

WPR22FA345

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

Group Chair's Factual Report - Attachment 1

Interview Summaries

July 29, 2024

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A. INTERVIEWS

1.0 Operations Manager (OM)

Interviewee: Tanner Wagoner
Representative: Matt Smith, Office of Special Council
Date: September 20, 2022
Location: ZLA Air Route Traffic Control Center
Present: Chad Miller, FAA
Seth Myers, NATCA
Andrew Swick, NTSB IIC
Investigator: Betty Koschig

During the interview, the OM stated the following:

His air traffic control career began in 2005. In August of that year, he attended initial training at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After successful completion of initial air traffic control training, he worked in Oakland Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZOA ARTCC) from 2005 to 2015, Santa Barbara Approach Control from 2015 to 2020, and Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZLA ARTCC) from 2020 to present.

He had been qualified on sector 26 in Area A as well as the Area A supervisor position, and was currently certified as OM. He did not currently hold a medical certificate as his current position did not require it. He obtained an associate's degree in applied sciences In Aviation Technology from the University of Alaska. He worked four to eight hours of comp time a month and had no prior military experience. His operating initials were TW, and his supervisor was Aaron Hedon.

On Tuesday, September 13, 2022, he worked his regularly scheduled shift and had been assigned to the Operations Mangers Desk (Watch Desk) at the time of the incident. His work schedule leading up to the day of the incident was:

Monday:	0630 to 1430
Tuesday:	0630 to 1430 (Day of Incident)
Wednesday:	RDO (Regular Day Off)
Thursday:	RDO
Friday:	1430 to 2230
Saturday:	1000 to 1800
Sunday:	1000 to 1800

He did not watch a radar replay of the event.

Asked what he did after signing into his shift he stated he received a briefing from the outgoing OM, looked at staffing to see if he needed to issue any traffic management initiatives (TMIs) and then proceeded with his daily duties.

Asked what he recalled about the event from that day, he stated that his desk was removed from the Area [not in the same Area] when he worked at the OM desk. He recalled that nothing was out of the ordinary that day. During the shift, the Area A supervisor approached him and stated they had a simultaneous loss of radar and communications with N43605, so he initiated the Alert Notice (ALNOT) process.

Asked what happened after starting the ALNOT, he stated he advised the other OM in the building of the situation, called the RCC, ZLA QC manager, and the DEN. He then had the Area A supervisor make sure the Area was monitoring for ELTs, while he called Seligman and Grand Canyon airports to see if the aircraft (N43605) was there. While talking to the Grand Canyon Airport he was provided the Sheriff contact number. Later he called the RCC and advised them of the pilot's name they found on flight aware.

Asked about the weather that day, he stated the weather was moving in and out that day but could not remember specifics.

Asked how the facility tracked pre-duty weather briefs, he replied that Area supervisors should be tracking them with sign off sheets that controllers initialed. He thought the pre-duty weather briefs at ZLA were sufficient.

Asked if he did a pre-duty weather brief, he replied no, because during the 0800 and 1600 stand up briefings he received a briefing from the CWSU. He said that the OM desk was involved with the Areas when it came to weather. On the day of the incident, he was not aware of any Center Weather Advisories (CWA's).

Asked how he would be notified of a CWA he stated that either the Traffic Management Unit (TMU) would call over or it would be indicated by the yellow indicator on the Enroute Decision Support Tool (EDST).

Asked about the Weather Coordinator (WC) position in TMU, he stated that it was combined up most of the time.

Asked if the WC was combined up and it was a bad weather day, what would his actions be for that situation; he replied that he would not do much. He did not have much of an understanding of the WC position. Asked if the OM team at ZLA understood what the WC position did, he stated he did not know.

Asked what was done with internal compliance verification (ICV) and external compliance verification (ECV) data, he stated that the issues found in those processes

were dealt with during ZLA refresher training. He stated that he did not see the facility numbers for compliance with his facility issuing the weather to airborne aircraft.

He stated that although he did not remember refresher training from 2021, he was familiar with the ZLA Local Safety Council (LSC). He recalled that the ZLA LSC was active and that it was mandatory for controllers to attend.

Asked how ZLA conducts LSC discussions every month he stated that it changed from month to month and when it was scheduled to happen it was posted on a board entering the control room.

Asked about the National Training Initiative (NTI) and how his facility handled the hour requirements and current staffing issues, he stated that each Area had a list of trainees on a priority sheet. The Area supervisors utilized the priority sheet, and each Area did it differently. It was difficult to reach the numbers and they received no feedback from his superiors when that did not happen.

End of Interview.

