ORDER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

7110.113C

8/6/01

SUBJ: **PROCEDURES FOR ISSUING AUTOMATED CLEARANCES**

1. PURPOSE. This order prescribes procedures for issuing departure clearances using the predeparture clearance (PDC) function of the Tower Data Link System (TDLS) automated data link between airport traffic control towers (ATCT) and authorized users.

2. DISTRIBUTION. This order is distributed to the branch level in Washington headquarters and regional Air Traffic offices and all ATCT's.

3. CANCELLATION. Order 7110.113B, Procedures for Issuing Automated Clearances, dated July 10, 2000, is cancelled.

4. EXPLANATION OF CHANGES. PDC/TDLS equipment is being replaced by a Federal Aviation Administration supported system, rather than ARINC-supplied equipment. This order is revised to correctly reflect air traffic responsibilities.

5. BACKGROUND. The automated PDC/TDLS is a data link between the ATCT Flight Data Input/Output System and specially equipped aircraft, or the User Flight Planning Computer System. The data is presented to the clearance delivery (CD) position on a terminal display in the form of a tabular list and flight plan display area. A CD may append the flight plan by including approved information before relaying the clearance. The resulting departure clearance is then transmitted to the participant network computer via a data communication transfer. The PDC process virtually eliminates the need for verbal communications with participating aircraft and reduces the amount of frequency congestion, especially during peak traffic periods.

6. PROCEDURES.

a. General.

(1) All clearances shall be reviewed for accuracy and route integrity. The following shall not be transmitted via the PDC:

(a) Revised or amended flight plans.

(b) Initial heading to be flown if it is different from the initial heading published in an assigned departure procedure (DP). In this case, the initial heading must be verbally assigned.

(c) Initial altitude if it is different from the altitude published in an assigned DP. In this case, the altitude must be verbally assigned.

Note-
If necessary, restate altitude restrictions when verbally assigning initial altitudes.

(2) Improvised or controller-generated text shall not contain air traffic control (ATC) instructions. Only additional information such as traffic management or other operational information may be included. All improvised text shall be clear and concise.

(3) The facility air traffic manager (ATM) shall determine the mode of PDC operation.

(4) Prior to use of the "AUTO" mode, facilities shall establish positive procedures to immediately detect and promptly correct any data transmitted in error.

(5) For a minimum of 60 days following the commissioning of a PDC/TDLS, the facility Automated Terminal Information System shall advertise that PDC is available.

(6) A notice to airmen (NOTAM) outlining the services being provided by PDC shall be issued for a minimum of 2 years following commissioning of the system. The NOTAM shall direct applicants who request to participate to contact:

Federal Aviation Administration
Aeronautical Data Link Product Lead, AND-370
800 Independence Ave., SW.
Washington, DC 20591

(7) Airway Facilities (AF) personnel shall be notified when an outage or problem occurs with any element of the TDLS.

b. Local Directive. The ATM shall establish a facility directive for transmitting clearances via the PDC system. The directive shall encompass local procedures and responsibilities for processing PDC flight plans and include the following:

(1) Procedures to review clearances for accuracy and route integrity, including procedures for correcting PDC information prior to transmitting and verbally issuing clearance information.

(2) Procedures for issuing departure frequencies, DP's, and other ATC information.

(3) Procedures to prevent PDC transmission of flight plans with a preferential departure route (PDR) that does not reconnect to the filed route. For the purposes of a PDC, a flight plan initially generated with a PDR is not considered an amended flight plan and may be transmitted, providing it reconnects to the filed route.

(4) A statement describing how initial altitude assignment is conveyed to the pilot, such as:

(a) "Expect initial altitude assignment from ATCT."

(b) "Maintain (altitude) until advised by departure control."

(5) Procedures and position responsible for issuing revised or amended clearances.

(6) Procedures and types of additional information and improvised text to be used in option fields.

(7) Procedures for operating in "AUTO" mode, when applicable.

c. Option Fields. Use PDC option fields, when applicable to the facility, in the following sequence. Items contained in a previous option field need not be repeated; and if an option field is not used, insert data into the next available field.

(1) Clearance limit.

(2) Initial heading.

Note-
Do not include the initial heading if it is contained in an assigned DP, or if it is contrary to the initial heading published in an assigned DP.

(3) DP.

(4) Initial altitude.

Note-
Do not include the initial altitude if it is contained in an assigned DP, or if it is contrary to the altitude published in an assigned DP.

(5) Departure frequency.

(6) Additional information as specified in accordance with the facility directive.

d. TDLS Application Specialist (TAS). A site application specialist, designated by the ATM, shall share responsibility with their AF TDLS counterpart for system configuration and maintenance of the site configuration data. The TAS shall also:

(1) Configure and maintain site air traffic operational data.

(2) Ensure data archiving and retention are accomplished as required, in accordance with applicable directives.

7. COORDINATION. All matters pertaining to the PDC/TDLS of system-wide interest, including notification of new participants, shall be coordinated by the regional Air Traffic Division through the headquarters Air Traffic PDC/TDLS coordinator in the Terminal Procedures Branch, ATP-120.

Michael A. Cirillo
Program Director
for Air Traffic Planning and Procedures