



NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

Office of Aviation Safety

Washington, DC 20594

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Air Traffic Group Factual Report of Investigation

Attachment 15 – ZDV NOTAM distribution report, 4 pages

Report of Investigation
Denver ARTCC
FDC NOTAM Distribution
04/01/01

On Sunday, April 1, 2001 during the period 1500 – 2200 MDT, an investigation was conducted by ANM-505 at Denver Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC). The investigation was to establish what methodology is used for distribution of FDC NOTAMs, and to specifically track FDC NOTAM 1/3034 concerning the VOR DME – GPS C Runway 15 approach at Aspen, Colorado.

The investigation consisted of a tour of the Flight Data Communication area with an operational briefing of Service A equipment, personnel interviews, and review of files. A physical walk through of the internal distribution process, a physical check of the Operations Manager (OM) and Traffic Management (TM) areas, and an inspection of Area One.

The physical inspection and walk through of the FDC NOTAM distribution process was accomplished to ensure complete understanding of the process. The inspection of the OM and TM areas was to identify different areas that FDC NOTAMs could be temporarily filed during a shift. The inspection of Area One was conducted to verify current FDC NOTAM information is posted in a manner that can be observed by all control personnel.

The interviews were conducted with 5 Flight Data Communication Specialist (FDCS), two Operations Supervisors (OS), and 1 OM. The interviews revealed that the facility does have an informal standard operating practice for the distribution of FDC NOTAMs. Instructions for the distribution are attached. Basically, the NOTAM is received on the facility Service A computer. It is then printed and date/time stamped by an FDCS. The FDCS then handle distribution two different ways. One way is to physically take it to the OM and ask where they would like distribution to go. (The new employees use this method.) The second way is to distribute a copy to the OM, the facility Procedures office and to the effected Area. The OM would then handle further distribution. Both methods require a separate distribution by either fax or mail (for facilities not having a fax machine). Notification to other facilities, i.e., Aspen ATCT, would be logged in a separate tracking binder. The OS's and OM all used status information areas to list pertinent NOTAM information. The investigation revealed that there is no specific directive in place that ensures thorough distribution and a managerial control action to validate the distribution process. Facility management has already action to establish this type of directive.

Specific to FDC NOTAM 1/3034, Aspen – Pitkin County/Sardy Field, Aspen, CO, VOR/DME or GPS – C, Amendment 4B, the lack of distribution to Aspen ATCT appears to be for the following reasons:

On March 27, 2001 at 1848Z, FDC NOTAMS 1/3032 and 1/3032 which read as follows were received:

NOUS11 KMSC 271848

!FDC 1/3032 ASE FI/T ASPEN-PITKIN COUNTY/SARDY FIELD, ASPEN, CO.

VOR/DME OR GPS-C, AMDT 4B...

CIRCLING NA AT NIGHT.

THIS IS VOR/DME OR GPS-C, AMDT 4C. =

!FDC 1/3033 FDC CANCEL 1/3032 ASE =

The FDCS who received these NOTAMs date/time stamped them at 1902Z, then made proper internal distribution. The FDCS stated that he did not notify Aspen ATCT since the second NOTAM cancelled the first one.

At 1849Z FDC NOTAM 1/3034 was received and read as follows:

NOUS11 KMSC 271849

!FDC 1/3034 ASE FI/P ASPEN-PITKIN COUNTY/SARDY FIELD, ASPEN, CO.

VOR/DME OR GPS-C, AMDT 4B...

CIRCLING NA AT NIGHT.

THIS IS VOR/DME OR GPS-C, AMDT 4C. =

Based on physical evidence, NOTAM 1/3034 was separated from NOTAMs 1/3032 and 1/3033 after being date/time stamped. (See attached) The FDCS on the day shift remembers receiving and distributing the first two NOTAMs. The FDCS working the evening shift remembered finding NOTAM 1/3034, and distributing it internally after just coming to work at 6 PM in the evening. When asked why he failed to notify Aspen ATCT the specialist stated he had made an error.

