NOTICE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

Air Traffic Organization Policy

N JO 3120.161

Effective Date:
October 7, 2026

Cancellation Date:
October 6, 2027

SUBJ: Air Traffic Refresher Training; Changes to FAA Order JO 3120.4S, Air Traffic Technical Training

1. Purpose of this Notice. This notice announces a new safety initiative, National Airspace System (NAS) Safety Focus refresher training, and adds a requirement that Safety Focus refresher training topics be included, as appropriate, in the required annual facility refresher training plan. It further moves the requirement for Line Up and Wait (LUAW) to the mandatory list of refresher training topics. This notice amends FAA Order JO 3120.4S, Air Traffic Technical Training, accordingly.

2. Audience. This notice is distributed electronically to all users of FAA Order JO 3120.4S, Air Traffic Technical Training.

3. Where can I Find This Notice? This notice is available on the MyFAA employee website at https://employees.faa.gov/tools_resources/orders_notices/ and on the Air Traffic Plans and Publications website at https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/.

4. Background. Operational System Intelligence (AJS), in coordination with Technical Training (AJV-T), Operational Policy (AJV-P), and the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), has developed a safety initiative, NAS Safety Focus refresher training. AJV-T will administer the NAS Safety Focus refresher training program and issue required Safety Focus refresher training topics, annually, per memorandum. Beginning with calendar year (CY) 2027, facilities must incorporate annually designated NAS Safety Focus refresher training topics into facility refresher training plans. AJS, in coordination with AJV-T, will identify the NAS Safety Focus refresher training topics and communicate them annually via a tasking memorandum targeted for release by October 1. The tasking memorandum will identify the NAS Safety Focus refresher training topics to be addressed during the following calendar year.

Concerning the move of LUAW to the mandatory topics list, this action is being taken to help ensure consistency of LUAW application in the NAS.

5. NAS Safety Focus Refresher Training.

a. Refresher training provides the opportunity to reinforce operational knowledge, technical decision-making, controller judgment, and the recovery of safety margins.

b. NAS Safety Focus refresher training connects national safety priorities with facility-level refresher training. Annual subject areas will be based on operational risk, safety trends, event data, safety recommendations, emerging hazards, and other identified ATO priorities.

c. NAS Safety Focus refresher training supplements the refresher training framework established in FAA Order JO 3120.4. The subject areas may satisfy existing refresher training requirements when the content and method of delivery meet the applicable requirements of FAA Order JO 3120.4.

6. NAS Safety Focus Refresher Training Delivery and Facility Implementation.

a. Each NAS Safety Focus refresher training topic must include:

(1) An instructor-led training component; and

(2) A simulation component, where applicable simulation capability exists.

b. Training must emphasize operational application, controller judgment, recognition of developing risk, communication, coordination, and recovery actions.

c. Facilities may adapt the training to local operations, facility complexity, safety trends, and available resources, provided all required content and delivery components are addressed.

d. Simulation conducted for the annual subject areas may be credited toward existing refresher training simulation requirements when it satisfies FAA Order JO 3120.4. Facilities without applicable simulation capability must address the subject areas through available refresher training methods.

7. Documentation. Document completions per FAA Order JO 3120.4.

8. Questions. Coordinate through Service Area training offices to Technical Training, AJV-T.

9. Action. Amend FAA Order JO 3120.4S by changing Chapter 4, Training Requirements for Air Traffic Control Specialists, paragraph 5, Proficiency Training, to read as follows:

Paragraph 5 through Subparagraph 5a, No Change

b. Refresher Training. Refresher training is conducted to maintain and update previously learned knowledge and skills. All operational personnel must complete refresher training. Each facility must develop a written annual refresher training plan and conduct the planned training throughout the calendar year. Refresher training need not be delivered all at once. Refresher training topics and delivery methods (e.g., electronic learning, classroom, simulation) will be developed by the Training Administrator (TA) and the Local Safety Council (LSC) or locally developed by another collaborative group. Facilities with access to simulation capabilities must identify which topics will be covered in simulation training from the refresher training plan. Simulation must consist of a cumulative total of not less than two hours per calendar year. Facilities may design their refresher training program specifically for operational areas within the facility that perform different types of operations. The list below is not all-inclusive, and facilities may add other topics to meet their needs. An annual refresher training plan must consist of:

(1) All mandatory topics listed below:

(a) NAS Safety Focus refresher training topics. For ease of administration, it is not necessary to copy/paste the Safety Focus topics into the refresher training plan; the entry "Safety Focus topics" is sufficient.

(b) Lost aircraft orientation.

(c) Recovery in ATC operations.

(d) Safety alerts (required in simulation training).

(e) Opposite Direction Operations (ODO), for facilities with procedures in place.

(f) Fatigue awareness.

(g) Oceanic procedures, where applicable.

(h) Line Up and Wait (LUAW), for those facilities authorized to conduct LUAW (required in simulation training).

(i) OS/Controller-in-Charge (CIC) Training. OSs and CICs must receive a minimum of one hour of training on subjects including but not limited to the handling of accidents, reporting incidents, unusual situations, upward reporting, Domestic Events Network (DEN) notification, and emergency events.

NOTE-
NAS Safety Focus Refresher Training is not required for operational personnel assigned to the David J. Hurley Air Traffic Control System Command Center.

Subparagraph b(2) through b(2)(c), No Change

(d) Procedures/Operations:

i. Airspace intruder

ii. Special flight handling

iii. Tower visibility

iv. Local Airport De-icing Plan (LADP)

v. Bird activity

vi. Special Activity Airspace (SAA)

vii. Military operations

viii. Limited Aviation Weather Reporting Stations (LAWRS)

ix. Land and Hold Short Operations (LAHSO)

x. Time-Based Flow Management (TBFM)

xi. Suspicious UAS Activity

xii. Space Operations

Subparagraph b(2)(e) through b(4)(b), No Change

No further changes to paragraph

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Digitally signed by CRYSTAL L BALL
Date: 2026.10.07 12:52:07 -04'00'

Crystal L. Ball
Director (A), Operational Policy, AJV-P
Mission Readiness Services
Air Traffic Organization (ATO)