




# Memorandum

**U.S. Department of  
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation  
Office of Inspector General

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement—  
Review of FAA's Air Traffic Controller Facility  
Training Program  
Project Number 07A3015A000

Date: May 21, 2007

From: David A. Dobbs   
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for Auditing and Evaluation

Reply to  
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Assistant Administrator for Financial Services  
and Chief Financial Officer

Attrition in the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) air traffic controller workforce is expected to rise in the upcoming years as controllers hired after the 1981 Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization strike become eligible for retirement. In March 2007, FAA reported that it expects to hire and train more than 15,000 new controllers over the next 10 years. A significant challenge for FAA will be to train and certify newly hired or "developmental" controllers; the longest and most expensive portion of that training is conducted at the facility level.

Facility training for developmental air traffic controllers is conducted in stages and consists of a combination of classroom, simulation, and on-the-job training (OJT). Each stage represents a different control position or group of control positions of a developmental controller's assigned area. After developmental controllers have certified on all positions within their assigned area, they are commissioned as a fully certified professional controller at that facility. Currently, this process takes between 3 and 5 years.

FAA projects that developmental controllers will make up 25 percent or more of the entire controller workforce through fiscal year 2014, which would represent the highest percentage of developmental controllers in the workforce in recent years. Furthermore, as experienced controllers retire, FAA will increasingly lose more experienced OJT instructors, who are critical components of facility training.

The Office of Inspector General plans to conduct an audit of air traffic controller facility training. The objectives of our audit are to (1) assess the adequacy of FAA's plans to effectively train an increasing number of new controllers at the facility level and (2) determine FAA's progress in implementing key initiatives for reducing facility training time and costs.

We plan to begin the audit the week of June 4, 2007, and will contact FAA's audit liaison to arrange a formal entrance conference. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Robert Romich, Project Manager, at (202) 366-6478, or Dan Raville, Program Director, at (202) 366-1405.

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cc: FAA Deputy Administrator  
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