

NOTICE

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

N JO 7210.953

Effective Date:
January 12, 2025

Cancellation Date:
August 7, 2025

SUBJ: Basic Watch Schedule

- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice amends FAA Order JO 7210.3, Facility Operation and Administration, paragraphs 2–5–1 and 2–6–7, regarding Basic Watch Schedules and required breaks between shifts.
- 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.** This change updates the language in subparagraphs 2–5–1c3 and 2–6–7b4 describing the break requirements from the time work ends to the start of any shift for any air traffic control specialists whose primary duties are those directly related to the control and separation of aircraft. Additionally, subparagraph 2–5–1c4 was added, subparagraph 2–6–7b4(a) was deleted, and the verbiage in subparagraph b4(b) was incorporated into subparagraph b4. Subparagraph 2–6–7b5 was updated to include a break requirement preceding a midnight shift.
- 5. Action.** Amend the following paragraphs in FAA Order JO 7210.3DD to read as follows:

2–5–1. BASIC WATCH SCHEDULES

Title through subparagraph c2, No Change

- 3.** Have an off-duty period of at least 10 hours between watches.
- 4.** Have an off-duty period of at least 12 hours preceding and following the midnight shift.

No further changes to paragraph

2–6–7. BASIC WATCH SCHEDULE

Title through subparagraph b3, No Change

- 4.** Have at least a 10-hour break from the time work ends to the start of any shift. 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 preceding and 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

6. Distribution. This notice is distributed to the following ATO service units: Air Traffic Services, Mission Support Services, System Operations, and Safety and Technical Training; the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

7. Background. In December 2023, the FAA Administrator requested that a small group of independent, objective experts evaluate the latest science on human sleep needs and fatigue considerations as applied to the FAA's current air traffic controller workforce, work requirements, and scheduling practices. The purpose of the evaluation was to inform the FAA's ongoing efforts to enhance the safety of the aviation system and the safety and well-being of the agency's controller workforce. The final report, entitled Assessing Fatigue in FAA Air Traffic Operations, from the Scientific Expert Panel on Air Traffic Controller Safety, Work Hours, and Health, urges the FAA to quickly develop and implement a strategy to update the current prescriptive policies to address identified fatigue factors, especially to avoid known schedule practices that induce fatigue.

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