



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION  
National Policy

**ORDER  
1070.1A**

Effective Date:  
08/22/2014

**SUBJ:** FAA Hotline Program

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**1. Purpose of This Order.** This order establishes the operations, responsibilities, and requirements of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Hotline Program.

**2. Audience.** All FAA employees who are responsible for oversight, coordination, processing, and/or investigating FAA Hotlines.

**3. Where Can I Find This Order.** You can find this order on the Directives Management System (DMS) website at [https://employees.faa.gov/tools\\_resources/orders\\_notices/](https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/). This order is available to the public at [http://www.faa.gov/regulations\\_policies/orders\\_notices/](http://www.faa.gov/regulations_policies/orders_notices/).

**4. Cancellation.** This order cancels the following Orders, FAA Order 1070.1, Hotline Operations Program, dated 4/17/00 and FAA Order 8000.73, Aviation Safety Hotline Program, dated 6/21/91.

**5. Explanation of Policy Changes.** The Administrator's Hotline Operations Program, Aviation Safety Hotline, and Consumer Hotline were consolidated under the Office of Audit and Evaluation (AAE). This revision reflects process changes from the consolidation.

**6. Definitions.**

**a. Action:** A hotline report determined to warrant further investigation.

**b. Action Office:** Offices throughout the FAA (i.e., Headquarters/Regions/Centers) that hotline reports are forwarded to for Action or Information.

**c. Air Safety Investigator:** FAA Air Safety Investigator within the Agency's Office of Accident Investigation and Prevention (AVP-100) responsible for providing aviation expertise to the Washington Operations Center on a 24-hour basis.

**d. Anonymous:** A request made by an individual that his/her identity not be disclosed or submissions to the hotline containing no contact information. Reports submitted anonymously will not include information about the reporting individual in the FAA Hotline system of record. Anonymous calls are accepted, but no feedback will be provided to the reporting individual.

**e. Closeout:** The memo containing the final disposition of a hotline report now referred to as the Investigative Results Report (IRR).

**f. Confidential:** A request made by an individual submitting a report to the FAA Hotline that his/her identify not be disclosed to anyone other than the Hotline Analyst or individuals responsible for investigating the actual report. Callers willing to disclose their name and contact information to

the investigating office will be categorized as “Confidential Field Office.” All other confidential reporting individuals will be categorized as “Confidential Headquarters.”

**g. FAA Hotline:** Term used to refer to reports submitted to AAE by way of the Administrator’s Hotline or the safety Hotline. This term is used to reflect the consolidation of the hotlines.

**h. FAA Washington Operations Center (WOC):** The WOC provides telephone coverage to the Hotline beyond that provided during normal business hours by the Hotline staff for time critical after-hours safety issues.

**i. Hotline Analyst:** Individual with responsibility for reviewing, analyzing, and ensuring the appropriate handling and resolution of issues reported to the FAA Hotline.

**j. Hotline Report:** Information received by the FAA Hotline. This includes issues involving aviation safety, violations of FAA regulations or policy, concerns involving FAA employees or facilities, maintenance issues, aircraft incidents, and/or aircraft accidents. Information contained in the hotline report may include, but is not limited to, a detailed description of what is being reported, the names of individuals or organization being reported, date and time when the event occurred, the specific area of concern, as well as any and all supplemental material provided by the reporting individual.

**k. Hotline Response:** Responses to investigated hotline reports. The response consists of a cover letter from AAE and a copy of the IRR, which is sent to the reporting individual. The cover letter indicates the office the hotline was referred to for investigation and provides information on appeal procedures. Hotline responses will not include supporting documentation used in the preparation of the IRR unless this information is deemed necessary by AAE and would not violate the Privacy Act.

**l. Information:** A hotline report that does not require an investigation unless requested by the receiving office for reclassification as action. This includes any hotline report sent out for investigation where it is later determined that the report is currently being investigated in a different forum.

**m. Interim Hotline Responses:** Responses sent to the Reporting Individual regarding the status of their hotline report. Interim responses are provided upon request by AAE in those cases where the investigation of the hotline is expected to exceed established processing times.

**n. Investigating Office:** The office assigned by the Action Office to investigate a hotline report received by the FAA Hotline.

