



Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement –
Review of FAA’s Controller Facility Training
Program
Federal Aviation Administration
Project No. 12A3003A000

Date: February 3, 2012

From: Jeffrey B. Guzzetti
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) currently plans to hire and train nearly 11,000 new air traffic controllers through fiscal year 2020 to offset the impending retirements of those hired after the 1981 controller strike. With so many veteran controllers retiring, FAA faces the risk of not having enough certified professional controllers (CPCs)¹ to maintain continuity of air traffic operations. Training and certifying these large numbers of newly hired controllers pose significant challenges for FAA. Over the past 2 years, the average training times for controllers assigned to terminal facilities have increased significantly, primarily due to the increased number of new hires who have no prior air traffic experience. In addition, some facilities experience high training attrition rates. For example, as we recently reported,² at the New York Terminal Radar Approach Control, 77 percent of new controllers who completed facility training between fiscal years 2008 and 2010 could not successfully complete certification to become CPCs.

In the last few years, FAA has introduced several training initiatives, such as purchasing new training simulators, in an attempt to address these issues. Accordingly, our audit objectives are to 1) identify steps FAA has taken to improve the facility training program for air traffic controllers, and 2) assess the effectiveness

¹ Certified professional controllers (CPCs) are controllers who have achieved full certification on all positions within their assigned area.

² OIG Report No. AV-2012-039, “Enhanced Oversight of Staffing and Training at FAA’s Critical Facilities is Needed to Maintain Continuity of Operations,” January 12, 2012. OIG reports are available on our Web site at <http://www.oig.dot.gov/>.

of those steps in improving training times, staffing composition, and training completion rates.

We plan to begin this audit this month at FAA Headquarters and selected air traffic control facilities. We will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If you have any questions concerning this audit, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Bob Romich, Program Director, at (202) 366-6478.

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cc: Anthony Williams, AAE-001
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