

Order 3330.41 Guidelines for Effecting The National Flight Service Station Transition



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1. Purpose. This order establishes guidelines to be used in carrying out the national flight service station transition.

2. Distribution. This order is distributed to the division level in Washington; to the branch level in the Air Traffic and Personnel Management Divisions in the regions; to the branch level in the Academy and Personnel management Division at the Aeronautical Center; to the branch level in the Administrative Systems Division at FAA Technical Center; with a standard distribution to air traffic field offices and facilities.

3. Background. The Flight Service Station (FSS) Modernization Program provides for a national automated information system to meet present and projected long-term demands for flight services. The FSS Automation Program Master Plan and the Master Plan Addendum established the requirement for a configuration of 61 automated flight service stations and the consolidation of existing FSS's into these new facilities.

4. Responsibilities.

a. Regional directors shall insure that a transition plan is prepared for each flight plan area (FPA) in accordance with the guidelines in this order. The plan shall be prepared by the Air Traffic Division in consultation with the Personnel, Management Division.

b. Each transition plan shall include as a minimum:

- (1) The location and identity of the automated flight service station (AFSS).
- (2) The dates and sequences for commissioning the automation equipment.
- (3) The names of existing FSS's to be consolidated into the automated flight service station (AFSS).
- (4) The dates and sequences of FSS consolidation.

(5) Key events required to complete transition.

(6) A list of services currently provided at existing facilities and the methods to be used to provide these services at the AFSS'S. If a service will not be provided, a statement should be made as to the impact on flight operations.

(7) Key events in the selection, placement, training, and orientation of affected personnel.

c. To the extent possible, regions shall make provisions for employee input into the formation of individual plans. Input from bargaining unit employees shall be accomplished through union representatives at an appropriate level.

d. The transition plan for each FPA shall be approved by the regional director.

e. The approved plan shall be disseminated to each affected employee as early as possible. This shall be accomplished not later than 12 months prior to the planned date of commissioning of the AFSS. In those cases in which the AFSS is scheduled for commissioning during calendar year 1984, plans shall be issued at the earliest possible date.

f. A copy of each plan shall be forwarded to AAT-730 and APT-220.

5. Human Relations. Every effort shall be made to minimize any adverse impact on affected employees as a result of this reorganization. Detailed information can be found in Order 3330.42, Human Relations Consideration in Relocating Federal Aviation Administration Employees From One Community to Another.

6. Definitions.

a. Automated Flight Service Station (AFSS). One of the 61 facilities designated to support the modernized FSS system.

b. Consolidation. The process of closing and decommissioning FSS's and moving the services and personnel to AFSS'S.

c. Flight Plan Area (FPA). A geographical area comprised of public-use airports and assigned to a specific FSS. The AFSS flight plan areas include entire individual states with the following exceptions: Alaska, California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin.

d. Flight Service Automation System (FSAS). A system designed to provide automation of FSS functions for both the specialist and the pilot.

e. Model 1. Limited automation equipment providing alphanumeric information to the specialist; a subset to model 2.

f. Model 2. Expansion of model 1 which will provide a full range of capabilities, including graphics.

g. Reorganization. A reorganization occurs when management at any level adds to, takes from, or redistributes the functions or duties of one or more positions within the competitive area.

h. **Transfer of Function.** The transfer of the performance of a continuing function from one competitive area and its addition to one or more other competitive areas or the movement of the competitive area in which the function is performed to another commuting area.

i. **Competitive Area (Reduction-In-Force) and Area of Consideration (Merit Promotion Program (MPP)).** These terms denote the geographical and/or organizational areas limiting competition. For purposes of this reorganization, these areas are the flight plan areas (FPA). The minimum area of consideration under MPP may be extended at the option of the employing jurisdiction.

j. **Transition Plan.** A document providing management direction, policies, and program guidelines for the transition to the modernized FSS system.

7. General Guidelines. Changes required to implement the reorganization will occur gradually with a 1990 calendar year-end target for full implementation. Selection, placement, and accommodation of employees will be geared to agency needs during the transition period as well as the continuing requirement following 1990. To insure uniformity in implementing the consolidation, the guidelines below shall apply.

a. **Nature of Action.** The realignment of flight service station activities is officially a reorganization in which new positions will be established and all former positions abolished.

b. **Retention of Personnel.** All air traffic personnel willing to relocate shall be guaranteed positions at the same grade and pay. For many employees there will be opportunities for promotion to higher grades. In a reorganization, employees at grades GS-5 and below or clerical/secretarial employees at any grade will not be included in any plan requiring them to relocate beyond their commuting areas. These employees may be considered for placement outside their commuting areas if they request such consideration and there is opportunity for placement.

c. **Grade Level for New Facility.** Initially, each AFSS shall be classified as meeting present level III criteria. Grade level determination for facility management positions; e.g., air traffic manager, assistant air traffic manager, etc., shall be based on the responsibilities and projected staffing of the AFSS after final consolidation.

d. **Declination of a Reassignment.** Any employee who declines a re-assignment will be separated or placed in another position for which qualified within the employing jurisdiction and one which is mutually acceptable to the employee and the agency.