**o. Investigative Results Report (IRR):** A summary report of the investigation results in memorandum format to the Manager, Reporting and Data Analysis Branch, AAE-300, along with supporting documentation. The summary report includes, but is not limited to, a description of the issues/allegations made, the hotline report number, the name of the office that conducted the investigation, and responses to each allegation made in the hotline report. It should also include corrective or enforcement actions which have been initiated for any/all allegations that were

substantiated in full *or in part*, a description of other actions taken as a result of the hotline report (policy change, remedial training, counseling, etc.), and whether the reporting individual was contacted during the course of the investigation. Supporting documentation may include a grid copy of the memo to AAE and details of the investigation (i.e., program tracking and reporting subsystem reports, enforcement information system numbers, emails, reports of investigation, etc.) used in the preparation of the IRR. .

**p. Principal Point of Contact (PPOC):** The individual in the Action Office (Headquarters/Regional/Centers/Directorate/Service Area) that the hotline report is forwarded to for action or information. The PPOC serves as the interface between the hotline staff and the investigating office and is determined by the Line of Business/Service Office. Note: In the case of Suspected Unapproved Parts (SUP) reports, this individual will be the HQ SUP Focal Point located in the Aircraft Certification Service.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities.

**a. Hotline Analyst:** The Hotline Analyst is responsible for the following activities:

(1) Receives reports from any person via telephone, email, voicemail, letter, facsimile, walk-ins, or referrals from other entities.

(2) Processes submissions to the FAA Hotline, Monday through Friday, from 0800 to 1600 ET, except Federal holidays. If after-hours callers believe a safety issue is time critical and should not wait until the next business day to be addressed, the caller may contact the WOC. The WOC will then forward the call to an Air Safety Investigator. All other after-hour calls left on the FAA Hotline voicemail system will be retrieved the next business day.

(3) Documents information provided by the Reporting Individual ensuring that as much pertinent information as possible is obtained to determine whether investigation is warranted. All reports, other than those received anonymously, will receive an acknowledgement of receipt along with an assigned hotline number for those referred for investigation. For multiple reports on the same issue, one number will be assigned.

(4) Evaluates all information received from the reporting individual to determine whether the matter falls within AAE's jurisdiction and to determine whether investigation is warranted. If a hotline report does not contain enough information, the Hotline Analyst will attempt to contact the reporting individual to get clarification or collect additional information to better determine whether the issue warrants investigation. Once a determination is made to send the report out as action or information, the report is forwarded to the PPOC for appropriate handling. Note: All reports of SUP will be assigned to the HQ SUP Focal Point for action. The SUP HQ Focal Point will either assign the SUP to the appropriate Regional SUP Coordinator or notify the Hotline Analyst of the appropriate geographical region to assign the hotline report for a non-SUP investigation

(5) Closes the report and provides notice to the reporting individual if it is determined that there is insufficient information to warrant further investigation. This excludes anonymous hotline reports or reports consisting of comments only. Hotline reports that can be handled by the Hotline

Analyst will be processed and closed out accordingly. Note: Reports involving administrative matters or aviation safety issues involving FAA employees or an FAA office will include AAE management review prior to closure.

(6) Provides the hotline response to the reporting individual in writing with the IRR, except those reports submitted anonymously or those containing insufficient information. As part of the closeout process, the Hotline Analyst will review the IRR to ensure the report includes all the necessary elements. Once it is confirmed that all necessary elements have been addressed, the Hotline Analyst will notify the PPOC of IRR acceptance except in the case of SUP reports, which are reviewed by the HQ SUP Focal Point/Regional SUP coordinator for sufficiency. Hotline responses are provided within five business days of AAE concurrence with the IRR. The IRR is used as part of the hotline response to the reporting individual except where the report was submitted anonymously.

(7) Obtains answers to questions for the investigating office from those reporting individuals not wishing to release contact information. These reports are identified as “Confidential Headquarters.” In these cases, the investigating office may contact AAE with their questions. The Hotline Analyst will follow-up with the reporting individual and respond to the investigating office with the reporting individual’s response when provided.

**b. Air Safety Investigator.** The Air Safety Investigator (also referred to as AVP Stand-by Duty Officer) tracks after-hours aviation safety related calls received by the WOC. These reports will be forwarded to AAE electronically along with information on any actions taken by the Air Safety Investigator.

**c. Action Office/Principal Point of Contact (PPOC).** The PPOC is located in the Action Office and is responsible for the following activities:

(1) Receives hotline reports for action or information.

(2) Reviews and assigns the hotline report to the appropriate investigating office for investigation or notifies the Hotline Analyst if a transfer to another region is more appropriate for processing, along with the reason for the transfer.

(3) Provides notification to AAE if the hotline report requires assignment to more than one region, along with the specific issues/concerns to be addressed by each Action Office.

(4) Requests extensions via email to AAE if the investigation will not be completed by the assigned due date.

