U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

**Office of the Chief Counsel**

**800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591**

DEC 11 2014

Mr. Michael Wuerger
Allegiant Travel Company
8360 S. Durango Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89113

Subject: Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts (TAF) as acceptable weather reports for part 121 requirements.

Mr. Wuerger:

This letter is in response to your request for a legal interpretation regarding weather reporting requirements in part 121. Specifically, you ask whether Terminal Aerodrome Forecasts[1] (TAF) and Area Forecasts (FA) are acceptable weather reports that satisfy the requirements of 14 CFR §§ 121.101 & 121.687.

The National Weather Service describes an Area Forecast as "a forecast of Visual Flight Rules, clouds, and weather conditions over an area as large as the size of several states." A Terminal Aerodrome Forecast is a "concise statement of the expected meteorological conditions at an airport during a specific period." *See* NOAA National Weather Service website at www.aviationweather.gov.

14 CFR § 121.101 Weather reporting facilities requires that "[e]ach certificate holder conducting domestic or flag operations must show that enough weather reporting services are available along each route to ensure weather reports and forecasts necessary for the operations." Part 121, subpart U, Dispatching and Flight Release Rules, contains regulatory requirements for weather reports or forecasts that apply to specific airports, such as the destination or alternate airport. Additionally, § 121.687(b) states that a dispatch release must contain "...weather reports, available weather forecasts, or a combination thereof, for the *destination airport, intermediate stops, and alternate airports*...[emphasis added]."

Therefore, since the part 121 requirements you refer to contain requirements for weather reports for specific airports, a Terminal Aerodrome Forecast would be an acceptable weather

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[1] In your request for a legal interpretation, you refer to a Terminal Area Forecast (TAF) and Area Forecast (FA) when asking what forecasts are acceptable to satisfy the requirements of part 121. The FAA notes that there are two commonly used definitions for the acronym TAF. A Terminal Area Forecast is the official FAA forecast of aviation activity for US airports. In contrast, a Terminal Aerodrome Forecast is a "concise statement of the expected meteorological conditions at an airport during a specified period." *See* NOAA National Weather Service website. www.aviationweather.gov. For the purposes of this legal interpretation, the acronym TAF refers to the Terminal Aerodrome Forecast.

forecast. However, since an Area Forecast covers vastly larger areas as opposed to specific airports, it would not be an acceptable forecast to satisfy the relevant part 121 weather reporting requirements referenced above.

We appreciate your patience and trust that the above responds to your concerns. This response was prepared by Nancy Sanchez, an attorney in the International Law, Legislation, and Regulations Division of the Office of the Chief Counsel, and was coordinated with the Air Transportation Division of Flight Standards Service. Please contact us at (202) 267-3073 if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Mark W. Bury
Assistant Chief Counsel for
International Law, Legislation, and Regulations
AGC-200