

9/22/2021

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

2021-123/7-13

1828389

To: Airport Manager, Greenville Spartanburg International Airport, SC, FAA (AAS-1)  
Info: FAA (Director of Air Traffic Operations ESA South, ATM GSP ATCT, AAS-300, AVP-1, AVP-200, ASO-600, AFS-280, AFS-200, AJI-144, Runway Safety Team), A4A, AAEE, ALPA, AOPA, APA, ASAP, ATSAP, ATSG, CAPA, IATA, ICASS, IFALPA, IPA, NATCA, NBAA, NTSB, RAA, SWAPA  
From: Becky L. Hooey, Director  
NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System  
Re: GSP ATC Workload

We recently received an ASRS report describing a safety concern that may involve your area of operational responsibility. We do not have sufficient details to assess either the factual accuracy or possible gravity of the report. It is our policy to relay the reported information to the appropriate authority for evaluation and any necessary follow-up. We feel you should be aware of the enclosed deidentified report.

To properly assess the usefulness of our alert message service, we would appreciate it if you would take the time to give us your feedback on the value of the information that we have provided. Please contact Dr. Becky Hooey at (408) 541-2854 or email at [becky.l.hooey@nasa.gov](mailto:becky.l.hooey@nasa.gov).



Aviation Safety Reporting System  
P.O. Box 189 | Moffett Field, CA | 94035-0189



## ACN 1828389

### DATE / TIME

Date of Occurrence 202101  
Local Time Of Day 0601 to 1200

### PLACE

Locale GSP.Airport  
State SC  
Altitude - AGL 0

### ENVIRONMENT

Flight Conditions Marginal  
Weather Fog

### AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - Tower GSP  
Make Model Name Commercial Fixed Wing  
Operating Under FAR Part 121

### AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT Y

ATC / Advisory - Tower GSP  
Make Model Name Commercial Fixed Wing  
Operating Under FAR Part 121

### PERSON 1

Function - Flight Crew Captain  
Function - Flight Crew Pilot Not Flying  
ASRS Report Number 1828389

### EVENTS

Anomaly ATC Issue - All Types  
Anomaly Conflict - Ground Conflict, Less Severe  
Anomaly Ground Event / Encounter - Weather / Turbulence  
Detector - Person Flight Crew  
Result - Flight Crew Requested ATC Assistance / Clarification

### NARRATIVE 1

The event occurred because Greenville-Spartanburg (GSP) is working a busy airport with one controller utilizing all three frequencies. This is a major safety of flight issue as multiple links in the safety chain were broken that day. If the sharpness of the crews from Air Carrier X and Air Carrier Y had not utilized full four ear policy and patience it could have been an issue. The actions taken by the ATC operation in GSP are uncalled for and unsafe. If this is overlooked there could be fatal consequences in the future. There are a few local airports in the area of Greenville-Spartanburg that are non-towered. If the Tower Controller delayed any further for us to be handed over to Departure, we could have had a collision or RA with an unknown aircraft all due to the unsafe actions of one controller handling a workload bound for a minimum of two personal.

I was in command of Aircraft X. The Greenville Tower had one controller working all three frequencies: clearance, ground, and tower. This was a busy morning with Air Carrier Z, Air Carrier X, Air Carrier A, and us to ZZZ all departing at roughly the same time. When we called for our clearance on the delivery frequency, we noticed there was some bleed over as the controller was issuing take-off clearances. We had to repeat our request for a clearance but were given it with no issues. I released the brakes and we called for push shortly

after. Air Carrier X also called for push after us. In the middle of our push back the controller called on the ground frequency to inform Air Carrier Z of a delay for them. The two began to have a conversation on ground of a game plan to be made. As their conversation occurred our ramp crew disconnected the tow bar and gave the wave off for an all clear to a taxi.

I noticed Air Carrier X had pushed off gate and we were pushed off with our nose in the direction of travel to only exit with a head on collision. We finished our "After Start Checklist" and cleared the area to begin our taxi. I switched on our taxi and nose lights and noticed Air Carrier X did the same. With the controller and Air carrier Z conversation occurring to what was now a clearance being given with a read back to follow there was no way for me or Air Carrier X to have confirmation one was waiting for the other. There was dense fog and low visibility on the ramp that morning. Tower does not control the ramp and a courtesy call is requested. The weather was so bad we had a take-off alternate of ZZZ1 that morning.

It was a frustrating situation as Air Carrier X and I could barely make out the 2nd half of each other's aircraft, so it was a game of chicken. I tried to call over the radio and speak over the clearance being given but it did not work. Ultimately, I turned off my lights to give Air Carrier X the right of way. As we began our taxi to Runway 4 Air Carrier A called clearance to get their clearance to Houston (IAH) and that now was being broadcast over the ground frequency adding to the safety issue that no one moving on the aircraft surface could talk to each other. The Tower issued Air Carrier X their take-off clearance and told us we were next. After we got our take off clearance, we began the take-off roll with no issues. As we continued our take-off climb Carrier called the controller over the ground frequency. All we heard was the controller responding over the tower frequency meaning he was working all three frequencies still. This delayed our hand off to Departure and made us uneasy as the tower radar could not see our path beyond a certain mileage. As we checked in with GSP Departure we were given an instruction to contact Center as our time had been too long and radar services with GSP could not be utilized further.

This told me the GSP airport controller took too long to hand us off and impeded the Departure Controller from doing their job properly. We did not have sufficient air traffic control separation all due to the unsafe practices of the GSP airport and Air Traffic Control operation at the airport of GSP. GSP needs to hire another controller! There must be at least one person working Ground and Delivery while another separate controller works Tower. The operation in GSP has been compromised and it is scary to think that the unsafe actions are acceptable to those working in the ATC system. If this issue were to happen again, I'm worried it could turn out like the Tenerife airport disaster with KLM and Pan Am but scraping metal on the ramp or taxing into each other.

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## SYNOPSIS

Air carrier Captain reported after push back on the ramp at GSP airport, they were on a head-on direction with another air carrier. The Tower Controller was reportedly working all positions combined causing frequency congestion preventing the flight crews from receiving clarification as to which way the aircraft should taxi to resolve the conflict.