2.0 Area F, Sector 8 (R8) On-The-Job Training Instructor (OJTI)

Interviewee: Jasmine Buckner
Representative: Nate Pair
Date/Time: September 20, 2022/1230
Location: ZLA in Palmdale, CA
Present: Chad Miller, FAA
Seth Myers, NATCA
Andrew Swick, NTSB IIC
Investigator: Betty Koschig

During the interview Ms. Buckner stated the following:

Her air traffic control career began in January 2017 when she was hired by the FAA and attended initial training at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After successful completion of initial training, she worked at ZLA from 2017 to present. Her operating initials were JF.

She was qualified and current on all positions in Area F and was certified as a controller in charge (CIC) and an on the job training instructor (OJTI). She held a current medical certificate, with no restrictions. She did not have military experience, or any other aeronautical ratings. She obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Air Traffic Management and a master's in business administration from Embry Riddle University. Her supervisor was Daniel Munoz.

At the time of the accident, she was assigned the OJTI at the R8 position in Area F. She had been working her normal shift for that day, which was 0630 to 1430. She stated her normal schedule was :

Monday:	Day
Tuesday:	Day
Wednesday:	Day
Thursday:	RDO
Friday:	RDO
Saturday:	Swing
Sunday:	Swing

She stated that she worked about one to two shifts of overtime per month.

She was well rested on the day of the accident and got about seven or 8 hours of sleep per night. She had not had any significant changes in her life, and she did not recall anything going on in the facility that was distracting or unusual.

Asked what her recollection of the events were leading up to, during, and after the accident she stated that the aircraft (N43605) came to them from Albuquerque Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZAB ARTCC). The pilot had come up on the frequency before handoff.

The aircraft came from ZAB, the pilot came on frequency before handoff and before they had a data block. They tried to find the aircraft (N43605) then they called ZAB to let them know the pilot was on our frequency. The trainee issued the altimeter for Grand Canyon. The aircraft was flying west toward Henderson (HND). There was a lot of weather in that area, and it was moving a bit. There were some Las Vegas arrivals at that time, and they may have had one of the Vegas, and some departures off course. She thought they were trying to get those airplanes back on course, but the aircraft (N43605) was going toward the weather, and there were arrivals checking on that needed to deviate around the weather that was painted [being shown] on the scope. She told the trainee to call weather to the aircraft (N43605) and the pilot replied that he was able to dodge it, but it was getting thicker.

Then a Southwest (SWA1640) reported moderate turbulence and told them they should close the arrival. They were trying to make sure that aircraft behind the SWA were advised of the moderate turbulence, so they would not go through the same spot.

After that she saw the aircraft (N43605) turn south bound and thought he was turning around the weather. She pointed out the aircraft (N43605) to ZAB and assumed he was going to turn south away from the weather.

Then they went back to the arrivals, and at that point she no longer saw the mode C on the aircraft (N43605). She had the trainee reach out on multiple sites and on the backup emergency communications system (BUEC).

At that point she called the supervisor, took the position, and continued to try to reach the aircraft. She asked another aircraft that was at 11,000 feet going south eastbound to check if he had heard anything from them or if he had heard an emergency locator transmitter (ELT). Not much longer after that someone relieved her from the position.

Asked what was her routine for getting routine her pre-duty weather brief when she came in for her shift, she stated that she went to the computer on the other side in the aisle, signed in, grabbed her headset, completed the weather briefing, and initialed the sheet on the clipboard.

Asked if she felt the pre-duty weather briefing had pertinent information, she said "yes."

Asked if she recalled what the weather was for the Area when she signed on for her first session, she did not remember.

Asked if during the position relief briefing she remembered what was passed down, she said she did not remember but the checklist was used.

Asked if she recalled anything about the refresher training completed in 2021 or 2022 and how it was conducted, she did not recall.

Asked if she aware that there were monthly safety discussions by the LSC, she said she knew of them but had not been to one recently. Asked if those were required, she did not think so.

Asked if she recalled any of the discussions she had with the trainee during the session, she did not remember everything, but she remembered telling the trainee to call the weather for the VFR aircraft (N43605) and after SWA said they needed to shut down the arrival, that they needed to take the aircraft direct to PEHTY so it would not go through that area of moderate turbulence. She thought the trainee expressed a concern about that airplane catching up with the SWA (SWA 1640), so she told the trainee that they just need to get him away from that area.

Asked when they saw weather building up in the area what do they do, they usually call out to the supervisor letting them know what was going on and what they needed. If they need to close the gate the supervisor gets on the phone and took care of it, and they let them know what the TMU was trying to do.

Asked about the arrival gate that day, she said it was open, there was no weather around the area they enter, even 30 or 40 miles out. When they close an arrival, it was usually due to weather around the entrance of the approach. It usually was not for anything further out than that, which was where they still were.

Asked the process for what normally happens when a weather cell forms further out and the gate was open, she said aircraft would deviate around the weather as far as they needed, and a plan was developed with the sectors around them. The higher sector would descend as soon as possible.