(1) Employees who are involuntarily separated from the agency as a result of this reorganization and who otherwise meet the age and service requirements may apply for discontinued service retirement. The requirements for retirement are any age with 25 years of service or 50 years of age with 20 years service. If employees are offered positions in more than two grades below their current grade levels and within the commuting area, they will not be eligible for discontinued service.

(2) Employees who do not qualify for retirement may be reassigned to other facilities, remain at their facilities until they close, or be separated. Employees who are involuntarily separated and qualify under the severance pay regulation will receive severance pay.

e. **Permanent Change of Station (PCS).** The agency will pay PCS costs within legal allowable limits using the following guidelines:

(1) The authorized document for reimbursement of relocation expenses is the travel order. To allow ample time to prepare for a transfer, the travel orders should be issued in a reasonable time in advance of the effective date of the transfer.

(2) Employees who are offered positions requiring change-of-station transfers, commence selling their homes, and incur related real estate expenses based on official notifications of transfer will be entitled to reimbursement of those expenses only if:

- (a) They are offered positions in FAA.
- (b) They receive appropriate travel orders.
- (c) They accept the positions offered and complete the transfers.
- (d) They sign 12-month service agreements.

(3) Employee orientation programs shall be established by individual personnel offices to cover such topics as:

- (a) Rules and regulations covering permanent change-of-station moves.
- (b) Retirement eligibility.
- (c) Federal and State tax laws.
- (d) Severance pay eligibility.
- (e) Employment rights. This orientation process shall be conducted as soon as the relocation is announced.

f. Reemployment and Return Rights. Employees whose jobs are abolished and who are eligible for return rights shall be provided placement opportunities in accordance with Order 3330.6B, Reemployment, Restoration, and Return Rights.

8. Operational Procedures. Modernization of the flight service station system will require two major transitions. One will be the transition from leased service A equipment to the model 1 or 2 system. In the case of model 1, this may occur either at selected existing level III FSS's or at the AFSS. The other transition will be from existing facilities to the AFSS. Since the delivery of model 1 will not meet the original schedule, these transitions may not occur in the planned order and may occur simultaneously.

a. Transition to Model 1.

(1) Transition from leased service A equipment to the model 1 system at selected existing sites or the model 1 or 2 at commissioned AFSS's poses few major problems when this transition occurs independently. Facility site preparation shall be completed prior to delivery of model 1 or 2 equipment. No major change to existing facility configuration is planned except for new displays and keyboards.

(2) This transition will require equipment replacement as well as training. To accomplish this and minimize disruption at each facility, model 1 or 2 automation training equipment will be

installed temporarily in a designated area. Training procedures and requirements are described in paragraph 10.

b. Establish to the AFSS. The transition to the AFSS will be the most complex, since it requires the commissioning of new facilities as well as the consolidation of all existing facilities.

(1) Where the new AFSS quarters are ready for occupancy but model 2 will not be available within 12 months, model 1 or nonautomation equipment may be installed to commission the facility. In these cases, the general sequence of events should be identical to the overall transition plan.

(2) The success of this transition depends on timely commissioning of the AFSS, the availability of sufficient staff at the new site, and a skillfully planned and systematic transfer of functional groups. These objectives should be accomplished as follows:

(a) Establish facility management staff. An initial facility management staff of at least the air traffic manager and the assistant air traffic manager will be selected to begin preliminary planning.

(b) Establish initial operational staff. This step in transition to the AFSS is the most complex and critical. When a model 1, Aviation Weather and NORAM System (AWANS), or Meteorological and Aeronautical Presentation System (MAPS) facility exists within the subject FPA, that facility should be the first to be relocated to the AFSS. If the AFSS has been established by use or expansion of an existing nonautomated FSS, the staff of that FSS should normally be combined with that of the transferring model 1, AWANS, or MAPS facility. Where no model 1, AWANS, or MAPS facility exists in the FPA, the region should designate the largest or closest facility in the FPA to begin the initial transition. In this case, it is desirable that personnel with as much automation training as possible be selected for the initial staff.

(c) Functional Groups. The AFSS facility manager, in consultation with the regional Air Traffic Division, will determine the specific sequence of functions which will be used to accomplish the transition. Consideration should be given to the interrelationship of functions in making group determinations. The following is given as an example.

Functional Group Examples

Group	Function
First Group	Supervisory and training staff. Begin administrative services for AFSS; consolidate part or all administrative support for other FSS's in FPA.
Second Group	En Route Flight Advisory Service(EFAS)1/.
Third Group	Broadcast (including Transcribed Weather Broadcast, Pilots Automatic Telephone Weather Answering Service, etc.)
Fourth Group	Inflight, Flight Data, Preflight (other than local)
Fifth Group	Local Preflight

1/NOTE: The current 44 EFAS facilities will be consolidated into 20 AFSS's. Where applicable, this may be accomplished independent of the sequence planned for the parent FSS.