(5) Reviews the completed IRR for formatting, accuracy, and completeness (including signature and date) then forwards the IRR to the Manager, Reporting and Data Analysis Staff, AAE-300, in writing within 45 business days (180 business days for SUP reports and 90 business days for Aeromedical related issues) from the date the report is assigned to the PPOC.

**d. Investigating Office:** The investigating office is responsible for investigating the allegations contained within the Hotline Report. The investigating office is responsible for the following activities:

(1) Provides the completed IRR in memo format to the PPOC by their imposed deadline. Reports may be submitted electronically or in hard copy. The IRR must be signed by the appropriate management level and should be reviewed by the PPOC prior to forwarding to AAE.

(2) If the reporting individual has requested confidentiality, the investigating office may obtain the individual's contact information from the Hotline if such a request is approved by the reporting individual. The contact information is to be used for FAA official use only, and the investigating office must maintain the AAE provided confidentiality of such contact information. If it is determined by the investigating office that it is necessary to release the name of the reporting individual, the investigating office will contact the reporting individual prior to releasing their information.

(3) Notifies AAE and the Office of Security and Hazardous Materials Safety (ASH) of any Law Enforcement Agency's (LEA) ongoing investigations of a hotline report. In the cases of SUPS where LEA is involved, the hotline issue will remain open until an IRR is received.

(4) For SUP issues, once a report is received the investigating office will follow procedures outlined in FAA Order 8120.16, Processing Reports of SUPs.

## **8. Security, Retention, Privacy Act, and Freedom of Information Act**

**a. Security.** Hotline materials and documents are stored in secure storage and will not be disseminated to persons other than those directly involved in processing, investigating, or resolving the allegations raised by a reporting individual. The Hotline stores confidential and sensitive investigative hard copy materials in locked file cabinets when not necessary for processing or reference. The Hotline maintains confidential and sensitive investigative electronic material on the Hotline secure server with controlled access.

**b. Retention of Files.** Delete and/or destroy hotline reports and files in accordance with Order 1350.15, Records Organizations, Transfers.

**c. Privacy.** The information collected from individuals in the course of receiving Hotline reports, and the responses provided to individuals, becomes part of the DOT/FAA Privacy Act System of Records, DOT/FAA System of Records Notification (SORN) 845, Correspondence Control and Information System. The information in that system must be protected against unauthorized disclosure to third parties. Misuse and/or unauthorized disclosure of this information are punishable by internal disciplinary action and/or civil or criminal penalties with a possible fine of up to \$5,000. Necessary information will be disclosed only on a need-to-know basis, or in accordance with the routine uses specified in DOT/FAA SORN 845. The investigative records used to develop responses are not part of the Privacy Act System of Records, DOT/FAA SORN 845, FAA Hotline Systems, Airport Voluntary Reporting Systems, and Whistleblower Protection Program System.

The Privacy Act provides the individual, whose record is accessed by his/her name or personal identifier, with various rights. First, the individual about whom the record pertains has the right to access the record to see what is there; and second, the individual has the right to request amendment to the record if he/she believes the information is not correct. In the case of the Privacy Act System of Records, DOT/FAA SORN 845, the record pertains to the caller, not the subject of the complaint. Therefore, those rights of access and amendment apply to the caller. Other provisions of the Privacy Act protect the information from disclosure to a third party. Requests for access to, or amendment of, information contained in this system of records must only be responded to by the FAA Hotline Program Office. The action office may have the same information as the FAA Hotline Program Office to use in responding to the Hotline complaint; however, the action office does not have the authority to respond to a Privacy Act request using information from the automated hotline tracking system. Any request for information from a Privacy Act System of Records must go to the AAE-300 reporting manager or his/her delegate. Guidance on the Privacy Act can be found in the current version of Order 1280.1, Protecting Personally Identifiable Information (PII). FAA airmen medical files should not contain the hotline complaint, as confidentiality cannot be maintained.

**d. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).** FOIA requests will be assigned and processed in accordance with FAA Order 1270.1 (series) FOIA, which may include file retention as appropriate.

## **9. Hotline Operations Procedures.**

### **a. Submitting Hotline Reports to the FAA.**

(1) The general public, aviation industry, and FAA employees may contact the FAA Hotline by telephone (1-800-255-1111, 1-800-322-7873, or 1-866-835-5322), by email by accessing the AAE Web site or by U.S. Postal mail. The hours of operation for the FAA Hotline Program are 0800 to 1600 ET, Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. After 1600, if a reporting individual believes their safety issue is time critical and should not wait until the next business day to be addressed, he/she may select an option that transfers him/her to the WOC, who will forward the call to the Air Safety Investigator. All other after-hour calls left on the FAA Hotline voice mail system will be retrieved the next business day.