Asked what was going on with the one departure going to Mexico, she said he was off course, and she did not know where he was going. She thought the discussion was to clear him back on course and she thought around that time the higher sector was trial planning a route to send him to the south. She thought the trainee asked her about the Mexico departure, and the trainee said she might reroute. She wanted to make sure that airplane was back on his route and then shipped him.

Asked if it was usual to have aircraft that go off route in that area, she said they were usually on a departure SID which was very distinct because there was a little dogleg, so it was easy to see when they were not on course. That airplane was not where it was supposed to be.

Asked where she thought that trainee was as far as her skillset, what was going on, and where she felt there should be proper intervention, she stated she worked with her the day before and thought she had done a good job, and she thought she wrote on her training form that she did a good job with weather calls, and she had no issues. She had just got on the trainee's training team recently, and saw her do a good job, but the circumstances that day was a little different. That was the third time she had trained her; before that she was a guest trainer for her, and she was not officially on her training team at that time. They were still building the team.

Asked was there a training team meeting when they came on to the team, she said not yet, it was in the works.

Asked where she would intercede with a trainee, she said when they were too hesitant and not doing what she was telling them to do. That trainee was still doing what she was telling her to do.

Asked if she reviewed the trainee's previous training sessions, she said she skimmed them and she recognized that she was working on giving point outs faster, which was the main thing.

Asked if R8 was a normal sector for training to start on, she said yes, either of the lows.

Asked if she knew the max hours for developmental for the R sides, she said 180 was max hours. Asked if she knew how many hours the trainee was at, she did not know for sure but believe she was at about 80 hours, or about 50 percent.

Asked when she recognized there was a problem with that airplane, she said when the mode C was no longer there.

Asked was there a CWA active for the Area, she did not recall, but said there usually was but did not recall if she read it.

Asked did she or the trainee put in the pilot report (PIREP) for SWA 1640, she thought she did.

Asked what fix they used for PIREPs in those areas, she said Grand Canyon.

Asked how she felt about the way she received PIREPS on the display, she said the GIs were ok. They come on the EDST but there were lots of them because they send out all of them; those were for Areas not close to us; they get them for the entire facility.

Asked when she went into the Area did she look at the pre-duty weather brief, and did she reference anything else throughout the day other than what was on the scope, she said they have a board in their Area; at one side had airspace and the other had PIREP solicitation, and there were check boxes that were on that one that let you know you need to solicit. Asked if she recalled what the status was that day, and she did not.

Asked if she recalled the precipitation intensities on the scope, and she said it depended on what part of the scope since it was changing a lot, but she believed it was moderate, and some parts heavy. Asked if she recalled what the weather looked like around the area of the accident and she said she did not recall exactly, but thought it was moderate.

Asked about the radio coverage in that sector, she said normally for sector 8 frequencies they have issues around the Grand Canyon when aircraft were lower than 11,000 feet. Any aircraft going lower they usually give them to sector 7 early so they did not get lost. She explained there had also been crackling in the frequency, and they had to try multiple sites to reach aircraft, or they had to switch back and forth depending on when the aircraft were close to Las Vegas or closer to the Grand Canyon.

Asked if she had frequency issues with aircraft on the arrival to Las Vegas, usually they did not on the Las Vegas arrival. They were usually ok, sometimes it was the site itself that had the issues. When everything was operating normally they could hear them throughout the day. She explained that the Delta that was inbound was weak and scratchy and that was not normal, but it had been happening more frequently with the radio sites. She did not know whether that was normal, or it was weather related.

Asked what site location she used, she did not recall the name, but she knew where it was on the VSCS equipment. She could not recall the acronym or where it was.

Asked if she had been solicited to be an OJTI or if she wanted to be one, she was asked.

Asked how many trainees she had, she was on the training team for another trainee but had not trained her yet since the trainee was very new and not on the floor yet.

Asked how many days of the week she spent on training; she said maybe two.

Asked if it was normal to see turbulence in the area where SWA reported it, she said no.

Asked if there was any other coordination done with aircraft deviating, not just 4th line. She said most of it was 4th line, but they also called the sector above to report the moderate turbulence. Asked when the 4th line was filled with deviation, did they assume the pilot had been called the weather, yes, that 4th line was the last thing they did after issuing the weather.

Asked if she saw the replay, she said no and did not want to.

Asked if that was a normal day, she said as far as volume it was normal, but weather was complicating things.

Asked what was her schedule the day prior, she said she worked on Sunday and Monday the day before, swing shift Sunday and day shift Monday.

Asked generally when training was going on did they get a D side, she said no. Asked if she had a D side on the day of the accident, she said no. Asked if she felt she could have asked for a D side would she have gotten one, she said it would have ended the training session. She would have had to work the radar and her trainee would have had to work the D side .

