



InFO

Information for Operators

InFO 16001
DATE: 2/1/16

Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC

U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration

http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/info

An InFO contains valuable information for operators that should help them meet certain administrative, regulatory, or operational requirements with relatively low urgency or impact on safety.

Subject: Cancellation of National Weather Service (NWS) Supplementary Aviation Weather Reporting Stations (SAWRS) Program and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Assumption of Oversight

Purpose: This InFO notifies operators, pilots and aircraft dispatchers of the elimination of the NWS SAWRS Program and the process to merge the program into the FAA Non Federal Observer (NF-OBS) Program.

Background: The SAWRS Program is a voluntary human weather observation (HWO) program established by the National Weather Service (NWS) and funded by non-Federal sponsors such as state or local governments, fixed-base operators (FBO), private corporations and air carriers. The SAWRS Program permits these sponsors to provide HWO service at airports where there is no Federal Government provided human observer (e.g. NWS, FAA Contract Weather Observer (CWO) or Limited Aviation Weather Reporting Station (LAWRS) observer), or automated weather observation system such as an Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) or Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS). SAWRS stations support air traffic operations at towered and non-towered airports (including offshore platform helipads), with or without a primary automated weather system.

The NF-OBS Program was developed to enable local aviation entities such as airport or air carrier personnel or FBOs to assist with the backup and augmentation of an ASOS or AWOS. The FAA assumed oversight of the NF-OBS Program on April 1, 2014.

Discussion: The FAA assumed oversight of the SAWRS program on October 1, 2015. Although the FAA does not have a long-term plan to continue the SAWRS Program, the FAA has agreed to assume oversight of the SAWRS Program under existing NWS operational policies and requirements. SAWRS sites may continue to use and maintain current equipment under NWS requirements.

The FAA intends to merge existing SAWRS sites into the NF-OBS program. The FAA is in the process of updating policy for the NF-OBS Program; however, the Agency expects it may take up to 36 months to update and implement this policy. Once the policy is finalized, the FAA will notify the affected sites that they must conform to FAA NF-OBS operational requirements if they wish to continue in the NF-OBS Program.

Recommended Action: SAWRS sponsors with any questions or concerns regarding equipment and/or equipment verification may contact the FAA at Non-Federal-Program@faa.gov. SAWRS sponsors with questions or concerns related to observer certification and operations can email 9-AJT-HQ-ASWO@faa.gov.

Contact: Questions or comments regarding this InFO should be directed to Future Flight Technology Branch (AFS-430) at (202) 267-8790.