



Memorandum

U.S. Department of
Transportation

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement –
Controller Staffing and Training at Critical Air
Traffic Control Facilities
Federal Aviation Administration
Project No. 11A3001A000

Date: October 22, 2010

From: Jeffrey B. Guzzetti 
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to JA-10
Attn. of:

To: Director, Audit and Evaluation

FAA estimates that it will need to hire and train nearly 11,000 new air traffic controllers by fiscal year 2019 to replace those hired after the 1981 strike who are now retiring. In addressing this challenge, FAA needs to ensure that all air traffic control facilities have enough experienced controllers to maintain the safety of the National Airspace System—especially at the busiest, most complex facilities. Due to increased controller attrition and hiring, FAA faces a shortage of fully certified controllers, with 26 percent of its current workforce comprised of controllers in training—up from 15 percent in 2004. This is a concern because only fully certified controllers are qualified to control traffic at all positions of their assigned area and provide on-the-job training for new controllers.

We are initiating this audit based in part on a provision in the report accompanying H.R. 5850 (House Report 111-564), the version of the Fiscal Year 2011 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill passed by the House of Representatives. If enacted, our office would be directed to review training and staffing at FAA's most critical facilities to assess whether FAA's training protocol can successfully meet these challenges.

Accordingly, our audit objective is to review FAA's plans to provide its most critical air traffic control facilities with appropriate controller staffing, training resources, and other support necessary to ensure the continuity of facility operations. We plan to begin the audit later this month at FAA Headquarters and selected air traffic control facilities and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference.

If you have any questions, please contact Dan Rville, Program Director, at (202) 366-1405 or Bob Romich, Project Manager, at (202) 366-6478.

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cc: FAA Deputy Administrator
Anthony Williams, AAE-001
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