

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

AIR TRAFFIC ORGANIZATION SYSTEM OPERATIONS SERVICE UNIT



National System Strategy Team (NSST)

ATO System Operations Facility Briefing

May 24, 2006

Version 1.3

FOR FIELD DISTRIBUTION ONLY

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Introduction

On or about Saturday, June 17, 2006, the Severe Weather area at the David J. Hurley Air Traffic Control System Command Center (ATCSCC) will be dissolved and replaced by a new functional area consisting of ATCSCC National Traffic Management Officer (NTMO) personnel: National System Strategy Team (NSST). The NSST will control a variety of national airspace management functions and processes from one organizational location.

Functions and processes managed by the NSST will include conducting Planning Teleconferences, coordinating and implementing Airspace Flow Programs (AFP), managing reroutes, and facilitating International Operations.

This document describes the purpose, structure, roles, and responsibilities of the NSST, outlines some of the national procedural changes associated with this new alignment, and highlights the local training and national communication activities that have been implemented to prepare ATCSCC and System Operations field personnel for this transition.

Purpose of this Document

After reviewing the materials presented in this document, you will be able to:

1. Describe the purpose in establishing the NSST.
2. Describe the structure and staffing of the NSST.
3. Identify the roles and responsibilities of the NSST, including Planner, NESP, Tactical Airspace Manager, Regional Airspace Managers and International Operations Manager.
4. Describe national procedural changes associated with establishing the NSST.

Purpose of NSST

This resource realignment and reassignment of work at the Command Center will improve the ability of the ATCSCC to respond more effectively to the needs of Traffic Management personnel in System Operations field facilities as well as AT customers. Most of the changes associated with this reassignment of work will be transparent to System Operations facilities and customers.

The National System Strategy Team will have clearly defined areas of specific individual responsibility among personnel in the area. Implementing individually assigned and recognized responsibilities in the NSST will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of system-wide planning, coordination, and responsiveness including reroute generation and exit strategy planning.

Structure of NSST

The NSST will be comprised of the Planner, National En Route Spacing Position (NESP), Tactical Airspace Manager (TAM), International Operations Manager (IOM) and Regional Airspace Managers (RAM).

The NSST will be divided into distinct areas of geographical responsibility assigned to specific Regional Airspace Managers and to International Operations Managers. Domestically, the geographical areas will coincide with the traffic management responsibilities assigned to the Directors of Tactical Operations (DTO): northeast, southeast, Midwest, southwest, and west. Internationally, the geographic areas will coincide with major traffic flows: North Atlantic, Pacific and Polar, Central and South America, and Caribbean.

All NSST positions can be combined or de-combined as situations dictate.

NSST Tasking and Responsibilities

The NSST will:

1. Develop private Flow Evaluation Areas (FEA) to monitor the target demand in a constrained area.
2. Share the FEAs with field facility Traffic Management Units (TMU) and the public when traffic management initiatives (TMI) will be required to manage demand.
3. Coordinate, prepare, and implement TMIs and reroutes.
4. Monitor TMIs and reroute compliance and take appropriate action to mitigate delays related to active TMIs.
5. Coordinate with field facility TMUs and customers and develop strategies to exit TMIs.
6. Conduct and facilitate collaborative Planning Telcons with FAA field facilities and NAS customers and coordinate the Operations Plan.
7. Facilitate the coordination of the New York SWAP statement.
8. Conduct international telcons and facilitate traffic flow management in the Pacific, Polar, North Atlantic, Central and South America, and Caribbean regions.
9. Participate in international hotline telcons.
10. Conduct contingency table top exercises.

The development of TMIs by the NSST will normally proceed from least restrictive to more restrictive, as follows:

1. Expanded miles-in-trail (MIT). To the extent possible, expanded MIT will be applied per airway or departure fix rather than per destination airport. NTML will be the preferred method for conveying MIT initiatives between the ATCSCC and field facility TMUs.
2. Playbook and Ad hoc reroutes. The Create Reroute Tool in TSD will be the primary method for publishing reroutes, the associated advisories, and flight lists.

3. Flow Constrained Areas (FCA). When conditions warrant, the NSST will coordinate and publish an FCA and send an advisory that outlines the TMIs associated with the scenario.
4. Airspace Flow Program (AFP). The NESP will be the team member responsible for coordinating, implementing, and monitoring AFPs.
5. Ground stops. During severe weather events, the NSST will participate in the coordination and implementation of ground stops.

It is important to note the following.

1. Air Traffic field facility Traffic Management Units are expected to:
 - a. Utilize FEAs and share them with the NSST when evaluating the need for TMIs.
 - b. Participate in TMI discussion and coordination with the NSST.
 - c. Suggest exit strategies and participate in their development with the NSST.
 - d. Discuss and coordinate TMI concerns and questions with the NSST.
 - e. Implement Traffic Management Initiatives coordinated by the NSST.

