

User Request Evaluation Tool (URET) – En Route

FAA Order 7110.65, “Air Traffic Control”, paragraph 13-1-1 describes URET as “an en route decision support tool that is used by the sector team in performing its strategic planning responsibilities. URET uses flight plan data, forecast winds, aircraft performance characteristics, and track data to derive expected aircraft trajectories, and to predict conflicts between aircraft and between aircraft and special use or designated airspace. It also provides trial planning and enhanced flight data management capabilities.”

By predicting an aircraft’s flight path, URET, as part of en-route air traffic control capabilities, was designed to detect conflict between aircraft; between aircraft and airspace boundaries; and to provide potential solutions to those conflicts in a timely manner.

The flight data management portion of URET eliminates the need for flight progress strips. Aircraft call sign, ground speed, and other pertinent information is displayed on the radar display throughout the en-route environment negating the need for the air traffic controller to look away from the radar display to update data as was required with flight progress strips.

Using URET, A controller may enter information about the flight, such as: communicating with flightcrew; no radio communication (NORDO), instructed to contact next controller in the flight data block (line 4). However, this information is temporary and does not transfer to the next controller. Each succeeding controller would have to input the information.

Air traffic controllers must still use flight progress strips in certain situations, such as when providing non-radar ATC services or as directed by facility management via facility directive.

In the case of NWA188, URET was used exclusively by air traffic controllers. At the time of the event, there was no standard procedure or requirement for indicating when an aircraft, such as NWA188, was in communication with the controller, not in communication with the flightcrew, or instructed to contact another air traffic controller on another frequency.