NOTICE   **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N JO 7210.655

Air Traffic Organization Policy

Effective Date:
June 1, 2007

Cancellation Date:
May 31, 2008

SUBJ: Airspace Flow Programs (AFP)

1. PURPOSE. The purpose of this directive is to establish procedures for implementing, monitoring, and canceling AFPs.

2. DISTRIBUTION. This notice is distributed to the following Air Traffic Organization service units: En Route and Oceanic, Terminal, Safety, and System Operations Services; service center offices; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center; and all air traffic control field facilities; international aviation field offices; and interested aviation public.

3. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY. The notice is available on 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. CANCELLATION. This notice cancels general notice 7/10, N JO 7210.658, Airspace Flow Programs (AFP), effective May 1, 2007.

5. BACKGROUND. The flight schedule monitor (FSM) was developed through the collaborative decisionmaking (CDM) process with customers to provide a dynamic method of implementing and managing ground delay programs. The creation and publication of flow evaluation areas (FEA) and flow constrained areas (FCA) serve to identify areas of limited capacity to system customers that require a reduction in demand through rerouting flights (voluntary or mandatory). An alternative to managing airspace congestion is to merge these two technologies and create AFPs. An AFP is a traffic management (TM) process administered by the David J. Hurley Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC). Aircraft are held on the ground and assigned specific arrival slots to manage capacity and demand for a specific area of the National Airspace System (NAS). The purpose of the program is to support the TM mission and mitigate the effects of en route constraints. It is a flexible program and may be implemented in various forms depending upon the needs of the air traffic system. It is important for aircraft to depart as close as possible to the expect departure clearance time (EDCT) to ensure accurate delivery of aircraft to the impacted location. AFPs provide for equitable assignment of delays to all system customers. AFP technology is an integral part of the integrated collaborative routing (ICR) concept. ICR is a developing process and incorporates FEA, FCA, and AFP technology and procedures.

6. POLICY. AFPs may be applied to all aircraft departing airports in the contiguous United States and from select Canadian airports. Aircraft that have been assigned an EDCT in

an AFP should not be subject to additional delay. Exceptions to this policy are miles-in-trail and departure/en route spacing initiatives that have been approved by the ATCSCC. AFP procedures do not apply to facilities in Alaska.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES.

    a. Facilities must:

        1. Remain cognizant of operational areas of interest and use FEAs to evaluate situations.

        2. Share FEAs that may require AFP consideration.

    b. The ATCSCC must implement, monitor, and cancel AFPs as appropriate.

    c. The air route traffic control center traffic management unit (ARTCC TMU) must monitor the effectiveness of the AFP and notify the ATCSCC of adjustments and revisions as necessary.

    d. The terminal must comply with the AFP-generated EDCTs.

8. PROCEDURES. Upon receipt of information that traffic flows have been impacted, or are expected to be impacted, and that significant delays may result:

    a. The ATCSCC must:

        1. Identify the constraint and potential AFP.

        2. Issue an FCA and tag as FSM-eligible.

        3. For the potential AFP, model program rates, scope, and duration. Time permitting, transmit a proposed AFP advisory.

        4. Conference affected facilities and customers to review system demand, other known or anticipated factors, program rates, scope, and duration.

        5. If it is determined that an AFP is the most appropriate traffic management initiative (TMI):

            (a) Send the AFP using the FSM and transmit an advisory.

            (b) Coordinate with affected facilities to ensure the AFP is adequately managing demand.

            (c) Use the traffic situation display (TSD) and FSM to monitor traffic flow patterns.

            (d) Manage AFPs with revisions, extensions, and compressions, as appropriate, and transmit advisories.

            (e) Provide EDCT information when requested.

    b. The ARTCC TMU must:

        1. Issue a general information (GI) message to all towers, sectors, and flight service stations (FSS) advising of the AFP. In some instances, verbal notification, in addition to a GI, may enhance the dissemination of information.

        2. Issue EDCT information to non-flight data entry and printout (FDEP)/flight data input/output (FDIO)-equipped towers and other customers in sufficient time for proper planning and control actions. This does not include non-FDEP towers that are satellites of terminal radar approach control (TRACON) facilities. The TRACON is responsible for issuing these EDCTs to satellite towers.

