

NOTICE

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

N JO 7210.822

Effective Date:
August 15, 2012

Cancellation Date:
March 7, 2013

SUBJ: Midnight Operations

- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** In an effort to reduce the vulnerability of the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) that is inherent with single-staffed midnight shift operations, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator has directed the implementation of back-up procedures to ensure single-staffed terminal radar approach controls (TRACON), single-staffed airport traffic control towers (ATCT), and single-staffed Up/Down facilities have established a process to confirm these facilities are able and prepared to handle the arriving or departing traffic.
- 2. Audience.** This notice applies to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: En Route and Oceanic, Terminal, Mission Support, and System Operations; and all associated air traffic control facilities.
- 3. Where Can I Find This Notice?** This 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/air_traffic/publications/.
- 4. Procedures.**

a. Amend the following paragraphs in FAA Order JO 7210.3 to read as follows:

2-5-10. CONTROLLER-IN-CHARGE (CIC) TRAINING

a. Before being designated as CIC, specialists must have been facility/area rated/certified for 6 months, except as provided in paragraph 2-6-3c. The specialist must also have completed an agency-approved and established CIC training course for the assigned option (that is, En Route CIC, Course 55072; National Flight Service CIC, Course 55025; or Terminal CIC, Course 55073). The Director of Flight Services Operations may issue a facility waiver for the 6 months criteria where a more immediate assignment is indicated. Upon receipt of a waiver from the Director of Flight Services Operations, the facility manager can then issue individual waivers to the 6 months requirement on a case-by-case basis. Waivers to facilities will be for 1 year with renewals based on the result of a yearly evaluation by the region.

NOTE-

In facilities that use CICs to provide midwatch coverage, all facility/area rated/certified specialists that provide such coverage must complete an agency-approved and established CIC training course for the assigned option as described above, within 30 days of final certification/rating.

b. Specialists that have completed the CIC course, who have performed CIC duties, and who subsequently transfer to another facility must be required to complete those portions of the course that are specific to the new facility before assuming CIC duties, except as provided in paragraph 2-6-3. They must not be required to fulfill the 6 months experience requirement at the new facility.

No further changes to paragraph.

2-6-3. CONTROLLER-IN-CHARGE (CIC) DESIGNATION

Subparagraphs a through b, no change.

c. In facilities that use CICs to provide midwatch coverage, specialists that provide such coverage must be designated as a CIC only for the purpose of providing midwatch coverage upon facility/area certification and completion of the local CIC training course. Air traffic managers must ensure the local CIC training course is completed within 30 days of facility/area certification/rating.

NOTE-

In combined radar/tower facilities, specialists who are certified in the tower cab may be designated as CIC in the tower, provided all of the above prerequisites are met.

2-6-4. CONTROLLER-IN-CHARGE (CIC) SELECTION PROCESS

Subparagraphs a through e, no change.

NOTE-

These provisions do not apply to midwatch CIC coverage.

2-6-7. BASIC WATCH SCHEDULE

Subparagraph a, no change.

b. Air traffic control specialists whose primary duties are those directly related to the control and separation of aircraft must meet the following criteria:

Subparagraphs b1 through b3, no change.

4. Have at least an 8-hour break from the time work ends to the end of any shift, except as follows:

(a) Employees are required to have a minimum of 9 consecutive hours off duty preceding the start of a day shift. For purposes of this paragraph only, a day shift is generally defined as a shift where the majority of hours fall between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

(b) This requirement applies to all shift changes, swaps, and overtime to include scheduled, call-in, and holdover assignments.

5. Have an off-duty period of at least 12 hours following a midnight shift. (A midnight shift is defined as a shift in which the majority of hours are worked between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.)

No further changes to paragraph.

