



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL**

Statement on FAA's New York TRACON Assessment

June 2, 2005

Earlier this year, both FAA and OIG received a high volume of hotline complaints from air traffic controllers at the New York (NY) TRACON facility alleging unreported operational errors. In response to these concerns, as well as a larger set of associated management and operational issues, it was agreed that FAA would conduct an internal management assessment and we would review their findings upon completion.

We have received FAA's report and are reviewing the findings and recommendations, which address issues ranging from unreported operational errors, alleged overtime pay abuse, sick leave abuse, and workers' compensation abuse. These are very serious issues that we have been reporting on for years, costing taxpayers millions of dollars. The report also notes that FAA is referring some matters to us for further review and investigation.

Last year, we found a lack of adequate controls on how operational errors were being identified, investigated, and reported at TRACONs and towers. We recommended—and FAA agreed to institute—internal audit procedures to determine whether operational errors are being fully reported. We recognize that there are varying degrees of the severity of operational errors and their effect on safety. However, operational errors remain an important safety measure requiring FAA's continued attention.

FAA's assessment of the NY TRACON was an important effort given the number of long-standing issues between management and labor, and successful implementation of FAA's recommendations will require their strong commitment and collaboration.

Given our continuing involvement in these issues, we will monitor and assess the effectiveness of actions taken to implement FAA's recommendations. To this end, we are establishing an on-site presence at the TRACON, for an indeterminate period. Our on-site presence will enable us to closely review FAA's progress and facilitate follow-up reviews and investigations through direct contact between our office and both controllers and management.