

# NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

N JO 7900.9

National Policy

Effective Date:  
Dec. 21, 2015

Cancellation Date:  
May 26, 2016

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**SUBJ:** BACK-UP METAR ENTRY

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**1. Purpose of this Notice.** This Notice clarifies procedures and responsibilities with regards to the back-up entry of METARs.

**2. Audience.** This notice applies to Air Traffic Services, and all associated terminal 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/](https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/) and on the air traffic publications Web site at [http://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/publications/](http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/).

**4. Background.** Air Traffic Services is working with the Flight Service Directorate on ways to reduce their costs associated with providing flight services in the National Airspace System (NAS). One of the duties performed by Lockheed Martin Flight Services is the receipt and dissemination of surface weather observations (METAR/SPECI). FAA Order JO 7900.5C, Surface Weather Observing, Paragraph 2.5 directs Limited Aviation Weather Reporting Station (LAWRS) personnel at Airport Traffic Control Towers to contact Flight Service with weather observations for long-line transmission when their automated weather observing system and/or long-line communications are malfunctioning. The Air Traffic Services, Contract Weather Group, AJT-21, is currently processing the Document Change Proposal for changes to FAA Order JO 7900.5C changing the back-up procedure from calling Flight Service to calling the overlying ARTCC's Flight Data unit (FDU) for entry.

**5. Procedures.** Change the following paragraphs to FAA Order JO 7900.5C as follows:

**2.5. Backup Requirements**

(2) Communications Failure. The automated weather observing system and/or long-line communications are malfunctioning, thereby preventing the entry and/or transmission of the observation over long-line networks. When it is apparent that observations are not being transmitted, the required information must be relayed to the overlying Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ATRCC) Flight Data unit for entry into an FAA approved electronic system

(for example, AIS-R, SWIM or similar systems) or, in Alaska, phoned to the tie-in Flight Service Station. Notify the appropriate office of the outage.

**2.6. Long-Line Backup Requirements.** Details on the procedures to provide backup are in Chapter 6. Backup Requirements at Automated Weather Stations. This paragraph specifies the type of minimum backup for various types of facilities.

**a. LAWRS ATCTs.** At LAWRS ATCTs, certified air traffic control specialists (ATCS) must provide the backup information for long-line transmission that is listed in this section. The required information must be entered into the automated systems with SPECI capability via the operator interface device. At locations with automated systems without SPECI capability, the required information must be relayed to the overlying ARTCCs Flight Data unit for entry into an FAA approved electronic system (for example, AIS-R, SWIM or similar systems) or, in Alaska, phoned to the tie-in Flight Service Station.

*Table 4-1: Operator Procedures for Providing Augmentation and Backup Information*

CONDITION	LONG-LINE	LOCAL
AUGMENTATION	Enter data via OID	Enter data via OID
BACKUP INFORMATION:		
Sensor Failure	Edit data via OID	Edit data via OID
OID communications failure	Relay to the overlying ARTCCs Flight Data unit for entry into an FAA approved electronic system (for example, AIS-R) or, in Alaska, provide to Associated FSS.	Provide to Local Air Traffic Facility and follow other Local Procedures
Erroneous/Non-representative data	Edit data via OID	Edit data via OID
LEGEND: OID – any automated weather observing system operator interface device FSS – Automated Flight Service Stations		

**6.2. Summary of Backup Requirements.** Table 6-1 presents a summary of the backup weather information requirements to support the pilots’ safety and regulatory requirements and the terminal forecast preparation program of NWS. The table documents the level of

backup required in accordance with the service level standards as described in Appendix D. Service Standards. In addition to the observational elements shown in the tables, the minimum functions of communications and observational records to back up the automated weather observing systems must be provided for as specified in this chapter. If a partial system failure or erroneous data involves weather elements not required to be provided in accordance with specifications in this chapter, those elements may be treated as missing. Responsible personnel may disable those automated sensors in accordance with applicable equipment manuals. When reverting to the manual mode, responsible personnel must record justification for reverting on FAA Form 7230-4, Daily Record of Facility Operation or an approved version of the form, and must make appropriate maintenance notifications. When long-line communications are unavailable, the report is to be relayed to the overlying ARTCCs Flight Data unit for entry into an FAA approved electronic system (for example, AIS-R, SWIM or similar systems), or, in Alaska, the FSS/Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS) must disseminate these reports. Dissemination procedures are outlined in Table 4-1: Operator Procedures for Providing Augmentation and Backup Information.

#### **6.4. Equipment Requirements.**

**h. Equipment for Communications.** No additional equipment is required for the communication of backup weather information. If the primary communications equipment is unavailable, any appropriate communications media may be used. When long-line communications are unavailable, the report is to be relayed to the overlying ARTCCs Flight Data unit for entry into an FAA approved electronic system (for example, AIS-R, SWIM or similar systems), or, in Alaska, request that weather information be disseminated by the FSS.

#### **Appendix C.**


##### **C.6. Procedures for LAWRS with Automated Systems without SPECI Capability**

**Observations using automated systems without SPECI capability.** At facilities where an automated system without SPECI capability is the automated system, LAWRS certified controllers must only use the automated system without SPECI capability OID (that is, AWOS) information to generate a manual hourly METAR/SPECI observation and distribute via the appropriate manual procedure. Observations using AWOS may not be transmitted long-line. LAWRS certified controllers must use the information displayed on the OID to formulate a METAR/SPECI, which will then be relayed to the overlying ARTCCs Flight Data unit for entry into an FAA approved electronic system (for example, AIS-R, SWIM or similar systems) or, in Alaska, telephoned to the Flight Service Station.

12/21/2015

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**6. Distribution.** This notice is distributed to the following ATO service units: Terminal, En Route and Oceanic, System Operations, and Mission Support; Office of the Service Center; the Air Traffic Oversight Service; and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center.

  
**Timothy L. Arel**  
**Vice President**  
**Air Traffic Services**

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