



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Air Traffic Organization Policy

**ORDER
JO 2900.2**

Effective Date:
06/01/2018

SUBJ: Air Traffic Organization Audits and Assessments

1. Purpose of This Order. Establishes an audits and assessments program as an integral part of the Air Traffic Organization (ATO) Safety Management System (SMS) and a component of safety assurance. To continuously improve the safety of National Airspace System (NAS) equipment, operations, and procedures, the ATO conducts audits and assessments to determine whether the NAS is performing as expected and to validate and verify safety data. Audits and assessments also ensure mitigations or corrective actions are implemented to address noncompliance with requirements, safety hazards, and other safety-related issues. This order defines the responsibilities and requirements for conducting audits and assessments of ATO operations, products, and services; a facility's delivery of air traffic services; safety programs and initiatives; SMS performance; and technical training. This order does not apply to independent operational assessments, which are described in the Acquisition Management System policy of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

2. Audience. This order applies to all ATO personnel and contract service providers.

3. Where Can I Find This Order? This order is available on the MyFAA employee website: https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices. This order can also be found on the Air Traffic Publications website: http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications.

4. Explanation of Policy Change. This order updates the ATO Safety and Technical Training (AJI) Audits and Assessments Program by removing guidance, such as Acquisition Management System policy, that is covered elsewhere or determined to be beyond the scope of this order. It also changes the order number in keeping with FAA Order 0000.1, *FAA Standard Subject Classification System*.

5. Related Publications. AJI conducts audits and assessments in accordance with FAA Orders JO 1000.37, *Air Traffic Organization Safety Management System*; JO 7210.633, *Air Traffic Organization Quality Assurance Program (QAP)*; JO 7210.634, *Air Traffic Organization (ATO) Quality Control*; and requirements contained in this order.

6. Cancellation. This order cancels FAA Order JO 7010.14, *Air Traffic Organization Audits and Assessments Program*. Provisions of this order do not override provisions of agency collective bargaining agreements.

7. Audits and Assessments Responsibilities.

a. AJI Responsibilities. AJI is responsible for the Audits and Assessment Program within the ATO, which includes the identification, preparation, execution, and reporting of findings of audits and assessments. In this role, AJI must:

(1) Determine ATO operational services, NAS equipment, safety programs or initiatives, or SMS and technical training initiatives to audit or assess. In addition, AJI determines facilities for conducting Operational Peer Assessments. Determinations may be based on:

- (a) Input from ATO management (internal AJI and that of other ATO service units),
- (b) Suspected risk/safety-related trends identified through analysis,
- (c) Safety documentation (e.g., Safety Risk Management documents, Corrective Action Plans (CAPs), and other applicable sources), or
- (d) Previous audit or assessment results.

(2) Establish an audit or assessment team to conduct each audit or assessment. Team size and composition are based on the scope of the audit or assessment.

- (a) Assign a team lead to manage each audit or assessment.
- (b) Assign team members (AJI personnel or subject matter experts who are independent of the service unit being audited or assessed) to conduct each audit or assessment. Team member assignment on site at the facility level must be in accordance with collective bargaining agreements, when applicable.

- **Note 1:** Additional personnel may serve as advisors or subject matter experts; however, they are not team members.

- **Note 2:** Air Traffic Safety Oversight Service (AOV) personnel may observe the conduct of an audit or assessment upon AOV's request. However, AOV personnel are not team members.

(3) Prepare for an audit or assessment by reviewing relevant safety data, requirements, procedures, and operations, and by developing documents needed to conduct the audit or assessment.

(4) Notify the affected service unit at least 90 days before a scheduled audit or assessment and at least 30 days before an ad hoc audit or assessment, unless otherwise coordinated.

- (a) At a minimum, notification must include the objective and scope of the audit or assessment, the team lead's contact information, and the timeframe of the audit or assessment.

- (b) AJI may conduct a no-notice audit or assessment with the concurrence of the AJI Vice President and the affected service unit Vice President; advance notice will not be provided in such cases.

