U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
Air Traffic Organization Policy

ORDER JO 7200.25

Effective Date:
02/24/2020

SUBJ: Joint Air Traffic Operations Command (JATOC)

1. Purpose of This Order. This Order describes the function and responsibilities of the Joint Air Traffic Operations Command (JATOC). The JATOC was established by the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) to integrate Service Units at all levels enabling a unified ATO response effort to significant incidents and other major events or natural disasters that adversely impact the National Airspace System (NAS) or national security. The JATOC will address constraints, risks, and threats to the National Airspace System (NAS) and communicate this information to ATO leadership and appropriate stakeholders.

2. Audience. This Order applies to all ATO service units, in particular the personnel who stand watch as part of the JATOC.

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/ and on the air traffic publications Web site at http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/.

4. Background. On August 24, 2018, the ATO Chief Operating Officer (COO) issued a Memorandum for Interim Procedures for ATO Significant Incident Response. The Memorandum provides authorization for the establishment of the JATOC to strengthen ATO's unified response efforts, as well as improve lines of communication during significant events. This Order formalizes that guidance by establishing the organization, roles and responsibilities of the JATOC.

5. General. The JATOC is designed to:

a. Synthesize information, data, and intelligence regarding constraints, risks, and threats to the National Airspace System (NAS) and deliver comprehensive and timely reports to ATO leadership and other appropriate stakeholders.

b. Operate as the ATO's command and control element

c. Integrate ATO's diverse operational capabilities at a single location.

d. Leverage commonality of mission requirements.

e. Eliminate operational overlap by consolidating information to a single source message.

f. Support and make efficient use of personnel and resources.

6. JATOC Administration.

a. Line of Authority.

(1) **ATO Incident Director (AID)**. The Vice President, System Operations Services, as designated by the COO, is the lead ATO official for ATO's response to significant incidents and serves as the default ATO Incident Director (AID). The AID is responsible for managing ATO's initial unified response to a significant incident or participation in a major event that could require a significant incident response. The AID is directly accountable to the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Deputy Chief Operating Officer (DCOO), and the Officers Group (OG). The AID will determine the initial scope and scale of ATO's unified response to an incident. The AID will also coordinate with the OG to formulate an integrated ATO strategy for follow-on efforts, including provisions for continued senior leadership, sustaining response efforts, and any ensuing recovery activities.

(2) **JATOC General Manager (JATOC GM)** directs and manages efforts to develop and implement procedures and policies necessary to respond to local or national aviation events and incidents and reports directly to the VP of System Operations. The JATOC GM is responsible for the following:

(a) Coordinates and collaborates with ATO Service Units, Directorates and other FAA lines of business as needed to make critical decisions in support of JATOCs mission.

(b) Interagency coordination to ensure successful integration and modernization of JATOC to support ATO operational goals and makes commitments within assigned area of responsibility.

(3) **JATOC ATO Watch Officer (AWO)** will consolidate and communicate the initial unified ATO response to significant NAS incidents, including characterizing the incident, providing notifications to ATO leadership, and taking steps to stabilize the situation. The AWO may also escalate the ATO's response efforts, as described in paragraph 7, JATOC Operations.

b. Functional Elements.

(1) The **AWO** serves as the outward facing, primary point of contact for the JATOC and is responsible for the following functions:

(a) During Steady State (Level 1 - Normal Operations), serve as the primary point of contact for the JATOC and the single flow of information on all operational incidents to ATO Senior Leadership.

(b) Collect and synthesize inputs from the various functional elements on NAS events and incidents.

(c) Disseminate consolidated information to ATO Senior Leadership for situational awareness, decision-making, and management of these incidents.

(d) For an incident, potential threat, or hazard encountered that requires a greater ATO response, the AWO will serve as the operational lead responsible for coordinating the initial ATO unified response to an Escalated Incident Activity (Level 2-4 as outlined in Appendix A), until relieved by the AID.

(e) The AWO may advise a particular facility(s) to take appropriate action such as declaring ATC Alert, review their Operational Contingency Plan, etc.

(2) **NAS Efficiency (AJR-1)** directs the National Traffic Flow Management (TFM) efforts to maximize the efficiency of the NAS and to mitigate the impacts of disruptive incidents, including but not limited to adverse weather, equipment failures, major sporting events, natural disasters, and other events on the strategic flow of air traffic from onset through recovery.