Asked if she was familiar with the new NTL and how they were supposed to train for a certain number of hours a day, she said she knew there was a goal per week for trainees and that was hard to meet. Training was highly encouraged, they wanted to get as much training as they could.

Asked if the Area was staffed appropriately, she did not know but guessed it was with the exception of not having D sides. She added, but they never have D side unless it was combined.

Asked if there were any issue that she could remember going on in the Area or facility that day, she said not that she can remember.

Asked what the normal course of action when they had a VFR flight following or low altitude that loses comms, she said it happened more around the Grand Canyon and lower altitudes that they drop off. They will start coast tracking in certain areas and say radar contact lost. When they are able to see the aircraft they will tell them who to contact and where, but that was usually regular days, not weather days.

Asked if she used relays to talk to low aircraft, yes when they needed to.

Asked what was the coverage of the radar and radios in the area where the accident occurred, and she said about 8,000 or 9,000 feet.

Asked to describe the sequence of events for the aircraft (N43605) contacting you and the coordination between you and ZAB, she said the pilot checked on, they did not see his data block. They typed in his call sign, and it came up outside of their airspace still tagged up with ZAB. The pilot just called up in the blind. ZAB could have transferred him without a handoff. It rarely happened; it was not normal. They called ZAB to let them know that the pilot checked on our frequency and they could initiate a handoff.

Asked what the requirements were for calling weather to pilots, they would give the clock position, distance, tops, or bases if they had them, information if it was moving, and the severity.

Asked if she had weather discussions with the trainee during the session, she had that discussion the day before on what to say to a VFR aircraft. She told the trainee that VFRs can go wherever they want and just suggested that she say they use caution.

Asked when you saw him headed towards that weather did you think about asking him more about it, getting a PIREP from him or anything like that, she said when he originally checked in he said he was dodging the weather, and it was getting thicker. Normally VFR aircraft stay away from anything that they can see.

Asked where was the supervisor when you called him, he was sitting at the desk, and he came over when called.

Asked what was going on during the down times in the sessions between you and the trainee, she thought they were just having discussions on what to say or the trainee may have been asking questions. They may have been discussing the arrivals but did not recall. There was a lot of back-and-forth discussion. She was not engaged with anyone in the Area, just the trainee.

Asked if she had been sitting on the D side position as the trainer, she said yes.

Asked if she did any D side functions, she submitted the PIREP for moderate turbulence and did a point out.

Asked was it common for OJTI to do D side functions, she cannot speak for everyone, but it was minimal.

Asked if she believed that the process was for reading the MBIs prior to work was ok, they do not have a lot of time to do it so if they had better staffing they would do a better job. The OS tells people to do them when they were signing in, but they were just trying to get to the Area so people can leave, it sometimes became an end of the day thing. If our staffing were better, they would not be so focused on getting to the Area.

End of interview.

3.0 Area F, Sector 8 (R8) Controller in Training

Interviewee: Jennifer Shuman
Representative: Martin Ramirez
Date: September 21, 2022
Location: ZLA in Palmdale, CA
Present: Chad Miller, FAA
Seth Myers, NATCA
Andrew Swick, NTSB IIC
Investigator: Betty Koschig

During the interview, the R8 trainee stated the following:

Her air traffic control career began on July 11, 2019, when she was hired by the FAA and attended initial training at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After successful completion of initial training, she worked at ZLA from 2019 to present. Her operating initials were JU.

She was qualified on the D sides in Area F and was training on the R8 position. She held a current medical certificate, with a restriction to wear contact lenses. She was wearing contacts at the time of the accident. She did not have military experience, or any other aeronautical ratings. She obtained a degree from LeTourneau University in Longview Texas. Her supervisor was Kevin McCants.

At the time of the accident, she was assigned as trainee on the R8 position in Area F. She was not working her normal shift for that day, which was scheduled from 1330 to 2130. Instead, she was working the 0700 to 1500 shift to get training on the position. She stated her normal schedule was:

Monday:	1500 to 2300
Tuesday:	1330 to 2130
Wednesday:	0700 to 1500
Thursday:	0645 to 1445
Friday:	0645 to 1445
Saturday:	RDO
Sunday:	RDO

She stated she worked about one shift of overtime per month.

Asked if she felt well rested for the session, she stated that she had just been on break right before the session and had eaten lunch. She was not as fresh as she had been during the two prior sessions that morning. She got about eight-hours of sleep per night. She had not had any significant changes in her life. She did not recall anything going on in the facility that was distracting or unusual.

Asked her recollection of the events leading up to, during, and after the accident, she remembered there was a GJS landing at Kingman. She explained with her different trainer they had been deciding on the best way to discuss cancelling the IFR. So, she was using slightly different phraseology, so she had a bit of trouble remembering the part to say cancel IFR on the ground with LA flight data.

She stated that when the pilot first checked on, she did not have a data block for him. She was looking and she had him repeat himself, and she realized he was coming from ZAB, and she needed to call ZAB to take radar.