    3. Evaluate the delay assignment (DAS) mode and assign EDCTs, as appropriate.

    (a) For DAS, acquire an EDCT from the ATCSCC for aircraft that do not receive an EDCT and are destined to/through the affected NAS element within their ARTCC boundaries. Contact the ATCSCC for aircraft destined to/through the affected NAS element outside their ARTCC boundaries.

    (b) For aircraft not assigned an EDCT, the TMU must advise the ARTCC area supervisor of the appropriate DAS delay. If requested, the TMU should provide reroute information to avoid the AFP.

    4. Keep the ATCSCC apprised of cancellations and diversions.

    5 Relay information to the ATCSCC about EDCT issues when advised by a terminal facility.

    6. Use FSM to obtain information about the AFP.

    7. Provide EDCT information, when requested, for flights departing underlying non-towered airports. If a flight departing a non-towered airport is airborne and not in compliance with an AFP EDCT, coordinate with the National En Route Spacing Position (NESP) at the ATCSCC for the appropriate course of action.

  c. The TRACON/airport traffic control tower (ATCT) must:

    1. Use FSM or enhanced traffic management system (ETMS), if available, to obtain EDCT information.

    2. Ensure the EDCT is included in the flight clearance when an AFP is in effect.

    3. Issue EDCT information to non-FDEP/FDIO-equipped towers and other customers in sufficient time for proper planning and control actions.

    4. Provide EDCT information, when requested, for flights departing underlying non-towered airports.

    5. To the extent possible, plan ground movement of aircraft to meet the parameters of their EDCTs. If unable, advise the ARTCC.

  d. The ARTCC must:

    1. Ensure compliance with EDCTs issued for aircraft departing non-towered airports.

    2. If a visual flight rules aircraft requests an instrument flight rules clearance through an area under an AFP:

    (a) The air traffic control specialist (ATCS) will advise the supervisor/controller-in-charge when an unscheduled flight occurs needing an EDCT.

    (b) The supervisor will coordinate the appropriate DAS delay from the TMU and advise the ATCS.

    (c) The ATCS will advise the pilot of the DAS delay and take the necessary control action such as airborne holding, reroute, etc.

  e. Amending EDCTs:

    1. Facilities with FSM may use the EDCT Change Request (ECR) tool to assign an EDCT that is later than the current control time for the flight. Select the slot credit substitution (SCS) option when assigning a new EDCT for a flight. If the SCS option is not available, use

the unlimited delay option. For flights captured in an AFP, select the ECR tool applicable to the corresponding FCA element.

2. To assign an earlier control time to a flight or for EDCT amendments not obtained using the ECR tool, coordinate through the Tactical Customer Advocate (TCA) at the ATCSCC.

3. Facilities without FSM must contact their overlying facility to request a new EDCT.

f. Cancellation:

1. When conditions no longer warrant AFP ground delays, the ATCSCC must:

(a) Conference all affected facilities and system customers to develop an operational plan for release of ground-delayed traffic into the system.

(b) Purge the AFP and transmit an advisory stating the AFP has been canceled.

2. The ARTCC TMU and the terminal TMU must:

(a) Issue cancellation information to underlying facilities.

(b) Notify facility personnel, as appropriate, of the cancellation.

g. Documentation: Facilities must use the national traffic management log (NTML) where applicable to document all pertinent information related to the AFP, including, but not limited to, the start and stop times and the reason for the AFP. Facilities that do not have NTML will log information as required by local procedure.

h. Customer Options:

1. When an AFP is in effect, system customers may exercise options other than ground delays.

(a) Intermediate landing: The flight should land at the intermediate airport to provide the delay necessary for the flight to arrive at the controlled time of arrival (CTA). Customer coordination with the TCA is required to avoid assignment of additional delay after an intermediate landing.

(b) Reroutes: Customers may reroute flights out of an AFP. Alternative route options will normally be discussed on either a planning telecon or an ad hoc telecon.

2. Substitution of flights.

(a) The ATCSCC may deny substitution requests when deemed appropriate. The ATCSCC must transmit an advisory when substitutions are suspended and include an estimated time when substitutions will resume.

(b) Customers are permitted to exchange and substitute CTAs congruent with CDM agreements concerning substitutions.

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