ORDER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

7210.57

11/12/98

SUBJ: TRAFFIC COUNTING, REPORTING, AND PROCESSING FOR DETERMINING FACILITY CLASSIFICATION LEVELS

1. PURPOSE. This order provides direction and guidance to Air Traffic and Airway Facilities managers at terminal and en route facilities, regional Air Traffic and Airway Facilities division staff, and Washington headquarters staff regarding the counting, reporting, and processing of air traffic operations data determining facility classification levels.

2. DISTRIBUTION. This order is distributed to the branch level in Air Traffic, Airway Facilities, and Air Traffic System Requirement Services in Washington headquarters; to the regional Air Traffic and Airway Facilities Divisions; and a standard distribution to all Air Traffic and Airway Facilities field offices and facilities.

3. ACTION. Within 30 days of the date of this order, the Air Traffic Manager at:

a. All National Airspace System (NAS) HOST equipped centers shall make an initial written submission of required profile data to Planning, Information, and Analysis (ATX-400) through the Regional Reclassification Coordinators. Subsequent updates or changes shall be submitted in writing to ATX-400 until the establishment of a monthly En Route Track Analysis Program (ETAP) submission procedure.

b. All terminal facilities currently using a locally designed, or in the process of developing an Automated Radar Terminal System (ARTS) extraction program for classification traffic information shall register that program either in writing to ATX-400, or through a cc:mail message sent to the 9-AWA-MSDT mailbox.

c. All facilities shall discontinue use of any previously recognized classification traffic counting program such as that provided by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) known as CLASS/BANANACOM. **Normal traffic counting procedures required by Order 7210.3, Facility Operation and Administration, shall continue in addition to that required by this order.**

4. BACKGROUND. The classification standard for air traffic controllers in terminal and en route facilities and the associated facility level designations have been changed to better reflect skill application and complexity differences between facilities. Application of the new classification standard is dependent on implementation of changes and additions to air traffic operations counting and reporting.

a. Over the last few years there have been various efforts and processes employed to capture, collect, and report the data needed to establish facility levels under the new classification standard. While much of that information has been utilized in determining the initial classification levels of facilities and controllers, a more formal and structured process is needed to fully implement and administer the new classification standard.

b. To minimize the traffic counting impacts in the operational environment, automation is being utilized to the fullest extent possible. That, however, may result in some differences when compared to manual counting, especially for the en route facilities. In the en route option, the automated traffic count will differ from the actual due to the fact that extraction programs are based on Radar Data Processing (RDP) information and not Flight Data Processing (FDP).

5. DEFINITIONS.

a. Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS). Automated weather system in use within air traffic facilities.

b. Center Area. The square mileage of the area defined by the geographic domestic boundaries of the center. Note: The calculation of this value is accomplished through coordination with the National Flight Data Center (ATA-110), Aeronautical Information (ATA-100) and the National Oceanic Survey.

c. Class of Airspace (Terminal Use Only). Airspace of defined dimensions within which air traffic control service is provided to aircraft operations in accordance with the airspace classification. Facilities shall use FAA Order 7400.9 to determine class of airspace. Class B, Class C, and Terminal Radar Service Area (TRSA) are used for classification.

d. Combined TRACON. An air traffic control terminal that provides radar approach control services for two or more large hub airports, as well as other satellite airports, where no single airport accounts for more than 60 percent of the total combined Terminal Radar Approach Control Facility (TRACON) air traffic count. This terminal requires such a large number of radar control positions that it precludes the rotation of controllers through all positions of operation.

e. Domestic-Over-Water Traffic. To be counted as a domestic-over-water sector traffic within that sector shall:

(1) Be separated using International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) rules (whether using radar or non radar procedures); and

(2) The aircraft shall (or shall have) crossed the Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) (whether in domestic-over-water sector or ocean sector).

f. En route Track Analysis Program (ETAP). The primary function of ETAP is to collect and collate NAS tracking data from the Host Aircraft Management Execs (HAME) tracking file for all HOST equipped en route centers. This program is used by headquarters personnel to sort HAME data into aircraft operations, by hour, into categories used under the new classification standard to establish a facility classification index. Field facilities use this program for HAME data audit analysis and validation.

g. Facility Functions. Air traffic operations are grouped into 1 of 3 functional areas; specifically, tower, approach control and en route.

h. Large Hub Airport. For the purpose of classification, an airport where the control tower has an annual airport operations count of 300,000 or more.

i. Limited Aviation Weather Reporting Service (LAWRS). A facility where observations are taken, prepared, and transmitted by NWS-certified Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) air traffic control specialists on a limited basis. At these facilities, various degrees of automated sensors and/or other automated equipment may be available. However, when on duty, the LAWRS observer has the complete responsibility for the surface aviation weather elements.