2-6-12. CONSOLIDATING TOWER/TRACON FUNCTIONS

a. At facilities where both tower and radar/nonradar approach control services are provided, the air traffic manager must ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that these functions are not consolidated during non-midwatch operations unless unforeseen circumstances or emergency situations arise which would preclude compliance with this paragraph.

b. During midwatch operations (where the majority of hours fall between 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m.) when traffic permits, all functions may be consolidated for meals or breaks.

c. Air traffic managers must ensure that no less than two fully-certified and current operational personnel are assigned to midnight shift, unless no such personnel are available for assignment. In the event circumstances result in an operation with staffing of only one fully-certified and current operational person, coordination must be accomplished with an adjacent facility before the operational person can leave the operational quarters for physiological breaks. This should be accomplished during periods of light to zero traffic.

b. Add the following paragraph to FAA Order JO 7210.3:

2-6-13. SINGLE PERSON TRACON/TOWER OPERATIONS

In the event circumstances result in shift staffing of only one fully-certified and operationally-current person, coordination must be accomplished as follows:

a. Single-person TRACON operations.

1. This type of operation must include some form of challenge or response to aircraft hand-offs between two facilities/functions.

2. Automated coordination cannot be silent hand-offs that do not include human interaction. It must be either manually coordinated (verbally via landline) or positively acknowledged via automation (acceptance of the handoff by keystroke entry).

3. In the event verbal coordination on inbound flights is required, it should be completed before communications transfer. If there is no response from the single-staffed facility controller, immediate action must be taken to determine the status of the unresponsive controller and begin appropriate notifications.

4. In all cases where a facility midnight shift is staffed with a single person, the following additional communication checks must take place:

(a) The approach control facility must initiate a communications check on the hour and at 30 minutes past the hour with the en route facility providing service to the TRACON, unless procedures are established locally with another FAA facility to accomplish this task.

(b) The servicing en route facility or FAA facility must initiate a communications check with the TRACON at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour to ensure communications can be verified with the single-staffed operation, unless procedures are established locally with another FAA facility to accomplish this task.

b. Single-person tower operations.

1. This type of operation must include some form of challenge or response to aircraft hand-offs between two facilities/functions.

2. This type of operation must include verbal coordination on all ATIS changes. For example, when there is a change to the ATIS, a call to the TRACON or en route facility providing approach control services advising them of the change must be on a recorded line.

3. Verbal coordination over established communication lines to the departure controller confirming that they are prepared to accept the flight should be completed before issuing takeoff clearance when the receiving facility is a single-staffed TRACON. If there is no response from the single-staffed facility controller, immediate action must be taken to determine the status of the unresponsive controller and begin appropriate notifications.

4. In all cases where a facility midnight shift is staffed with a single person, the following additional communication checks must take place:

(a) The tower must initiate a communications check with the facility providing approach control services on the hour and at 30 minutes past the hour, unless procedures are established locally with another FAA facility to accomplish this task.

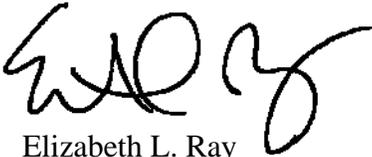
(b) The servicing approach control facility or FAA facility must initiate a communications check with the tower at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour to ensure communications can be verified with the single-staffed operation, unless procedures are established locally with another FAA facility to accomplish this task.

NOTE-

The requirement for challenge/communications checks can be accomplished through the exchange of traffic or information, either verbally or through automation.

- c. Up/Down facilities during midnight shifts.
 - 1. When operations permit, it is expected that functions will be consolidated to facilitate breaks.
 - 2. If the facility is not working with both functions in the cab and has a single-staffed operation in either operating quarters, the single-staffed operation practices apply.
 - 3. Single-staffed challenge checks can be applied between tower/TRACON in up/down facilities rather than through the overlying en route facility.

5. Distribution. This notice is distributed to the following ATO service units: Terminal, En Route and Oceanic, System Operations, and Mission Support; the Office of ATO Safety and Technical Training; the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.



Elizabeth L. Ray
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Air Traffic Organization

August 13, 2012
Date Signed