



# Memorandum

U.S. Department of  
Transportation

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation  
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION**: Audit Announcement –  
Security Controls of the Data Communications  
Program  
Federal Aviation Administration  
Project No. 17F3007F000

Date: April 4, 2017

From: Louis C. King   
Assistant Inspector General for Financial and  
Information Technology Audits

Reply to  
Attn. of: JA-20

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

The Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Data Communications (DataComm) program is an essential element of the Agency's Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen) initiative to transform the Nation's air traffic control system to meet future needs. DataComm will provide a direct link for digital communications between aircraft flight decks and air traffic controllers. FAA also expects the system to improve flight safety, enhance controller productivity, increase aircraft fuel savings, and provide support for other NextGen programs.

Given the important role that DataComm will play in communications between controllers and flight crews, it is critical that FAA incorporate sufficient controls to prevent potential security threats from compromising flight data and communications. This includes establishing an effective contingency plan to ensure FAA can quickly recover from any unexpected loss of DataComm availability. Accordingly, we are initiating an audit of FAA's information technology security controls for DataComm. Our audit objectives are to determine whether: (1) FAA is identifying and properly mitigating security risks, and (2) FAA's contingency plan is sufficient to limit the effects of DataComm availability losses.

We plan to begin this audit in April 2017 and conduct it at FAA Headquarters and selected field sites. We will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference.

Should you have any questions, please call me at (202) 366-1407, or Abdil Salah, Program Director at (202) 366-8543.

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cc: Chief Information Officer, DOT  
Deputy Assistant Administrator for Information Services/  
Chief Information Officer, FAA  
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