



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

Air Traffic Organization Policy

**ORDER  
JO 7000.21**

**Effective Date:**  
September 30, 2007

**SUBJ:** Standard Operating Procedures for the System Efficiency Assessment Team (SEAT)

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- 1. Purpose of This Order.** This order establishes the procedures, requirements, and responsibilities for conducting system efficiency assessments of airport traffic control towers, Federal contract towers, terminal radar approach control facilities, combined center/radar approach control facilities, air route traffic control centers, and the David J. Hurley Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC), including all field traffic management units.
- 2. Audience.** This order applies to air traffic control (ATC) facilities and offices of the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: En Route and Oceanic, Terminal, Safety, Technical Operations, and System Operations Services, including Flight Services Program Operations, the ATCSCC, the Directors of Tactical Operations, and traffic management officers.
- 3. Where Can I Find This Order?** This order 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/).
- 4. Explanation of Policy Changes.** In November 2003, the Federal Aviation Administration established the ATO as a performance-based organization. As a result, the ATO Strategy Map recognizes that managing airspace and traffic includes achieving efficiency goals through effective planning and execution. Thus, the traffic management system's mission is to balance air traffic demand with system capacity to ensure the maximum efficient use of the National Airspace System (NAS). To meet these goals, the ATO Executive Council authorized the Vice President, System Operations Services to establish the SEAT to respond to customer, owner, and internal interests and concerns.

The SEAT is responsible for analyzing air traffic procedures and techniques, runway and airspace use, communication and coordination procedures, and other areas that directly impact the efficiency of the NAS. The process begins with information gathering, with the goal of achieving optimum efficiency. The intent is to work in coordination with the facilities involved to achieve resolution at the lowest organizational level. If previous initiatives have proven ineffective, the SEAT may be scheduled to visit facilities where system inefficiencies are identified. Assessments will be conducted based on identified events or triggers within the system. The SEAT identifies deficiencies and recommends to facilities efficient and effective methods of managing air traffic and sharing locally developed operational solutions with other facilities where they may be applicable. The SEAT may also visit facilities that are operating well to garner good operating techniques and best practices.

## 5. Procedures.

**a.** The Vice President, System Operations Services must ensure that:

(1) Coordination is accomplished in advance with the appropriate vice presidents and the facilities to be visited, and includes the areas of particular interest to the team and the assistance needed to carry out the assessment.

(2) The assessment report is reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate vice president.

**b.** The vice presidents must:

(1) Provide help and resources, as identified, to support the SEAT.

(2) Provide a representative to serve as a member of the SEAT.

(3) Ensure their directors are told of the assessment team visit.

(4) Review the assessment report and the approved facility action plans.

**c.** The Director, System Operations must:

(1) Provide oversight and line of authority to the SEAT.

(2) Review the assessment report and forward it to the Vice President, System Operations Services within 30 days of completion of the assessment.

**d.** The Manager, System Efficiency must:

(1) Start the SEAT process and identify areas within the NAS for assessment.

(2) Ensure the SEAT assessments fall within the scope of this order.

(3) Assign a team lead to oversee each assessment.

(4) Review the assessment report and send it to the facility managers and all affected directors within 15 working days from completing the assessment.

(5) Provide a quarterly status report to the Director, System Operations.

**e.** The Manager, Traffic Management Quality Assurance serves as the chairperson of the SEAT and must:

(1) Ensure required SEAT timelines are met.

(2) Oversee development and completion of the assessment report and deliver it to the Manager, System Efficiency within 10 working days of completing the assessment.

(3) Give feedback on the action plan, as appropriate, to all affected directors within 5 working days.

(4) Forward the approved action plan to the Director, System Operations and to the Manager, System Efficiency.

(5) Keep a database of all assessments or action plans produced and provide quarterly status reports to the Manager, System Efficiency.

**f. The SEAT must:**

(1) Determine facilities to be assessed based on identified events or triggers, in collaboration with the Manager, System Efficiency.

(2) Coordinate the participants of the assessment team through the appropriate lines of business. The participants of the assessment team will include management representatives from ATC facilities, service center offices, and headquarters offices, as appropriate.

(3) Review the action plans and give feedback, as appropriate, to the SEAT chairperson.

(4) Monitor the action plans and close individual action items when appropriate.

(5) Conduct an inbrief to the facility management team that includes the identified events or triggers that started the assessment and proposed assessment activities.

(6) Conduct the assessment through:

(a) Monitoring of operational positions.

(b) Observation of communication and coordination procedures and techniques.

(c) Analysis of the air traffic operation by using any available automation tools.

(d) A review of any other applicable documents such as letters of agreement or local facility orders and directives.

(7) Conduct an outbrief to the facility management team at the conclusion of the site visit.

(8) Prepare the assessment report that names the responsible line of business for each action item and includes at a minimum:

(a) Identified triggers that caused the assessment.

(b) Identified actions, procedures, and techniques contributing to system efficiencies or inefficiencies and the supporting rationale and documentation.

(c) Possible resolution ideas.

(9) Give the assessment report to the SEAT chairperson within 5 working days after concluding the visit.

(10) If necessary, the assessment team may conduct a followup visit with the facility/facilities and help in developing the action plans.

**h.** The directors must:

(1) Make certain the facility management team is prepared for the assessment team visit.

(2) Review and approve each action plan with the SEAT chairperson to make certain he or she addresses the observations and recommendations from the assessment report.

(3) Send the approved action plan to the vice presidents for review and to the facility management team for implementation.

(4) Provide resources, as necessary, to complete the approved action plans.

(5) Monitor the facility action plans and provide the vice presidents with updates until completed.

**i.** The facility management team must:

(1) Present an inbrief that includes information relevant to the identified events or triggers.

(2) Give support to the SEAT as requested.

(3) Develop an action plan to address the observations and recommendations from the assessment report. The action plan must include specific measures to be taken by each line of business and the expected completion dates.

(4) Send completed action plans to the SEAT chairperson and the directors within 30 days from the release of the assessment report.

(5) Carry out the approved action plan and give the directors and the SEAT chairperson monthly updates on open action items.

**j.** Assessment triggers: The following may trigger an assessment under the SEAT process:

(1) Significant changes in performance metrics.

(2) Customer- or facility-identified issues.

(3) Events causing an impact to efficiency.

(4) Implementation of significant new technologies/systems in the NAS.

**6. Distribution.** This order is distributed to all FAA Washington headquarters offices, and ATC facilities of the following ATO service units: En Route and Oceanic, Terminal, Safety, Technical Operations, and System Operations Services, including Flight Services Program Operations, the ATCSCC, the Directors of Tactical Operations, and traffic management officers; service center offices; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center; and the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service.

**7. Definitions.**

**a. Vice presidents:** Indicates the Vice President, System Operations Services; the Vice President, En Route and Oceanic Services; the Vice President, Safety Services; the Vice President, Technical Operations Services; and the Vice President, Terminal Services.

**b. Director:** All service center directors, Directors of Tactical Operations, and all FAA Washington headquarters directors.

**c. Facility management team:** The managers of ATC facilities, the manager of the ATCSCC, managers of System Operations, and the air traffic district managers.

**d. SEAT:** The oversight team which includes representatives from System Operations, En Route and Oceanic, and Terminal Services.

**e. Team lead:** The individual in charge of all aspects of the assessment.

**f. Assessment team:** Those individuals assigned to a specific assessment.

**g. Assessment report:** The executive summary and full assessment report.

**h. Triggers:** Significant changes in performance metrics, issues raised by a customer or facility, or other events that adversely impact efficiency within the NAS.



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07-12-07  
Date Signed