

# NOTICE

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

N JO 7210.687

**Effective Date:**  
May 30, 2008

**Cancellation Date:**  
March 12, 2009

**SUBJ:** Airspace Flow Programs (AFP)

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- 1. Purpose of This Notice.** This notice establishes procedures for AFP use contained in Federal Aviation Administration Order (FAAO) 7210.3V, Facility Operation and Administration, Chapter 17, Traffic Management National, Center, and Terminal, Section 9, Airspace Flow Program.
- 2. Audience.** This notice applies to the following Air Traffic Organization (ATO) service units: En Route and Oceanic, Terminal, and System Operations Services, including the Directors of Tactical Operations and traffic management officers.
- 3. Where Can I Find This Notice?** The notice is available on MyFAA employee Web site at [https://employees.faa.gov/tools\\_resources/orders\\_notices/](https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/) and on the air traffic publications Web site at [http://www.faa.gov/airports\\_airtraffic/air\\_traffic/publications](http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/air_traffic/publications).
- 4. Cancellation.** This notice cancels N JO 7210.655, Airspace Flow Programs (AFP), effective June 1, 2007.
- 5. Explanation of Policy Change.** AFPs may be applied to all aircraft departing airports in the contiguous United States and from Canadian airports. Aircraft that have been assigned an estimated departure clearance time (EDCT) in an AFP should not be subject to additional delay. Exceptions to this policy are mile-in-trail and departure/en route spacing initiatives that have been approved by the Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC). AFP procedures do not apply to facilities in Alaska.
- 6. Procedures.** Amend FAAO 7210.3V, Chapter 17, by inserting a new Section 9, Airspace Flow Programs (APF), to read as follows:

## Section 9. Airspace Flow Programs (AFP)

### 17-9-1. General

The flight schedule monitor (FSM) was developed to provide a dynamic method of implementing and managing ground delay programs. The creation and publication of flow evaluation areas (FEA) and flow constrained areas (FCA) serve to identify areas of limited capacity to system customers that require a reduction in demand through rerouting flights (voluntary or mandatory). An alternative to managing airspace congestion is to merge these two technologies and create AFPs. An AFP is a traffic management tool that assigns specific arrival slots and corresponding EDCTs to manage capacity and demand for a specific area identified by the FCA. It is important for aircraft to depart as close as possible to the EDCT to ensure accurate delivery of aircraft through the impacted area.

**17-9-2. Responsibilities**

- a. Facilities must:
  1. Develop and share FEAs that may require AFP consideration.
  2. Comply with AFP-generated EDCTs.

**17-9-3 Procedures.**

Upon receipt of information that traffic flows have been impacted, or are expected to be impacted, and that significant delays may result:

- a. The ATCSCC must:
  1. Identify the constraint and potential AFP.
  2. Implement, monitor, and cancel AFPs as appropriate.
  3. Issue an FCA and tag as FSM-eligible.
  4. For the potential AFP, model program rates, scope, and duration.
  5. Transmit a proposed advisory unless immediate implementation is necessary.
  6. Conference affected facilities and customers to review system demand, other known or anticipated factors, program rates, scope, and duration.
  7. If it is determined that an AFP is the most appropriate traffic management initiative (TMI):
    - (a) Send the AFP using the FSM and transmit an advisory.
    - (b) Coordinate with affected facilities to ensure the AFP is adequately managing demand.
    - (c) Use the traffic situation display (TSD) and FSM to monitor traffic flow patterns.
    - (d) Manage AFPs with revisions, extensions, and compressions, as appropriate, and transmit advisories.
    - (e) Provide EDCT information when requested.
- b. The ARTCC TMU must:
  1. Issue a general information (GI) message to all towers, sectors and flight service stations (FSS) advising of the AFP. In some instances, verbal notification, in addition to a GI, may enhance the dissemination of information.
  2. Monitor the effectiveness of the AFP and notify the ATCSCC with requests for adjustments and/or revisions as necessary.
  3. Issue EDCT information to non-FDEP/FDIO equipped towers and other customers in sufficient time for proper planning and control actions. This does not include non-FDEP towers that are satellites of TRACON facilities. The TRACON is responsible for issuing these EDCTs to satellite towers.
  4. Evaluate the DAS mode and assign EDCTs, as appropriate.
    - (a) Acquire an EDCT from the ATCSCC for aircraft that do not receive an EDCT.
    - (b) For aircraft not assigned an EDCT the TMU must advise the ARTCC area supervisor of the appropriate DAS delay. If requested, the TMU should provide reroute information to avoid the AFP.
  5. Keep the ATCSCC apprised of cancellations and diversions.
  6. Relay information to the ATCSCC about EDCT issues (e.g., flights requiring a revision due to mechanical or flight crew duty issues).