While she was looking for the airplane that had checked in with her (N43605) she realized that there was N718 who was coasting (indicating CST in the data block) and she had a bit of discussion with her trainer about what happened there.

Once she had radar on the aircraft (N43605), she gave the pilot the altimeter, then realized she could have given it in the first place.

They had another airplane, N890M which was IFR, heading in a direction where their route was going to lead them into military airspace, and there was weather there, so they needed to be given information. She needed to keep them away from the airspace, so she told the pilot they need to deviate a particular direction. If she gave them a direct it would take them away from military airspace, so she gave them Flagstaff direct. Then she got a call from the GJS airplane that they cancelled on the ground.

There were just some other normal control instructions, and then she called weather for the accident pilot. He said he had been dodging through the weather and was getting thicker, and she said let her know if she could help.

Then one of the Vegas arrivals let her know he was given a speed and did not know if he could keep it. She told him to let her know. At that time my trainer, the R7 trainee and their trainer, and myself were discussing sending one of the Vegas arrivals to the other gate. They decided to keep the other aircraft on its present heading and handed him off.

SWA1640 had a bumpy ride and called about moderate turbulence. Another pilot asked what arrival that was, then they said they were going to take a turn or deviate. That pilot never told her what their callsign was in the first place, so she asked who it was, and then told that pilot he could deviate.

Then the descent happened to the VFR pilot. She was looking at the two data blocks on the airplanes that were talking about the moderate turbulence. SWA1640

said we should shut off the arrival. The next thing she needed to say was to tell the arrival ahead of them to descend via the arrival, so she had a pause there.

Then the airplane behind SWA, asked for the deviation so she and her trainer discussed the situation and decided that airplane needed to go to STYYX; so, she gave that pilot the next fix to avoid turbulence.

She finally had a second to get back to the VFR and she noticed it was going in a variety of directions. She called out to check on him and did not get a response. She started going through all different potential frequencies to see if she could contact him.

She was then put on the D side to see if ZAB had them, and after that she went on break. She went to her car to sit. After 30 minutes she came back inside hoping she would see her trainer, but she did not see her. She talked to handful of people and asked if they had seen her trainer, but they did not find her. She then talked to the supervisor and then went back to the car. She heard back from her trainer, and they spent the rest of the day in her car talking.

Asked what the discussion was about in the car, she said they talked about all sorts of things, life stuff and social things and telling her positive views of what could have happened, not focusing on that accident.

Asked what time did you go home that day, she said 1300, but she was not sure exactly.

Asked how she felt coming out of the academy coming to ZLA, she said she still had the sense that she had in the academy; she was going to do her best, and if this did not lead her into this career then that was what would happen.

Asked how she felt when she started D side training, when she first got on the floor before she got sent home from Covid, she was pretty much in her head. She had not found the groove, the social D side expectation, or with the minimum expectation for doing the job.

Asked what she did during the Covid Break, she said they did Zoom calls and they had the maps. She had plenty to study, for the most part of the time it was really structured with training with other trainees.

Asked when she came back from Covid did she jump back into D side or other things, it was on again and off again, depended how the numbers for LA county affected them. She spent a lot of time just monitoring and asking questions but not getting training hours.

Asked if she remembered conducting refresher training and what was it, she said last year she remembered the lab type of stuff such as doing emergency things. That was before she started R side. The refresher was R side so for those things she had not done yet. So, it was good practice for being exposed to those things. More recently, she recalled they had one training about those new little airplanes, some aircraft that needed a lot of attention.

Asked how long she had been training on R side, she said about 90 hours.

Asked how long it had been months wise, she could not really remember that at that point.

Asked had she had any training team meetings yet, she said they had her first training team meeting to get started and there were some issues, so she met with one of her trainers and had a real quick meeting. There were the other two people on her training team, which she was not sure if they ever signed the form, but they never ended up on her training team.

Asked if she had any skills checks, she said just one and she was due for one, potentially that session.

Asked was her skills check previously discussed with her, she did not remember the details of that.

Asked on a normal training day did they have time for a debrief, she said they talk at the end; if there was anything they needed to discuss before that they would, but most happened at the end of the day.

Asked if she remembered what departure they were on off LAS Vegas, she could not remember what SID they were on. It was not that she had not seen them before it was just things to be careful of weather, she was aware that there can be an issue.

Asked had she worked many sessions with weather, she said most of her sessions were with weather.

Asked if she felt overwhelmed during the accident, she said she was feeling like her brain was not where she wanted it to be.

Asked did she feel her trainer was supporting her and helping where you needed help, she said there was a lot of trainers and trainees discussions. The trainer that was next to her was discussing things with her as well. There was quite a bit going on.

Asked how long had it been since she was qualified on D side, she said less than a year.

