that method will not affect efficient computer use, and changing to the less accurate counting method would require reprogramming.

Instrument Approach Data. FAA Order JO 7210.3, chapter 9, requires ARTCCs to tabulate and report instrument approach data for nontower, nonapproach control, or VFR tower airports under the ARTCC's jurisdiction to which instrument approaches are conducted.

Where no weather reporting service is available at destination airports, the following, in descending order, are used to determine valid instrument approaches:

1. A pilot report.
2. The flight has not canceled its IFR flight plan before reaching the initial approach fix.
3. The official weather as reported for any airport within 30 miles of the airport to which the approach is made.

NOP automation cannot effectively take advantage of pilot report or flight cancellation determinations. Pilot reports require manual handling, and all IFR flights ending at nonapproach airports register similar end of flight messages. The NOP can fully automate instrument approach counts using official weather reports from destination airports or nearby airports.

Oceanic Operations. Oceanic operations are inconsistently defined across FAA Order JO 7210.3, which covers traffic counting, and FAA Order 7210.57, which covers traffic counting for facility classification purposes. This inconsistency is not conducive to automating the count for oceanic operations through the NOP, which provides the counts for ERAM-equipped facilities under both orders. One consistent standard is needed, and the definition found in FAA Order 7210.57 can be used by the NOP without amendment.

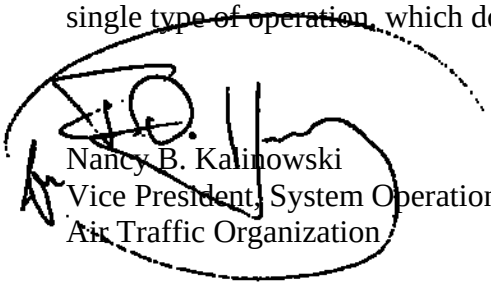
The definition of oceanic operations in FAA Order JO 7210.3, chapter 9, is leading some ARTCCs to take counts for operations in the Air Traffic Activity Data System (ATADS) that they are not entitled to under the Facility Classification Standard. Its interpretation is also producing inflated traffic counts.

FAA Order JO 7210.3, chapter 9, states that oceanic operations are not categorized as departures, arrivals, and overs. In spite of that, ATADS divides oceanic operations into departures and overflights, presumably to capture whether flights originate within or penetrate an ARTCC's oceanic airspace. Traffic entered into the ATADS Oceanic "departure" category is then doubled under the departures multiplied by two counting methodology, which only applies to domestic operations.

Other interpretations of the FAA Order JO 7210.3 definition have resulted in multiple oceanic counts being taken for aircraft that do not leave an ARTCC's flight information region, as well as counts taken at a facility that is not considered an oceanic ARTCC. The latter case raises the question of whether other non-oceanic ARTCCs should also be taking oceanic counts, particularly when the service they provide is the same as that performed by an oceanic facility.

FAA Order 7210.57 defines oceanic traffic as aircraft traversing airspace over the oceans of the world or the Gulf of Mexico that are controlled without direct communication between the aircraft and the controller, and separation is provided exclusively using International Civil Aviation Organization

nonradar procedures. The definition ensures oceanic operations are recorded based on the type of operation and work performed, rather than assignment of oceanic airspace. It also implies there is only a single type of operation, which does not include departures.



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01-05-2010

Date Signed