

4/17/2025

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

2025-85/7-5

2219396

To: Airport Manager, Newark Liberty Int'l Airport (EWR), NJ, FAA (AAS-1)

Info: FAA (AVP-1, AVP-200, AAS-300, AEA-600, AJV-A, ATM EWR ATCT, AFS-260, AFS-200, Director of Air Traffic Operations ESA North, Runway Safety Team), AAAE, A4A, ALPA, AOPA, APA, ASAP, ATSAP, ATSG, CAPA, IATA, ICAO, ICASS, IFALPA, IPA, NATCA, NBAA, NTSB, RAA, SWAPA

From: Becky L. Hooey, Director
NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System

Re: EWR Combined Tower/Ground Control Operations

We recently received ASRS reports 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.



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



ACN 2219396**DATE / TIME**

Date of Occurrence	202503
Local Time Of Day	0001 to 0600

PLACE

Locale	EWR.Airport
State	NJ

ENVIRONMENT

Flight Conditions	IMC
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AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - Tower	EWR
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	2219396

EVENTS

Anomaly	ATC Issue - All Types
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NARRATIVE 1

We were flying the ILS approach to 22L. Low ceilings and low visibility required an ILS approach. We contacted EWR as instructed around the final approach fix. We were cleared to land after our initial contact. From this point on, there was constant radio communication occurring. EWR combined the Tower and Ground Control frequencies. Planes were calling up for pushback, for taxi from the Ramp area, asking their taxi sequence. Tower was issuing complex taxi instructions to multiple airplanes. ATC was talking nonstop throughout our entire approach. To say this was a distraction is an understatement. It was challenging to communicate in the cockpit because of all the radio communication taking place. It was borderline unsafe. It would have IMPOSSIBLE for us to communicate with the Tower Controller had we needed to.

Cause: ATC combining Ground Control and Tower frequencies into the Tower frequency.

Suggestions: Busy airports like EWR should not be allowed to combine frequencies. We are required to maintain a sterile cockpit environment below 10,000 feet. But somehow it is okay for EWR to combine frequencies and have nonstop radio communications while we are conducting a complex approach. This is asinine and should never be allowed.

SYNOPSIS

Air carrier Captain reported not being able to properly communicate with EWR ATC due to nonstop talking on the radio after the facility had combined both Tower and Ground frequencies.