j. Non radar Sector/Position. An exclusive non radar sector in what is otherwise classified as a TRACON or TRACON portion of an up-down facility. When controllers are assigned to this sector, they are responsible for the control and separation of air traffic without physical or mechanical visual reference to the aircraft under the controllers' jurisdiction. Without radar, the controllers use flight progress strips to document aircraft movement and to develop a picture in their minds of all the aircraft using the airspace. Separation standards between the aircraft are specified in terms of time and/or mileage and they vary according to the speed of the aircraft and the navigational equipment available to the pilot.

k. Oceanic Traffic. Only air traffic traversing airspace over the oceans of the world and the Gulf of Mexico are to be counted if both of the following conditions are met:

(1) There are no direct communications between the aircraft and the controller; and

(2) ICAO non radar procedures are used exclusively to separate aircraft.

l. Overflight. Aircraft that transit a facility's airspace that neither originate nor terminate within that facility's airspace.

m. Regional Reclassification Coordinators. A network of field personnel designated at the regional level, to assist in the implementation and monitoring of the terminal and en route facility reclassification. Each Air Traffic division shall have one management representative and one bargaining unit employee chosen by the respective Air Traffic Division manager and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) Regional Vice President to serve as

Regional Reclassification Coordinators. These individuals shall be used strictly on an as needed basis and it is not intended for this to be a permanent assignment. A list of this individuals will be available from the Regional Office. Involvement of bargaining unit employees is at the discretion of the Air Traffic Division manager.

n. Runway Configurations. Runway information shall be consistent with the facility approach plate diagrams found in the most current U.S Government Flight Information Publication titled U.S Terminal Procedures and latest Airport/Facility Directory (a.k.a as the Green Book). There are four different types of runway configurations (single, crossing, converging, and parallel). One or more of these may apply to each facility. Only the highest single complexity factor shall be used. Stand alone TRACON's not serving a primary airport shall use the busiest airport in their area to be the primary for runway configuration purposes.

(1) Single. One runway (either hard surface, grass, or sea lane) at airports for aircraft use or parallel runways separated by 2,500 feet or less (centerline to centerline).

(2) Parallel. Two or more runways at the same airport whose centerlines are parallel and more than 2,500 feet apart.

(3) Crossing. Two or more runways where the magnetic alignment will have crossing flight paths and where the actual runway surfaces overlap.

(4) Converging. Two or more runways where the magnetic alignment will have crossing flight paths within the surface area and where the runway surfaces do not overlap.

o. Special Use Airspace. Airspace of defined dimensions identified by an area on the surface of the earth wherein activities must be confined because of their nature and/or limitations may be imposed upon aircraft operations that are not part of those activities. Types of special use airspace include: Alert Area, Controlled Firing Area, Military Operations Area (MOA), Prohibited Area, Restricted Area, and Warning Area.

p. Terrain. Terminal facilities qualifying for this complexity feature shall have terrain that measures 4,000 feet or more above the primary airport field elevation contained within the terminal facility's airspace. A center facility is credited with having terrain if it has land depicted as "mountainous terrain" as specified in Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) 95 Subpart B and has terrain above 10,000 feet mean sea level (MSL) within the facility's designated airspace.

q. Transitional Overflight. Transitional overflights are those overflights where aircraft under track control of the center, change altitude by 4,000 feet or more within the center's airspace.

r. Terminal Track Analysis Program (TTAP). The primary function of TTAP is to collect and collate reclassification traffic counts from terminal air traffic facilities. Aircraft operations are entered via manual or automated means, by hour, into categories used under the new classification standard to establish a facility classification index.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES.

a. Facility Air Traffic managers are required to periodically verify air traffic counts provided through facility automation and compare this information to that required by either the TTAP or ETAP.

b. Air Traffic managers at those facilities without automated traffic counting capabilities shall periodically verify the traffic counting procedures used for submission via TTAP format.

c. Facility managers shall provide the local NATCA facility representative, or their designee, the opportunity to participate in validation of facility count data.

d. The accuracy of the automated traffic counting process shall be reviewed by ATX-400 on a periodic basis and a determination will be made as to whether it is necessary to manually augment or supplement those counts where potentially significant variances occur.

e. The new classification standard requires use of some traffic mix data that is currently not readily available through facility automation programs. Until such time that appropriate automation capabilities are established, the aircraft mix calculations shall be based on the most recent data issued by the Information Systems Branch (APO-130). That information shall be maintained and updated by Planning, Information, and Analysis (ATX-400) directly into the appropriate track analysis program for terminal and en route facilities.

f. ATX-400 shall provide aggregate validation worksheet data on all ARTCC's through the Regional Reclassification Coordinators during the October 1998 – October 1999 validation period.

