

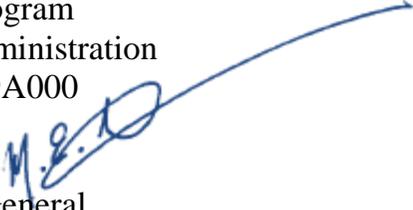


# Memorandum

**U.S. Department of  
Transportation**  
Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation  
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement -  
Review of FAA's Oversight of Aircraft Rescue  
and Fire Fighting Program  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Project No. 14A3009A000

Date: August 6, 2014

From: Matthew Hampton   
Assistant Inspector General  
for Aviation Audits

Reply to  
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

In July 2013, Asiana Flight 214 crashed on final approach into San Francisco International Airport, resulting in three fatalities and drawing widespread attention to the importance of effective emergency response at our Nation's airports. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is responsible for ensuring that more than 500 commercial airports<sup>1</sup> comply with Federal regulations governing airport safety and emergency response operations, including Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) requirements. Since 2004, FAA has provided approximately \$400 million in Airport Improvement Program funds to airports nationwide for ARFF facilities and equipment.

Under ARFF regulations, FAA requires commercial airport operators to develop plans and procedures to respond to aircraft incidents and accidents, fires, and hazardous materials incidents. FAA also requires all rescue and firefighting personnel to be fully trained prior to their first duties and to receive recurrent training every 12 months. However, questions have been raised about the effectiveness of FAA's oversight of these requirements. For example, the National Transportation Safety Board recently

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<sup>1</sup> Commercial service airports are generally defined as public airports receiving scheduled and unscheduled passenger-passenger-carrying operations of an air carrier operating aircraft designed for more than 9 passenger seats and at least 31 passenger seats, respectively. Becoming a commercial service airport requires FAA to issue an airport operating certificate (AOC). To obtain an AOC, an airport must agree to specific standards for maintaining and operating the airport and provide aircraft rescue and fire fighting personnel, facilities, and equipment.

highlighted safety issues related to ARFF training, staffing, and FAA oversight of emergency response plans in its report on the July 2013 Asiana crash.<sup>2</sup>

Given the criticality of ARFF operations to airport safety, we are initiating an audit of FAA's management and oversight of ARFF requirements. Our audit objectives are to assess FAA's (1) policies and guidance for implementing ARFF requirements and (2) oversight and enforcement of airports' adherence to ARFF requirements.

We plan to begin our audit later this month and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct our work at FAA Headquarters, selected FAA regional offices, and selected airports (to be determined). If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Scott Macey, Program Director, at (415) 744-0434.

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

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<sup>2</sup> National Transportation Safety Board, "Crash of Asiana Flight 214 Accident Report Summary," June 24, 2014.