



Memorandum

Date: March 3, 2020

Subject: INFORMATION: Audit Announcement | FAA Inspector Staffing Model Update
Project No. 20A3003A000
Federal Aviation Administration

From: Matthew Hampton
Assistant Inspector General for Aviation Audits 

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

As part of its safety oversight mission, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) monitors more than 290,000 registered aircraft, 5,400 aircraft operators, and nearly 1,600 approved manufacturers to ensure compliance with aviation safety laws and regulations. Much of this work is performed by the Agency's aviation safety inspector workforce, whose responsibilities include overseeing the maintenance practices of air carriers and other operators, certifying the airworthiness of new aircraft, overseeing the work performed by designees,¹ and updating safety-critical policies and guidance. FAA estimates that it will employ more than 4,200 inspectors in fiscal year 2020.

To address this critical function, section 303 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018² directed the Agency to update its safety critical staffing model to determine the number of aviation safety inspectors FAA needs to fulfill its safety oversight mission. The act also directed OIG to conduct an audit to determine the staffing model's assumptions and methodologies, and whether it accounts for FAA's authority to fully use designees.

In November 2019, FAA informed OIG that it had updated the model in accordance with section 303 of the act. Accordingly, we are initiating the required audit. Our objectives will be to (1) assess the changes FAA made to update the inspector staffing model, (2) review the assumptions and methodologies the model uses to predict the number of aviation safety inspectors FAA needs to

¹ Designees are individuals and organizations that FAA has authorized to act on its behalf to examine, inspect, and test people and aircraft for the purpose of issuing airman, operating, and aircraft certificates.

² Public Law 115-254 (October 5, 2018).

meet its current and future oversight responsibilities, and (3) determine how FAA's model accounts for the use of designees.

We plan to begin the audit this month and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. We will conduct the audit at FAA Headquarters and other locations that we will determine during the audit. If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 366-0500 or Robin Koch, Program Director, at (404) 562-3770.

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