7. PROCEDURES.

a. Maintain hourly count data on the following categories of aircraft operations in addition to those daily counts required by the latest edition of Order 7210.3, Facility Operations and Administration. Facilities with multiple functions (e.g. Combined Center Radar Approach Control and combined tower/TRACON facilities) shall count operations separately for each of the functions identified below. Not all types of operations will apply at individual facilities.

b. All distances are measured from the center of one airport to the center of another.

c. Overflight traffic includes point out traffic that penetrates the airspace of the receiving facility. This does not include receiving facility airspace delegated to another facility via Letter of Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement, or any other arrangement between the facilities.

(1) For tower functions.

(a) Instrument Flight Rules/Special Visual Flight Rules (IFR/SFVR) arrivals and departures and Visual Flight Rules (VFR) practice instrument approaches.

(b) Itinerant VFR arrivals and departures.

(c) Local operations, except VFR practice instrument approaches. Each arrival and each departure counts as an individual operation.

(d) IFR/SVFR overflights.

(e) VFR overflights.

(2) For approach control functions, except at combined TRACON facilities.

(a) IFR/SFVR arrivals and departures and VFR practice approaches at the following:

1 The primary airport.

2 A secondary airport 15 miles or less from the primary airport.

3 A secondary airport more than 15 miles from the primary airport.

(b) VFR operations at the following:

1 The primary airport.

2 Secondary airports.

(c) Overflights.

1 IFR/SVFR.

2 VFR.

(d) Total non radar sector/position operations. Non radar operations are used as a percentage of total traffic. Therefore, individual operations at the exclusive non radar sector should be counted in the appropriate category defined above prior to being added to the non radar count.

(3) For approach control functions at combined TRACON facilities.

(a) IFR/SFVR arrivals and departures and VFR practice approaches at a large hub airport.

1 15 miles or less from another large hub airport.

2 More than 15 miles from any other large hub airport.

(b) IFR/SFVR arrivals and departures and VFR practice approaches at a secondary airport other than at a large hub airport.

1 15 miles or less from a large hub airport.

2 More than 15 miles from any large hub airport.

(c) VFR arrivals and departures.

1 At a large hub airport

2 At any other airport 15 miles or less from a large hub airport.

3 At any airport more than 15 miles from all large hub airports.

(d) Overflights.

1 IFR/SVFR.

2 VFR.

(e) Total non radar sector/position operations. Non radar operations are used as a percentage of total traffic. Therefore, individual operations at the exclusive non radar sector should be counted in the appropriate category defined above prior to being added to the non radar count.

(4) En route functions.

(a) IFR/SVFR departures transferred from an approach control facility.

(b) All other IFR/SVFR departures (including IFR airfiles) and IFR/SVFR aircraft receiving center air traffic control (ATC) services upon leaving Special Use Airspace.

(c) IFR/SVFR arrivals transferred to an approach control.

(d) All other IFR/SVFR arrivals (including IFR cancellations) and IFR/SVFR aircraft terminating center ATC services upon entry into Special Use Airspace.

(e) IFR overflights that are categorized as transitional.

(f) All other overflights.

(g) VFR advisories.

(h) Oceanic.

(i) Domestic-over-water sector operations. Domestic-over-water operations are used as a percentage of total traffic. Therefore, individual operations shall be counted in the appropriate category defined above prior to being added to the domestic-over-water count for traffic percentage calculations.

Note: En route facilities that are not NAS HOST equipped are considered combined control facilities under the reclassification system. These facilities are not presently equipped to provide required information for classification under the en route category.

d. Use of automated counting.

(1) HOST computer equipped centers shall utilize automated counting based on HAME data sources. Facility managers shall ensure that automation adaptation and procedures maximize automated counting consistency with the criteria defined in paragraph 7c(4) above.

(2) All other facilities may utilize automated counting of the operations defined in paragraph 7c above in manners similar with the criteria and procedures defined in paragraphs 12-1-1 and 12-1-2 of Order 7210.3.

(3) The accuracy of each automated count shall be within 3 percent of the manual count, for that hour, to utilize automated counting.

e. Facilities shall submit the following facility profile information and any subsequent changes in status via either the TTAP facility setup feature or through written request sent via the Regional Reclassification Coordinators to ATX-400 for en route facilities:

(1) Terminal facilities.

(a) Class of Airspace. Indicate facility class of airspace. For stand alone TRACON's not serving a primary airport, only the busiest airport within the approach control airspace can be used for profile information.

(b) Runway Configuration. For stand alone TRACON's not serving a primary airport, only the busiest airport within the approach control airspace can be used for profile information.

(c) Automated Surface Observation System (ASOS). Commissioned ASOS equipment available within the tower.

(d) LAWRS. National Weather Service (NWS) certification required by facility as part of training process. Observations required as part of routine duties or to maintain currency.