Asked how many times had she had a D side sitting next to her when she trained on R8, she said less than ten times.

Asked if she felt like she needed a D side, she thought it would be convenient but did not need it.

Asked how many times had there been situations when she started training on R side that the training got cancelled and she ended up working D side, she said it happened about twice a week. That included when she was needed as a D side.

Asked when there was weather in her airspace what was her general knowledge in issuing weather to aircraft, she needed to issue the weather to aircraft. Because of frequency control she should be trying to issue it in the beginning when they were checking on. Sometimes it called for precise phraseology, and other times using the word scattered, or sometimes something like, say along your route of flight, sometime offering suggestions and seeing what they want.

Asked what she did before she got to the Areas, she said she started when she was at home. She checked an app for weather and got the direction of the wind and stuff like that. Once she got to work, she signed in, watched the weather briefing, checked CEDAR, looked at the big board, looked at the individual sector, checked wind at a couple different altitudes, and looked at the SA board and see what they had on them.

Asked was there anything in training that she was not getting that would be helpful to her, she did not know if there was a good solution, but to get more training and to practice phraseology. The one part that she wished she had better practice at was mileage and directions for traffic calls. She did her own training by going on the "see all" scope and pulling random traffic.

Asked if anything else would be more helpful, she said consistency. They can only open the two low sectors, and they only have six people that can work that, and their numbers were for nine. She said up until the time she finally decided to do something about her trainee team, she had a trainer who did not overlap with her; the other two trainers on her team, one had Covid and the other had a family emergency. There was a time she had a lot of guest trainers. On the training form, there were rarely days where she wrote down no training due to staffing, but there were lots of days where she wrote two hours, because in an eight hour day she could only work two hours, so she got what she got.

Asked did she reach out to request a new training team, she said one of her guest trainers who was the training representative talked to her about it. The OJTI that was on the position with her at the time of the accident, had been training her because her assigned trainer thought she should work mornings. She felt nothing would have changed if she had not said anything.

Asked about the radio coverage in her Area, she said it appeared there were some issues with scratchy frequency. It was a problem; they had the mains, standbys and BUECs. They had different outages in different areas, sometimes one of them did not work, or it was being worked on and they could not use it. There would be times one would be shut off and one would be scratchy, and they could not hear the pilot, or the pilot could not hear them. Having that radio problem made every other problem worse.

Asked how that impacted her that day, she said when an aircraft came over from the east edge, potentially the pilot was going to have to be on a different transmitter. So, whenever that pilot checked on, she did not know where he was until she found them, it was on that edge, so it was possible he could not have heard her. But when he did respond back she asked who was calling, so she knew he could hear her on that transmitter.

End of interview.

4.0 Local Safety Council (LSC) Representative

Interviewee: Trisha Todd
Date: September 22, 2022
Location: ZLA Air Route Traffic Control Center
Present: Chad Miller, FAA
Seth Myers, NATCA
Investigator: Betty Koschig

During the interview, the LSC representative stated the following:

Her air traffic control career began in 2011. In January of that year, she attended initial training at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After successful completion of initial air traffic control training, she worked at Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZLA ARTCC) from 2011 until present.

She was qualified on all positions in Area C to include controller in charge (CIC) and as an on the job trainer (OJT). She currently held a medical certificate with a restriction of corrective lenses. She obtained a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Aviation Management from Southern Illinois University. She worked approximately two days of overtime a month, had no prior military experience or other aviation certificates, her operating initials were TT, and her supervisor was James Becker.

Asked what collateral duties she had within the facility she stated, Facility Safety Rep, Local Safety Council Lead (LSC), NATCA Event Review Committee (ERC) Lead, NATCA QC point of contact for External Compliance Verification (ECV) and Internal Compliance Verification (ICV), and NATCA point of contact for refresher training. She had been a member of LSC since 2016, Facility Safety Representative since 2018. Her FAA LSC counterpart at the facility was Sarah Fletcher, OM Area F. She stated her work schedule is:

Monday:	1330 to 2130
Tuesday:	0700 to 1500
Wednesday:	0630 to 1430
Wednesday:	2230 to 0630
Thursday:	2230 to 0630
Friday:	RDO
Saturday:	RDO
Sunday:	1430 to 2230

She explained the ZLA Local Safety Councils scope; they meet once a month to collaborate, and during the last 12 months they met 10/12 months. The ZLA LSC had a quorum of two NATCA and two FAA members, in the past year they have met quorum 8/12 months. Asked how LSC discussions were scheduled and attended she

stated, 100 percent of the time they were scheduled, prior to the summer ZLA was still meeting virtually, they just started in person discussions in April, throughout the year they have been attended in the 30 to 50 percent attendance with most of the months being on the lower end.

Asked If these discussions were mandatory and why the attendance was so low she stated, yes, 100 percent of the facility was required to get them per the national order. Staffing was ZLA's largest impediment to meeting that requirement.