(d) Consolidation of Existing FSS's. Consolidation of the remaining FSS's in the FPA should be completed as early as possible but not later than 12 months following the commissioning of model 2. If the activity of a specific station is such that it can be immediately absorbed and all essential services provided to meet user needs, all functions may be transferred simultaneously and the facility decommissioned. If not, functions should be transferred in accordance with paragraph 8(c).

(e) Additional Factors to be Considered when the AFSS is Commissioned With Interim Equipment:

1. Site modifications required for the interim equipment.
2. The extent of consolidation possible within the FPA, considering constraints inherent with the interim equipment.
3. Assurance that essential services can be provided to meet user needs.

9. Selection and Placement Procedures.

a. General. All employees willing to relocate shall be guaranteed positions at the same grade and pay. They will have an opportunity to indicate a preference of location within the region and be able to volunteer for assignments. Positions will also be filled by both merit promotion and internal placement procedures.

b. Interregional Moves. Regions should mutually agree on a plan to cover employees who wish to relocate to different regions or who wish to remain in their regions. This is significant where the AFSS to which an employee would normally be transferred is outside the present region.

c. Selection of Air Traffic Managers. A national selection process shall be used to select air traffic managers. The evaluation plan covering the selection of GS-2152-14 Air Traffic Managers in the flight service station is located in appendix 13 of Order 3330.IA, Merit Promotion Program. The plan covering the selection of GS-2152-13, Air Traffic Managers is located in appendix 14 of the order.

d. Promotion Opportunities. There are no continuing GS-2152 positions at the GS-9 and GS-10 levels. Therefore, in order for employees at the GS-9 and GS-10 grade levels to continue their employment with the agency, they must compete through merit promotion procedures to gain access to GS-11 positions.

e. Bargaining Unit Employees. All bargaining unit employees at facilities scheduled to be closed shall be asked to list station/location preferences within the regions. In the event that more candidates desire particular locations than available vacancies, selections shall be based on FAA entrance-on-duty date among employees of equal qualifications.

f. Assignments of Other Affected Employees.

(1) Employees will be asked to submit their preferences for possible future duty locations and position assignments. Based on the availability of such positions, selecting officials shall take

individual employee preferences into consideration where possible when making position assignments.

(2) Selecting officials may place employees who are willing to relocate without loss of grade in any available positions in the regions for which they qualify.

q. Initial Consolidation. Selected existing FSS's will occupy leased space as it becomes available.

(1) Employees may be reassigned or detailed to accomplish the initial move.

(2) Prior to consolidation, separate lists will be established for internal placement and merit promotion for all employees in the FPA. The Internal Placement Program list will rank volunteers first, indicating location preference. These lists will be maintained by the personnel office throughout the transition, making possible the selections for the AFSS prior to final consolidation. The promotion and reassignment actions would be effective upon movement into the AFSS.

(3) It may be desirable to augment the staff at the new facility with experienced personnel by detail and/or reassignment from outside the FPA.

h. Final Consolidation. The final transition to a modernized system will require the consolidation of all current FSS's into AFSS's equipped with automation communication and other supportive systems. In most instances employees will be required to relocate. The order of moves will normally be as follows:

(1) Employees within the FPA who volunteer for ingrade reassignment.

(2) Employees selected for promotion from within the FPA.

(3) Other employees within the region.

(4) Employees from other regions.

(5) To the extent that management needs can be met, preference shall be given to employees with hardship cases and to employees who need to place children in school when scheduling moves.

10. Training Requirements/Certifications. Employees who transfer to an AFSS and employees at existing facilities where automation equipment is commissioned must satisfactorily complete training in order to retain their positions. Training requirements of Order 3120.4, Air Traffic Training, and the Instructional Program Guide (IPG) shall be followed where appropriate. Modifications to existing procedures required to accomplish the transition are set forth in the following paragraphs. Until FSAS/AFSS training has actually been conducted, the hours specified for training are only estimations. Course lengths will be validated after sufficient training has been conducted.

a. Area Knowledge/Facility Rating. Facility rating/certification in the AFSS will require qualification on certain operational functions and knowledges which will be unique to the individual AFSS. Area knowledge requirements for the FPA will involve considerable time and study. Each region shall insure that a standard area knowledge package, including examination, and a facility rating examination are developed for each FPA. The area knowledge package developed for a specific FPA should be distributed to each existing FSS in that FPA prior to consolidations. To the extent possible, this training

and examination should be completed at the home facility prior to relocation by those specialists who have been selected for positions at an AFSS.

b. Facility Rating Procedures for Initial Cadre. The procedures in this paragraph are applicable only to the initial cadre of specialists/supervisors who transfer to the AFSS which absorbs the flight plan area of their current facility. These employees shall:

- (1) Complete the area knowledge study.
- (2) Receive a maximum of 80 hours onsite facility/position familiarization at the AFSS.
- (3) Receive, as appropriate and in accordance with the IPG, qualification/requalification training for positions on which they were not certified immediately prior to being transferred.
- (4) Receive training and be certified on any equipment for which they have not previously been certified.

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