(2) A reporting individual, who contacts the FAA Hotline, may request that their identity remain confidential. Confidential reports are categorized as Confidential Headquarters or Confidential Field Office. For those reports categorized Confidential Headquarters, the investigating office may submit a request to AAE to communicate to the reporting individual and AAE will provide the response from the reporting individual to the investigating office. For those reports categorized Confidential Field Office, the investigating office may contact AAE to get the reporting individual's contact information. Anonymous reports to the FAA Hotline are accepted, but no response will be provided.

(3) If the employee requests confidentiality from the investigating office or anonymity, his/her identity will be removed from the hotline report before it is forwarded to the PPOC. However, authorized disclosure of FAA employees' identities may be made within the agency on a "need to know" basis to a Washington Headquarters investigator from ASH.

(4) FAA employees that contact the FAA Hotline will be asked if their report is currently being investigated under a different agency forum and whether or not they are represented by an FAA collective bargaining unit. Note: Submissions to the FAA Hotline that are identified as being investigated under a different agency forum will be closed upon confirmation by the Hotline Analyst. The reporting individual will also be notified that his/her submission to the Hotline is not being referred for further investigation.

(5) Reports submitted that are determined to be outside of the purview of the FAA Hotline will be referred to the appropriate venue/forum and closed in the hotline system of records. Reporting individuals will be notified that their questions/concerns were outside the purview of the FAA Hotline and have been referred.

#### **b. Referrals to the FAA Hotline.**

(1) Hotline referrals from the FAA Whistleblower Protection Program will be processed in the same manner as any other hotline report submitted to the FAA Hotline.

(2) Hotline referrals from other government agencies or modes within DOT that do not require a response from the FAA will be reviewed by AAE management to determine whether or not to send the hotline out for investigation through the FAA Hotline. These referrals will be processed in the same manner as any other hotline report submitted to the FAA Hotline. Referring agencies include, but are not limited, to the DOT Consumer Protection Division, C-75, the DOT Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

(3) Hotline referrals from other government agencies or modes within DOT, submitted to AAE requiring a response from the FAA, are reviewed and assigned by AAE directly to the appropriate Lines of Business or Staff Offices (LOB/SO) for investigation. All responses to these hotlines will be prepared by the investigating office for the signature of the Director, AAE-1, and addressed to the referring office (e.g., DOT OIG, etc.). Responses should include a copy of the IRR along with a copy of the original hotline in electronic (including the memo in Adobe PDF or Microsoft Word format) as well as hard copy format.

(4) Requests by the LOBs/SOs to create new hotline reports will be reviewed on a case-by- case basis. All such requests must be submitted to AAE management or management designee for acceptance. If accepted, these requests will be processed as a regular hotline report. Congressional requests and other requests submitted directly to LOBs/SOs through the FAA's Correspondence Control Management System will not be accepted into the FAA Hotline.

#### **c. Processing Hotline Reports.**

(1) The Hotline Analyst inputs the information submitted by the reporting individual into the automated hotline tracking system, creates a hotline report and provides an acknowledgement of receipt by phone or email back to the reporting individual. Acknowledgements for hotline reports sent out for investigation will include the assigned hotline number.

(2) The hotline report is transmitted by email along with any supporting documentation provided by the reporting individual to the PPOC for action or information.

(a) Reports alleging fraud, waste and abuse within the FAA as well as any reports of serious conduct and discipline issues requiring security investigation, national security or criminal activity will be sent to ASH for review. For reports accepted by ASH, the reporting individual will be notified that the issue falls outside the purview of the FAA Hotline and has been referred to ASH. Any hotline report ASH determines does not involve security issues will be returned to the Hotline Analyst within three business days and forwarded to the appropriate line of business for investigation.

(b) Reports of alleged misconduct falling within the scope of the Accountability Board (AB) will be referred to the AB Coordinator.

(c) Reports of safety disclosures falling within the scope of FAA's internal or external Whistleblower Program will be referred to AAE's Audit and Analysis Branch, AAE-100. Hotline reports accepted by AAE-100 will be closed out in the FAA Hotline system upon notification of acceptance.

(d) Reports involving Equal Employment Opportunity issues or falling within the scope of the Office of Civil Rights (ACR) that are reported to the FAA Hotline will be referred to the ACR.