Asked how refresher training was developed at ZLA she stated, collaboratively they pick items from the national list that they can use there locally. For example, in 2021 they used VFR encountering IMC with included simulation lab and classroom. Some of the things they do not use as they were not for an enroute facility. They try to pick training that was relatable to them and their traffic.

She explained that in the last year weather dissemination and PIREPs had been covered in refresher training. The facility refresher training had a much better completion rate as compared to local safety discussions. Refresher training was scheduled and not ad hoc like the LSC discussions. She stated she had seen PIREPs, and weather dissemination get better over the years until last year.

Asked if she could pick one thing that would help LSC discussions and refresher training be more successful she stated, staffing. Controllers were exhausted, staffing was bad, nobody wanted to do extra, morale was low, they were tired and exhausted, they just did not have the resources. She stated with COVID there had been a huge amount of drift. She recalled during COVID there had been no traffic, sectors were combined, new controllers and veteran controllers' skills were dropping. She stated that traffic had come back but the drift still remained. COVID did a number on their workforce.

When asked about the ZLA pre-duty weather brief she stated, it was right outside of the Area and in CEDAR; she utilized it every shift. The pre-duty weather brief was a good product, its completion was tracked on a clip board that OMs keep track of and sometimes CICs. Asked if she thought her coworkers utilized the pre-duty weather brief, she stated, no, they do not.

End of interview.

5.0 Operations Supervisor (OS)

Interviewee: Daniel Jose Munoz
Representative: Matt Smith FAA Office of Chief Council
Date: September 22, 2022
Location: ZLA Air Route Traffic Control Center
Present: Chad Miller, FAA
Seth Myers, NATCA
Andrew Swick, NTSB IIC
Investigator: Betty Koschig

During the interview, the OS stated the following:

His FAA air traffic control career began in September 2008, when he attended initial training at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. After successful completion of initial air traffic control training, he worked in Los Angeles Air Traffic Control Tower (LAX ATCT) for one year and three months, Burbank Air Traffic Control Tower for three years, and then Los Angeles Air Route Traffic Control Center (ZLA ARTCC). While at ZLA, he worked as a controller for seven years and had worked as an OS from August 2021 until present.

Prior to joining the FAA, he served in the United States Air Force. After completing basic training and air traffic basics at Keesler Air Force Base he was stationed at Kadena Air force base, Japan, and Barksdale Air Force base.

He was certified in Area F on all positions, and at the Operational Supervisors position for Area F. He maintained a current medical certificate with no restrictions.

He earned an Associates in Airway Science and an Associates in Avionics Communication from High Tech Institute, Phoenix Arizona.

He worked one overtime shift per week. His operating initials were DM, and his supervisor was Sarah Fletcher.

On Tuesday, September 13, 2022, he did not work his normal schedule. He worked an overtime shift that started at 0630 and ended at 1430 and was assigned the OS Desk for Area F.

He was originally scheduled to work an overtime shift on Wednesday September 14, 2022, but while at work on Monday September 12, 2022, he realized, and the OM concurred, that he was needed to work on Tuesday due to staffing needs.

He stated his normal schedule was:

Monday:	0630 to 1430
Tuesday:	RDO
Wednesday:	RDO
Thursday:	1430 to 2230
Friday:	1430 to 2230
Saturday:	1330 to 2130
Sunday:	0630 to 1430

He stated he felt rested and slept for about seven hours the prior night. He stated that was not normal and that he normally slept between four and seven hours due to the length of his drive to work, which was one hour and five minutes to one hour and fifteen minutes without traffic, and the short time between some shifts. He noted no big changes in his life just his two children attending college and he stated nothing was going on that was unusual at the facility or distracting. He did watch a replay of the event.

Asked his account of what was going on surrounding the event involving N43605, he stated there was weather and it was busier being a Tuesday morning. He talked to Traffic Management Unit (TMU) and went over a plan; a lot of flows get shut down in weather and he was making sure the Area got taken care of.

He was just back from a 10 day quarantine and his plate was full. He put on the cordless headset and picked a position to monitor. He normally picked the busy sectors and that day it was the high sectors 36 and 37. He was on the schedule because someone else was going out on paid parental leave (PPL).

He was finishing up the paperwork and was making sure the highs were good; his routine has been to stand behind and make sure everything was ok. He noted that the lows were not that busy. The highs have three Las Vegas feeds, two Phoenix feeds and those guys were deviating. He could not remember if he had to close an arrival feed.

He then returned to the desk to work on the schedule; he had printed out some paperwork because they had days, they were going to four, and he printed out the overtime.

He was not sure if the batteries died on the cordless headset but at some point, he changed them, checked on the highs and he was just sitting down when the R8 OJTI called him over and said, he (N43605) just went into CST track, and she thought the plane went down.