Specific NSST Position Responsibilities

National Traffic Management Officer (NTMO) staffing at the ATCSCC has been increased to permit staffing of the NSST area by management personnel. The NSST area will staff the following positions on a daily basis:

Planner

The Planner is the team lead for the NSST and has responsibility for matters pertaining to the development of the Operations Plan (OP) within the lateral and vertical limits of the National Airspace System (NAS) and trans-border operations with international facilities.

Tactical Airspace Manager

The TAM assists the National Operations Manager (NOM) and Planner with NSST area oversight, job assessment, and task assignment. The TAM is responsible for the coordination and communication of operational activities between the NOM, Planner, NESP, RAM, TCA, Terminal Area NTMO, among others. To help avoid communication shortfalls, special attention will be placed on coordinating route constraints and associated MIT restrictions conveyed by the Terminal Area and reroute activity and associated MIT restrictions conveyed by the NSST. To this same end, the TAM serves as the focal point for the release of ground stops when convective activity and reroutes are involved.

National En Route Spacing Position

The NESP is responsible for monitoring the NAS, promoting system balance, and mitigating the impact of flow constraints in the system. The full spectrum of TMIs is available to the NESP for managing overall NAS constraints. The NESP will coordinate, implement, and manage AFPs. Other TMIs, however, will normally be coordinated and implemented by NSST members and the Terminal Area NTMO.

International Operations Manager

The IOM is responsible for matters pertaining to international issues of demand and capacity and for route management concerning trans-border operations with international facilities. IOM responsibilities also include supervision and management of ongoing initiatives involving Space Operations, Very Light Jets, Very Large Jets, and other emerging traffic management projects.

Regional Airspace Manager

The RAM is responsible for implementing and monitoring TMIs. The RAM will work in conjunction with and follow the lead of the Planner with regard to TMIs.

During times of national emergency, the RAM will join the Crisis Management Center, as assigned, and serve as the focal point for coordination and communication of hurricane impacts to the NAS. The RAM will also serve as the ATCSCC operational focal point for conducting contingency planning tabletop exercises.

NSST National Procedural Changes

The official FAA General Notice (GENOT) specifying procedural changes associated with establishing the National System Strategy Team will be developed and distributed through currently established methods and media.

The material presented here is intended as a summary overview of the national procedural changes associated with establishing the NSST and do not replace or supersede the information provided in the GENOT.

The GENOT and this document are both posted on the TFM Learning Center web site at www.fly.faa.gov/tfmlearning.

Severe weather operation system reviews indicate that procedural reform can improve the efficiency of NAS operations. Among the most frequent requests have been to 1) develop route requests through the National Traffic Management Log (NTML) and 2) simplify mile in trail (MIT) restrictions.

NTML Route Requests

Procedures are being developed to allow for NTML route requests. Those procedures will include the following process:

- A requesting facility will build and share an FEA and formulate a route request.

- The FEA/Route Request will be forwarded to the appropriate NSST Regional Airspace Manager and surrounding impacted facilities by NTML.
- The NSST Regional Airspace Manager and Tactical Airspace Manager will review the data provided, along with weather data and any other pertinent facts, and then respond to the requestor. The response may take the form of NTML or phone contact. In all cases, any final implementation will be confirmed and authorized by telephone.

Miles-in-Trail Restrictions

During severe weather events, operations within the NAS become far more complex than normal. Reroutes generate additional requirements on system stakeholders and FAA facilities. One common comment received from the major facilities has been that Miles-in-Trail (MIT) restrictions are too pervasive during complex operations.

A standard request from major facilities has been to simplify MIT restrictions by providing a single MIT restriction for a specific airway or departure gate rather than multiple MIT restrictions for different airports on the same airway. The NSST will assume responsibility for reviewing MIT associated with reroutes and implementing MIT restrictions on specific airways whenever operational gains can be realized. The NSST will review and implement all severe weather and reroute related restrictions through the standard NTML process. This is a change from the current procedure regarding MIT implementation.

Documentation

The ATCSCC Procedures Office will update all applicable FAA documents describing these and any other procedural changes. The ATCSCC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) will also be revised.

NSST Equipment and Automation

The responsibilities structure in the NSST requires simultaneous NTML access from multiple positions. The NSST area will install distinct NTML platforms for each position. These NTML platforms/functions will be combinable in any format as needed.

New telephone configurations in the NSST area will allow any FAA facility to call their specific NSST Regional Airspace Manager at the correct position.

NSST Training

All National Traffic Management Officers will attend ATCSCC internal training on AFP, NSST, and associated equipment prior to the establishment of the NSST area.

The Office of NAS TFM Learning and Development developed this briefing package to inform personnel at ATO System Operations field facilities regarding the purpose, structure, roles, and responsibilities of the National System Strategy Team. All materials are posted to the TFM Learning Center at www.fly.faa.gov/tfmlearning.