(5) Conduct an audit or assessment using various methods and techniques, which may include: reviewing documents, records, and data (e.g., radar, voice recordings); conducting interviews with management personnel or designees; distributing questionnaires; and observing procedures and operations. AJI may conduct an audit or assessment on site and may remotely collect some or all data. When an audit or assessment is conducted on site, the team lead must:

(a) Conduct an opening meeting with the manager or designee to explain the objective and scope of the audit or assessment and any planned activities.

(b) Conduct a closing meeting with the manager or designee to discuss the audit or assessment.

(6) Document and report results.

(a) Prepare a report and cover memorandum to document the results of each audit or assessment. Distribute the report and cover memorandum to the affected service unit after approval by the AJI Vice President or designee.

(b) Notify the affected service unit when the audit or assessment team requests the service unit's response to address an identified finding.

(1) Initiate a Corrective Action Request (CAR) when it is unlikely a safety-related finding will or should be resolved informally. FAA Order JO 7210.633 addresses CAR process requirements.

(2) Request a Point of Contact via the report cover memorandum if a finding requires resolution, but does not result in a CAR. The report cover memorandum will state that no response is required for findings that do not require resolution.

b. ATO Service Unit Responsibilities. ATO audits and assessments are conducted at the national, service area, and service delivery levels and require participation from ATO service unit personnel. When performing audits or assessments, findings may also require additional coordination and action. As a result, ATO service units must:

(1) Submit a request for an audit or assessment via email to AJI management. At a minimum, the request must include a point of contact, the service unit, the safety program or initiative and/or procedure to be audited or assessed, background information, and a description of the safety concern(s).

(2) Designate personnel to participate in an AJI audit or assessment as team members, subject matter experts, points of contact, etc., when applicable. Participation of bargaining unit personnel must be in accordance with collective bargaining agreements.

(3) Ensure the affected manager or designee attends the opening and closing meetings. The manager or designee may invite personnel from the service unit, service area, service center, district, facility, etc., to attend the opening and closing meetings.

(4) Respond to findings of an AJI audit or assessment by the response due date when required. The affected service unit must:

(a) Submit a CAP in response to any CARs initiated by AJI. FAA Order JO 7210.633 addresses CAR process requirements.

(b) Submit a response to AJI regarding any findings that will not enter the CAR process but require resolution.



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Appendix A: Definitions

- 1. Ad Hoc Audit or Assessment.** An audit or assessment directed by AJI management or requested by ATO service unit management. An ad hoc audit or assessment is conducted on an as-needed basis and is prioritized based on the potential risk to the NAS or the safety concern. An ad hoc audit or assessment may take priority over a scheduled audit or assessment.
- 2. Assessment.** A process of measuring or judging the value or level of something.
- 3. Audit.** A review of an organization's safety programs or initiatives to verify completion of tasks and determine an organization's compliance with FAA directives and procedures.
- 4. Corrective Action.** The initial action or series of actions taken to correct a discrepancy.
- 5. Corrective Action Plan (CAP).** Documentation prepared in response to a corrective action request that describes the action(s) to be taken to correct a safety-related finding.
- 6. Corrective Action Request (CAR).** A formal document identifying a nonconformance that is systemic in nature and requires a root cause analysis and modification.
- 7. Finding.** Results of the analysis of collected data against audit or assessment criteria.
 - a. Non-Safety-Related Finding.** A concern or noncompliance that does not indicate a potential safety risk to the NAS.
 - b. Safety-Related Finding.** A safety issue or noncompliance with a safety-related requirement that indicates a significant hazard or potential safety risk to the NAS.
- 8. Operational Peer Assessment.** A collaboration with an affected service unit, based on a suspected risk, safety related trend, or other special emphasis item or concern. An OPA is conducted to evaluate a facility's operational and technical adequacy in delivering air traffic control services, and focuses on management's involvement in and oversight of facility staffing and scheduling, operations and procedures, training, and quality control efforts.
- 9. Scheduled Audit or Assessment.** An audit or assessment normally conducted on a recurring basis and scheduled and planned in advance of the fiscal year.
- 10. Team Lead.** An AJI employee assigned to manage an audit or assessment.
- 11. Team Members.** Personnel (internal to AJI or external) assigned to conduct an AJI audit or assessment.