(e) Terrain. Terminal facilities qualifying for this complexity feature shall have terrain, contained within the terminal facility's airspace, that measures 4,000 feet or more above the primary airport field elevation.

(f) Foreign Country Interaction. Facilities qualifying for this complexity feature shall routinely coordinate and transfer air traffic with an air traffic facility from another sovereign nation. Each different country would count as one; e.g., BUF/Canada.

(g) Large HUB Airport Proximity. This applies only to towers with/without radar. Each qualifying airport for this complexity feature shall have 300,000 airport operations or more themselves and must be within 10 nautical miles of other airports also having 300,000 airport operations or more. Measurement is from center of airport to center of airport. Each different qualifying airport would count as one; e.g., BFI/SEA, each would count as one for the other's report.

(2) En Route Facilities.

(a) Terrain. A center facility is credited with having terrain if it has land depicted as "mountainous terrain" as specified in FAR 95 Subpart B and has terrain above 10,000 feet MSL within the facility's designated airspace.

(b) Foreign Country Interaction. Facilities qualifying for this complexity feature shall routinely coordinate and transfer air traffic with an air traffic facility from another sovereign nation. Each different country would count as one; e.g., ZSE/Canada.

(c) Adjacent (Fringe) Airports. Airports outside of center airspace that are served by approach controls that are outside, or partially outside, that center's airspace. Departures and arrivals to these airports are transferred directly to/from the approach control and not the adjacent center.

(d) Domestic-over-water sectors. To be designated as a domestic-over-water sector, the majority of the sector traffic must be separated using ICAO rules (whether using radar or non radar procedures) and must have crossed the ADIZ .

Note: Other en route complexity features are dependent on specific traffic or airspace information and are taken directly from ETAP, Office of Aviation Policy and Plans (APO), or Air Traffic Airspace Management (ATA) data sources.

f. Facility managers are required to perform a validation, as follows:

(1) Facilities shall validate the automated count in comparison to the actual count for at least 8 consecutive hours on a specific day (with at least 2 hours between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. local) at the following frequency:

(a) Once each quarter for fiscal year 1999 including the first quarter; and

(b) Once a year beginning in fiscal year 2000.

(2) Facilities shall complete a worksheet similar to Appendix 1, Sample Validation Data Worksheet, that authenticates the data for each hour used in the validation. Facilities shall forward a copy of all validation worksheets no later than 15 days after the end of each validation period via cc:mail (or internet) to ATX-400 through the Regional Reclassification Coordinators. The facility shall note all discrepancies between the actual and automated counts and provide explanations for those differences unique to their facility. Facilities may provide proposed solutions or remedies for any deficiencies identified on the worksheet.

Note: The ETAP application shall automatically generate a validation worksheet for the date and hours you specify from the resource management menu.

(3) Facilities not capable of using automated counting programs shall validate the manual count with data reported via the TTAP program using the schedule in paragraph 7f(1) above.

(4) All voice recorder tapes, flight strips, and other documentation supporting the data examined on the validation date shall be retained for a period of 180 days.

g. Submission of classification data.

(1) Terminals, non-HOST equipped centers, and combined control facilities shall use the TTAP to submit hourly traffic data on a monthly basis.

(a) Traffic data may be put into TTAP via manual or locally developed automated procedures. All locally developed extraction software must be registered with ATX-400.

(b) At the end of each month, each facility shall use the export feature of TTAP to create a file for that month and any additional information placed in TTAP since the last export.

(c) This file shall be attached to a cc:mail message addressed to the 9-AWA-MSDT mailbox or as an internet message to 9-AWA-MSDT@FAA.DOT.GOV.

(d) The message subject box shall state the term DATA and the facility three letter identifier (e.g. DATA PHL).

(e) The file being submitted shall be sent in original format (or zipped version) without making any changes or additions to the file.

(f) Upgrades to the TTAP program shall be announced via receipt of data submission and can be acquired by sending a cc:mail message to the addresses in paragraph 7g(1)(c) above with UPGRADE (for win 3.1) or UPGRADE-32 (for win 95) in subject.

(2) HOST equipped centers.

(a) The Center operational support personnel shall, at a minimum, archive one year running consecutive HAME data files on a monthly basis via 3480 tape media.

(b) Each month, the Air Traffic Manager shall mail a copy of the 3480 tape to Washington headquarters, ATTN: ATX-400 MSDT.

(c) ATX-400 personnel shall execute preparatory software that formats the data into an ETAP readable file. The ETAP program then processes classification data from HAME raw data.

(d) ATX-400 personnel shall archive the raw HAME and ETAP processed data into DAT tape.

(e) Upgrades to the ETAP system shall be distributed directly to facility managers via the quarterly ATX-400 MSDT services distribution cycle.

Ronald E. Morgan
Director of Air Traffic