



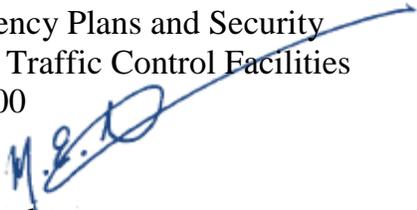
Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION**: Audit Announcement –
Audit of FAA’s Contingency Plans and Security
Protocols at Chicago Air Traffic Control Facilities
Project No. 15A3001A000

Date: October 15, 2014

From: Matthew E. Hampton 
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

On September 26, 2014, a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) contract employee deliberately set fire to critical equipment at FAA’s Chicago Air Route Traffic Control Center (Chicago Center) in Aurora, IL. This is the second time since May 2014 that a fire at a Chicago area air traffic control facility has resulted in delays and cancellations of hundreds of flights in and out of O’Hare and Midway international airports. These events underscore the importance of safeguarding the National Airspace System and the need for effective contingency plans.

FAA operates a vast network of facilities and communication, navigation, and surveillance equipment throughout the United States for managing air traffic through all phases of flight. The responsibility for the security of air traffic facilities and systems is shared among two FAA offices. The Office of Security and Hazardous Materials Safety ensures the integrity of personnel who support air traffic operations and protect facilities from criminal and terrorist acts. The Air Traffic Organization is responsible for managing day-to-day operations and, among other things, develops and implements contingency plans for restoring air traffic service in response to emergencies.

Over the years, we have conducted numerous reviews of the security of air traffic systems and facilities. We recently began a review of the information security controls over large FAA facilities that are responsible for managing airport arrival and

departures.¹ This review is also examining whether risks are being properly mitigated to limit the loss of a facility's ability to provide air traffic services.

On September 29, 2014, six Members of Congress requested that our office review the emergency and security protocols at Chicago air traffic control facilities. We were asked to ensure that adequate protocols, emergency plans, and security measures are in place to prevent or mitigate the impact of such emergencies in the future. Accordingly, our objectives are to (1) assess whether FAA has developed and implemented a business continuity plan for the Chicago air traffic control facilities that provides for adequate levels of redundancy and resiliency and (2) evaluate whether the security measures in place at the Chicago facilities are currently maintained and sufficient to mitigate potential risks to the air traffic control system.

We plan to begin the audit this month and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-366-0500 or Robert Romich, Program Director, at 202-366-6478.

#

cc: DOT Audit Liaison, M-1
FAA Audit Liaison, AAE-100

¹ "Audit Initiated of the Information Technology Controls over FAA's Large Terminal Radar Approach Control Facilities," August 7, 2014. OIG announcement letters and reports are available on our Web site at <http://www.dot.oig.gov/>.