(e) Reports involving issues that are subject to negotiations between the exclusive collective bargaining representative and FAA or that are subject to challenge under the provisions of a negotiated grievance procedure will be referred to the appropriate parties. Collective bargaining agreements provide the mechanism by which such issues should be addressed. Bargaining unit employees contacting the FAA Hotline regarding such issues will be referred to the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

(3) Hotline reports accepted by ASH and other forums (e.g., AB, Equal Employment pre-complaint hotline, Bargaining Unit, OIG,...) will be closed out in the FAA Hotline system upon notification of acceptance or confirmation that the issues submitted are already being investigated. The reporting individual will be notified that the issue has been referred to another venue and is being closed out in the hotline system. No IRRs are required in these cases. In addition, no contact information will be provided for confidential reports without the reporting individuals consent.

#### **d. Investigation of Hotline Reports.**

(1) The PPOC forwards the hotline report for action to the appropriate office. Note: When a hotline report includes allegations of wrongdoing by FAA employees, the hotline investigation should be conducted by individuals who have no direct or indirect involvement in allegations or issues identified. This includes individuals named or working in the same office identified in the hotline report.

(2) The investigating office investigates hotline reports and prepares the IRR.



(a) Investigation of a hotline report includes addressing all allegations identified, reviewing any supporting documentation provided by the reporting individual, conducting interviews with any witnesses identified, as well as contacting the reporting individual when contact information is provided or available (in the case of confidential contacts) to ensure a complete understanding of the issue(s) being reported.

(b) If a hotline report is related to another hotline report or is part of an existing hotline investigation, the investigating office is responsible for notifying the PPOC and AAE. The Hotline Analyst will update the hotline record with a note including the related hotline number(s). In such cases, only one IRR is required by the investigating office. The IRR should address allegations from all hotline reports.

(c) If the FAA Hotline receives multiple reports on the same issue, only one hotline report will be created and the report will include copies of information provided by each of the reporting individuals. In such cases, only one IRR is required by the investigating office.

(d) The IRR submitted by the investigating office should be carefully reviewed to ensure it clearly indicates if the allegations were substantiated in full, in part or unsubstantiated. If substantiated, the IRR should indicate whether or not allegations violate Title 14, Code of Federal Regulations or any FAA order, standard, or policy. The IRR should also clearly state if any corrective or administrative actions have been taken to resolve the matter. In cases where a violation of FAA regulations or policy has taken place and no corrective actions have been identified, the IRR must include an explanation of why no corrective actions are necessary.

(3) The investigating office may request a due date extension by contacting the PPOC or AAE (if the PPOC is not available) via email in the event the investigation cannot be completed on time. Extension requests will include how long an extension is needed in terms of days or a newly proposed due date. The suspense date is 45 business days for regular hotline reports. The suspense date for SUP reports is 180 business days and 90 business days for Aeromedical related hotlines.

**e. Preparing the Hotline Response.**

(1) The PPOC and the Hotline Analyst review the IRR and all supporting documentation used in the preparation of the IRR, to ensure the response satisfactorily addresses issues contained in the hotline report and is consistent with the investigation details. The Hotline Analyst or the PPOC will contact the investigating office if the IRR does not satisfactorily address the allegations/issues identified in the hotline report for a revised IRR, which includes any missing information and any other corrections identified.

(2) The Hotline Analyst prepares the hotline response, which will include a cover letter from AAE and a copy of the IRR prepared by the investigating office. The cover letter prepared by AAE will indicate the office the hotline was referred to for investigation and provide information on appeal procedures. Hotline responses will not include supporting documentation used in the preparation of the IRR unless this information is deemed necessary by AAE and does not violate the Privacy Act.

(3) In the event the Hotline Report is being addressed in another venue (e.g., AB, EEO case), the investigating office will verify that all of the issues in the Hotline Report are being addressed in that venue. In this case, the investigating office will prepare a memo in writing to AAE which includes the venue and the case number (or other form of verification) where the issues in the Hotline Report are being addressed.

**f. Appeals to Hotline Investigations.** When a reporting individual does not believe their concerns have been adequately addressed in the hotline response, the individual may submit a written appeal to the FAA Hotline requesting their issues be reconsidered. Appeal requests should include the specific allegation(s) that were not addressed in the original response, the hotline number, and the reason(s) why the reporting individual feels his/her allegations were not addressed along with evidence to support his/her appeal. All appeals are reviewed by AAE to determine if further action is warranted. Accepted appeals to hotline reports will be re-actioned to the original investigating office under the same hotline number for a response to the allegations/issues outlined in the written appeal. Confidential callers may maintain confidentiality on their appeal.

#### **10. Administrative Information.**

**a. Distribution.** This order is distributed to all FAA Lines of Business and Staff Offices.

**b. Related Publications.** For further information on this process, refer to FAA Order 1100.176, AAE Order.



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