(3) **System Operations Security (AJR-2)** protects the U.S. and its interests from threats and other major incidents involving the Air Domain by taking appropriate action to mitigate the impact of threats, incidents, and associated security measures on the safety and efficiency of the NAS. Acts as a single focal point for our security aviation partners and ATO facilities to enable safe and efficient integration of security operations and initiatives into the NAS. The **System Operations Support Center (SOSC)** provides specialized Aeronautical Information Services (AIS), including issuance of Temporary Flight Restrictions (TFR), which support airspace security efforts and other activities related to VIP movements, national defense, homeland security, law enforcement, and emergency operations activities.

(4) **Safety and Technical Training (AJI-131)** is ATO's primary coordinator for review of significant safety-related events to determine compliance with applicable orders and identify potential risk in the air traffic system. AJI is the focal to investigate and report safety incidents and potential risk in the NAS for both Air Traffic Services and Technical Operations service delivery.

(5) **Technical Operations (AJW-B)** oversees the maintenance of the FAA's Air Navigation System (NAS) infrastructure, including technical systems and services, and supporting physical plant, in coordination with Air Traffic Control (ATC) operational personnel and other key stakeholders.

(6) **Air Traffic Services (AJT)** provides the National Airspace System with safe and efficient air navigation services to NAS operators and customers throughout the United States and its territories. The Air Traffic Services representative **(JATOC-AT)** serves as the advocate to FAA Air Traffic Control facility management and staff on real-time operational issues. The JATOC-AT assists ATC facility personnel with complex decision making as requested/required, and provides guidance for the formulation of clear, concise and comprehensive messaging related to event notifications and event management.

(7) **Flight Program Operations (AJF-1)** provides safe and efficient flight operations for Flight Inspection, which ensures the integrity of equipment, instrument approaches and airway procedures that are part of the National Airspace System (NAS) infrastructure. AJF conducts flights directly related to research, development, test, and evaluation of new electronic aids, air traffic procedures, and aircraft improvement, under established agency projects.

(8) **Program Management Organization (AJM-2)** manages facilities, equipment and operations programs encompassing the NAS to include the air traffic operation, mission support systems and business support systems. Duties include NAS infrastructure modernization programs, service life extensions, technology refresh and engineering services.

c. JATOC Surged Elements.

(1) The **JATOC Crisis Action Team (J-CAT)** is a surged element of the JATOC and is ATO's primary national level communications and coordination hub for unified responses to significant incidents. It provides ATO incident management support to the AID as well as ATO Senior Leadership.

(2) The **Airspace Access Response Cell (AARC)** is a surged element of the JATOC that regulates, by vetting and prioritizing, the flow of aircraft into and out of select airports and airspace critical to incident response operations.

7. JATOC Operational Levels.

a. Level 1 – Steady-State

(1) This is the normal state of operations in the JATOC.

(2) In steady state operations, each functional element will:

(a) Perform its existing mission.

(b) Report to its own chain-of-command.

(c) Maintain its normal operational tempo.

(d) Support shared situational awareness among the functional elements.

(e) Highlight information to the AWO, which could result in an event that changes the JATOC operational level.

(3) The AWO monitors events and determines if escalation to Level 2 is required.

b. Level 2 – 4 Event Management (scalable) The characteristics of levels include:

(1) Operate in accordance with **APPENDIX A: JATOC Operational States.**

(2) Managing and coordinating the ATO response to the event.

(3) Managing communications for the event.

(4) Synthesizing information into a cohesive situational awareness picture.

(5) Escalating capabilities, as needed, through the JATOC Crisis Action Team (J-CAT), Airspace Access Response Cell (AARC), etc.

(6) Managing multiple events simultaneously.

8. JATOC Contingency Operations. In the event the JATOC has to evacuate the Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC), each functional element will provide a representative to proceed to the FAA Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located at the Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center (MWEOC).

9. Review and Changes. This Order must be reviewed at least annually. Change proposals must be submitted to the JATOC Operational Support Team (JOST).

10. Definitions. Airspace Access Response Cell (AARC) – A surged element of the JATOC that regulates the flow of aircraft into and out of select airports and airspace critical to response operations during significant incidents, such as hurricanes or other natural disasters.