He called the OM and said they had a possible downed aircraft and the OM advised to check for an ELT. He then had an aircraft check for an ELT. He had the R8 OJTI and R8 trainee go through the frequencies and had them try low flying aircraft.

As soon as the next person returned from break, he had the R8 OJTI and R8 trainee relieved from position. He noted that both controllers seemed distraught. The R8 OJTI and R8 trainee tried to give him a quick recap. He then pulled the R8 trainee aside and advised her about issuing weather and available airports during weather events to VFR aircraft. That was something he had learned along the way. The R8 trainee said OK and went on break. He went back and forth giving updates to the OM. A few hours later he was notified the wreckage had been found. He noted that another OS was doing some back and forth and got an approximate area of the accident, and asked if the Area was good without the R8 OJTI and R8 trainee for the rest of the day.

Asked what his normally routine was when he came into the building at the beginning of a day, he said he walked to the OM desk, asked about changes, and got a quick briefing. If the CIC was not open, he would run the checklist for the OS position, if a CIC was there, he would get a rundown on training or not, and a plan to accomplish. A lot of the time he would encourage the CIC to come up with a plan, so it would make them more involved in the operation.

They talked about a training team change and the R8 trainee requested to have the R8 OJTI, monitoring her at the time of the accident, as her trainer. She also requested a possible RDO change. She believed the R8 trainee had worked with the same R8 OJTI the day before. He also had two D side trainees, and the CIC advised him that the plan was to get training accomplished, and if a D side was needed training would be canceled.

Asked how he obtained the weather when he got on duty, he said from the pre-duty weather briefing and explained they had to sanitize the headset. He then walked the Area and surveyed it; it was apparent when walking you see weather developing. That year had been the most impactful year of weather he had ever seen.

Asked if the pre-duty weather brief was sufficient to assume a position, he said yes and no. He wished it was more related to an Area instead of generic for the facility. He did see why it was the way it was though.

Asked if he was ever informed that someone had not done their weather briefing, he said there was a checklist as soon as they walk through the Area that they reach for the clipboard and sign off. Just like CEDAR was a pre-duty item he asked the controller did they check the CEDAR and weather. If they say yes, he initialed the board, if they say no, I tell them to knock it out.

Asked if he did on the spot corrections for weather dissemination, he said he did for PIREPS not for weather. PIREPs were put through refresher training, it was an eLMS (eLearning management system). They did not go in the TTL or the DYSIM for a problem. That might have been part of the recovery training that was done but not the weather one.

Asked how he could make a controller better with providing weather, he said reminding controllers of 7110.65 requirements. He would put PIREPs on the big board and remind them. If he was monitoring and saw the requirement to solicit, he would remind controllers to do them, if they have not in an hour. He would ask the next guy how the rides were, and he would put in PIREPs. Since the accident he has put in all PIREPS. The week after the event he put in all PIREPs moderate to heavy precipitation around whatever storm he was looking at in the area, issued descend via, and tried to get bases and tops of cells where thunderstorms were located.

Asked if there was a CWA that he was aware that was active, he puts them on the board. He said at Burbank he stapled the strip, and everyone initialed when they passed it around. He put it on the big board.

Asked about administrative duties in the operation, he said he tried to fill holes for the next upcoming days. He had been advised to monitor the Area as much as possible. He could tell by a change in voice and when the focus was high they were busy. Sometimes he tried to monitor two positions at once but that was hard, but it was easier to do that with the lows. He had seven trainees, and he tried to monitor them, especially when he was about to do a skills check.

Asked if it was a facility requirement to monitor or was personal choice, he stated it was a facility requirement and that six or seven months prior the Executive Officer came in and questioned why they were not monitoring, and the facility started doing it.

Asked if an aircraft was on a descend via and then deviated did they get a base altitude, he said it was a problem with trainees and if he was monitoring and did not hear the trainer catch it, he would correct it.

Asked if he knew what the weather coordinator position was, he did not know.

Asked if he closed an arrival when the SWA1640 reported moderate turbulence, he replied that the R8 OJTI told him about the moderate turbulence and there was not an issue with closing the arrival. He put turbulence on the big board even if it was outside the airspace and it impacted the Area.

Asked if he got feedback on ICD, ECD compliant and noncompliant highs he stated that he gets the information from the OM at the 0800 and 1600 briefing.

Asked if he knew what an OSA was, he stated yes and usually the other OS did the OSAs. He had not done one in two or three months.

He stated that the R8 OJTI had been a great OJTI; she felt out a new trainee and tried to figure out weak points and what she needed to work on with them. He thought she was an outstanding training representative.

Asked had he monitored the R8 trainee much, he said he was supposed to get a skill check done on her the day before. The issue was when he did a skill check he cannot get everyone out to do a training team meeting.

End of interviews.