7. Use FSM to obtain information about the AFP (e.g., flights captured, EDCTs, route changes, etc).
  8. Provide EDCT information, when requested, for flights departing underlying non-towered airports. If a flight departing a non-towered airport is airborne and not in compliance with an AFP EDCT, coordinate with the National En Route Spacing Position (NESP) at the ATCSCC for the appropriate course of action.
  9. Ensure compliance with EDCTs issued for aircraft departing non-towered airports.
- c. The ARTCC must:
1. When advised of a visual flight rules (VFR) aircraft requesting an instrument flight rules (IFR) clearance through an area under an AFP:
    - (a) The air traffic control specialist (ATCS) will advise their supervisor/controller-in-charge when an unscheduled flight occurs needing an EDCT.
    - (b) The supervisor will coordinate the appropriate DAS delay from the TMU and advise the ATCS.
    - (c) The ATCS will advise the pilot of the DAS delay and take the necessary control action such as airborne holding, reroute, etc.
- d. The TRACON/ATCT must:
1. Use FSM or ETMS, if available, to obtain EDCT information.
  2. Ensure the EDCT is included in the flight clearance when an AFP is in effect.
  3. Issue EDCT information to non-FDEP/FDIO-equipped towers and other customers in sufficient time for proper planning and control actions.
  4. Provide EDCT information, when requested, for flights departing underlying non-towered airports.
  5. To the extent possible, plan ground movement of aircraft to meet the parameters of their EDCTs; If unable, advise the ARTCC.
- e. Amending EDCTs.
1. Facilities with FSM may use the EDCT ECR tool to assign an EDCT that is later than the current control time for the flight. Select the SCS option when assigning a new EDCT for a flight. If the SCS option is not available, use the unlimited delay option. For flights captured in an AFP, select the ECR tool applicable to the corresponding FCA element.
  2. To assign an earlier control time to a flight or for EDCT amendments not obtained using the ECR tool, coordinate through the Tactical Customer Advocate (TCA) at the ATCSCC.
  3. Facilities without FSM must contact their overlying facility to request a new EDCT.
- f. Cancellation Procedures.
1. When conditions no longer warrant AFP ground delays, the ATCSCC must:
    - (a) Conference facilities and customers to develop an operational plan for release of ground delayed traffic into the system.
    - (b) Consider using the Integrated Modeling Tool when evaluating a cancellation.
    - (c) Purge the AFP and transmit an advisory stating the AFP has been canceled.
  2. The ARTCC TMU and the terminal TMU must:
    - (a) Issue cancellation information to underlying facilities.

(b) Notify facility personnel, as appropriate, of the cancellation.

g. Documentation.

Facilities must use the national traffic management log (NTML) where applicable to document all pertinent information related to the AFP, including, but not limited to, the start and stop times and the reason for the AFP. Facilities that do not have NTML will log information as required by local procedure.

h. Customer Options.

1. When an AFP is in effect, system customers may exercise options other than ground delays.

(a) Intermediate landing: The flight should land at an intermediate airport to provide the delay necessary for the flight to arrive at the CTA. Customer coordination with the TCA is required to avoid assignment of additional delay after an intermediate landing.

(b) Reroutes: Customers may reroute flights out of an AFP. Alternative route options will normally be discussed on either a planning telcon or an ad hoc telcon.

2. Substitution of flights.

(a) The ATCSCC may deny substitution requests when deemed appropriate. The ATCSCC must transmit an advisory when substitutions are suspended and include an estimated time when substitutions will resume.


(b) Customers are permitted to exchange and substitute CTAs congruent with collaborative decision making (CDM) agreements concerning substitutions.

**Renumber Section 9 through Section 20 to Section 10 through Section 21**

**7. Distribution.** This notice is distributed to the following ATO service units: En Route and Oceanic, Terminal, Safety, and System Operations Services, including the Directors of Tactical Operations and traffic management officers; air traffic control facilities, except flight service stations; the William J. Hughes Technical Center; the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center; international aviation field offices; and the Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service.

**8. Background.** AFPs have been in use in the NAS to distribute ground delays to aircraft filed through an identified system constraint. AFPs assign EDCTs to reduce airspace volume and are based on the creation of an FCA to select a set of flights appropriate to the objectives as identified by the ATCSCC, in collaboration with system customers and FAA facilities. Customers are provided the option of accepting a ground delay or filing a route around the FCA created.

**9. Implementation.** This notice shall be implemented on the effective date and the content of this notice will be incorporated in FAAO 7210.3V, change 1, effective March 12, 2009.

  
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Date Signed