The local distribution did include Area One in whose airspace Aspen, CO resides. When asked if the Area had notified Aspen ATCT the OS advised no. Aspen airport is closed when Aspen ATCT is closed so Area One had no reason to be concerned about the content of the FDC NOTAM. A review of the voice tapes of the opening briefing conducted between the Area controllers and the Aspen controllers, revealed no mention of FDC NOTAM 1/3034. Further investigation revealed that there is no checklist used for exchanging information when part-time facilities are assuming their airspace. Facility management is addressing this issue also.

It is the finding of this investigation that the failure to distribute FDC NOTAM 1/3034 to Aspen ATCT is due to human error. An employee with two months experience failed to comply with the FDC NOTAM Instructions required by the FDCS staff. It is also our finding that the facility needs to formalize the current procedures and add managerial controls to ensure that the developed procedures are being followed and meet distribution needs.

Information Paper for AOA-1

Subject: Handling and Distribution of FDC NOTAM 1/3034 at Denver ARTCC

Specific to FDC NOTAM 1/3034, Aspen – Pitkin County/Sardy Field, Aspen, Colorado, VOR/DME or GPS – C, Amendment 4B, the lack of distribution to Aspen ATCT appears to be for the following reasons:

On March 27, 2001, at 1848Z, FDC NOTAMS 1/3032 and 1/3033 which read as follows were received:

NOUS11 KMSC 271848
!FDC 1/3032 ASE FI/T ASPEN-PITKIN COUNTY/SARDY FIELD, ASPEN, CO.
VOR/DME OR GPS-C, AMDT 4B...
CIRCLING NA AT NIGHT.
THIS IS VOR/DME OR GPS-C, AMDT 4C. =

!FDC 1/3033 FDC CANCEL 1/3032 ASE =

Mr. Woodruff, the FDCS trainee, who received these NOTAM's date/time stamped them at 1902Z, then made proper internal distribution. He stated during the interview that he did not notify Aspen ATCT since the second NOTAM cancelled the first one.

At 1849Z, FDC NOTAM 1/3034 was received and read as follows:

NOUS11 KMSC 271849
!FDC 1/3034 ASE FI/P ASPEN-PITKIN COUNTY/SARDY FIELD, ASPEN, CO.
VOR/DME OR GPS-C, AMDT 4B...
CIRCLING NA AT NIGHT.
THIS IS VOR/DME OR GPS-C, AMDT 4C. =

Based on physical evidence and an interview conducted with FDCS trainee Woodruff working the day shift, he stated that he had separated NOTAM 1/3034 from NOTAM's 1/3032 and 1/3033 after being date/time stamped. Mr. Woodruff remembers receiving and distributing the first two NOTAM's. Mr. Mendenhall, the Senior FDCS on the day shift and who is responsible for training, had no specific recollection of these specific FDC NOTAM's or of Mr. Woodruff's distribution.

During the interview, Mr. Fischer, the FDCS trainee working the evening shift, remembered finding NOTAM 1/3034 (one of 35 FDC NOTAM's received that day) but does not remember where he physically found it. Mr. Richie, the Senior FDCS on the evening shift who is responsible for training, had no specific recollection of this NOTAM. Mr. Fischer remembers distributing it internally after just coming to work at 6 p.m. in the evening. When asked why he failed to notify Aspen ATCT, Mr. Fischer stated he had made an error.

The local distribution did include Area One in whose airspace Aspen, Colorado, resides. When interviewed, the OS, Mr. Deubler (OMIC), was asked if the Area had notified Aspen ATCT and he advised no. Aspen Airport is closed when Aspen ATCT is closed so Area One had no reason to be concerned about the content of the FDC NOTAM. A review of the voice tapes of the opening briefing conducted between the Area controllers and the Aspen controllers revealed no mention of FDC NOTAM 1/3034. Further investigation revealed that there is no checklist used for exchanging information when part-time facilities are assuming their airspace. Facility management is addressing this issue also.

It is the finding of this investigation that the failure to distribute FDC NOTAM 1/3034 to Aspen ATCT is due to human error. Mr. Fischer with 2 months experience failed to comply with the FDC NOTAM Instructions required by the FDACS staff. It is also our finding that the facility should formalize the current procedures and add managerial controls to ensure that the developed procedures are being followed and that distribution needs are met.

Steven J. Brown, Acting ATS-1

cc: AOA-2
ADA-1
ADA-2