ATO Incident Director (AID) – The ATO senior leader responsible for managing ATO's initial unified response to a significant incident or participation in a major event that could require a significant incident response.

Emergency Notification System (ENS) – Method of facilitating the one-way dissemination or broadcast of messages to one or many groups of people alerting them to a pending or existing emergency.

Domestic Events Network (DEN) – A continuous, twenty-four hour communications capability that includes over a hundred agency partners. Monitors ongoing activity in the NAS along with their respective areas of expertise to identify anomalies to determine whether they could pose a threat and to coordinate operational responses to defeat any such threats.

JATOC ATO Watch Officer (AWO) – The AWO is the primary point of contact for the JATOC and is responsible for consolidating and communicating the initial unified ATO response to significant NAS incidents, including characterizing the incident, providing notifications to ATO Senior Leadership, and taking steps to stabilize the situation.

JATOC Crisis Action Team (J-CAT) – A surged element of the JATOC responsible for serving as ATO's primary national level communications and coordination hub for significant incidents, such as hurricanes and other natural disasters.

JATOC Operational Support Team (JOST) – The support team responsible for the documentation and reference materials utilized by the JATOC functional elements. The JOST also provides initial training and mentoring to all JATOC personnel and AWOs.

11. Distribution. This Order is distributed to all ATO service units.

Teri L. Bristol
Chief Operating Officer
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Appendix A: Joint Air Traffic Operations Command (JATOC) Operational States

Level 1 – Steady-State

This is the normal state of operations in the (JATOC).

Operating characteristics:

a. Each functional element will:

1. Perform its existing mission.
2. Report to its own chain-of-command.
3. Maintain its normal operational tempo.
4. Support shared situational awareness, specifically among the functional elements.
5. Highlight information, which could result in an event that changes the JATOC operational state.

b. The ATO Watch Officer (AWO) will:

1. Be responsible for collecting information from the functional elements, paging out operational information to the ATO Senior Leadership and applicable stakeholders, and managing the communications for an event.
2. Serve as the outward facing, primary point of contact for the JATOC.
3. Synthesize information into a cohesive, situational awareness picture.

Level 2 – Escalated Activity

Level 2 is implemented due to a disruptive event that requires a unified response by two or more functional elements.

Operating Characteristics:

a. Each functional element will:

1. Continue to perform existing mission.
2. Support AWO led efforts to integrate response activities.

b. The AWO will:

1. Initiate an elevated, coordinated response to the event.
2. In addition to Level 1 duties, conduct an Emergency Notification System telcon as appropriate to update ATO Senior Leadership on the information available regarding the event.

c. The AID will:

1. Determine the need of JATOC Crisis Action Team (JCAT) or Airspace Access and Recovery Cell (AARC)
2. Determines possible level of incident escalation

Level 3 – Increasing Escalation

Level 3 is implemented when the need exists to begin directing ATO elements outside of the JATOC.

Operating Characteristics:

a. Each functional element will:

1. Continue to perform existing mission.
2. Support AID led efforts to integrate response activities.

b. The AWO will:

1. Coordinate the functional elements at the direction of the AID or Chief Operating Officer (COO)/Deputy Chief Operating Officer (DCOO).
2. At the direction of the AID, coordinate for escalating capabilities, as needed. Examples include: the JATOC Crisis Action Team (JCAT), Airspace Access and Recovery Cell (AARC).

c. The AID will:

1. Manage the event and provide direction from FAA senior leadership across the ATO and to the AWO and functional elements.
2. Serve as the central point of contact for senior ATO management and keep ATO Senior Leadership informed of event developments.
3. Direct additional surge capabilities such as the JCAT.
4. Deploy additional ATO resources and liaisons to field locations and other interagency operations centers.

Level 4 – Major Event

Level 4 is implemented when the need exists to engage external elements such as the Office of the Administrator (AOA-1), the White House, industry, or other stakeholders in order to enable the ATO response.

Operating Characteristics:

a. Each functional element will:

1. Continue to perform their existing mission.
2. Support AID led efforts to integrate response activities.

b. The AID will:

1. Manage the event and provide direction from FAA senior leadership across the ATO to the AWO and functional elements.
2. Direct additional surge capabilities such as the JCAT.
3. Deploy additional ATO resources and liaisons to field locations and other interagency operations centers.