

# ALERT BULLETIN

AB 2025:26/10-2

11/18/2025

2285630

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**TO:** Airport Manager, DenverInt'l Airport (DEN), CO, FAA (AFS-410, AAS-1)

**INFO:** FAA (AVP-1, AVP-200, AFS-260, AFS-200, ANM-600, AAS-300, Director of Air Traffic Operations WSA, Runway Safety Team), A4A, ALPA, AMFA, APA, ASAP, ATSG, CAPA, IAM, IATA, ICASS, IFALPA, IPA, NTSB, PAMA, SWAPA, TWU

**FROM:** Becky L. Hooley, Director  
NASA Aviation Safety Reporting System

**SUBJ:** DEN Runway 16R RNAV Y Approach Concerns

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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 following:

ASRS received a report from a D01 TRACON Controller describing pilot deviations from the new DEN RNAV Y procedure. Reporter stated he observed this type of dangerous deviation on three occasions on the day of his report. Reporter suggested splitting the RNAV Y procedure into two approaches to alleviate the errors and enhance safety in the DEN area.

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 Hooley at (408) 541-2854 or email at [becky.l.hooley@nasa.gov](mailto:becky.l.hooley@nasa.gov).



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



## ACN 2285630

### DATE / TIME

Date of Occurrence	202509
Local Time Of Day	1801 to 2400

### PLACE

Locale	DEN.Airport
State	CO
Altitude - MSL	11000

### AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - TRACON	D01
Make Model Name	Commercial Fixed Wing
Operating Under FAR Part	121

### AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT Y

ATC / Advisory - TRACON	D01
Make Model Name	Commercial Fixed Wing
Operating Under FAR Part	121

### PERSON 1

Function - Air Traffic Control	Approach
ASRS Report Number	2285630

### EVENTS

Anomaly	ATC Issue - All Types
Anomaly	Deviation - Track / Heading - All Types
Anomaly	Deviation / Discrepancy - Procedural - Clearance
Anomaly	Deviation / Discrepancy - Procedural - Published Material / Policy
Detector - Person	Air Traffic Control
Result - Air Traffic Control	Issued New Clearance
Result - Air Traffic Control	Separated Traffic

### NARRATIVE 1

I was working Front Range 1 with Aircraft X that was assigned the RNAV Y 16R about 4 miles ahead of Aircraft Y that was assigned the RNAV Z 16R. The plan was to let Aircraft Y take the RNAV Z (short curved approach) and take Aircraft X on the downwind so they could join 1,000 feet below the 16L final on a visual. This is a common best equipped, best served situation we do all the time.

After Aircraft X entered my airspace I gave them a descent and then cleared Aircraft Y behind for the RNAV Z. Aircraft X read back descend 8,000 but then I noticed they were flying the RNAV Y track to fix (TF)/curved leg instead of staying northbound on the STAR. They had also slowed down (basically self-cleared themselves to slow) which made them a conflict with Aircraft Y behind. I had to turn Aircraft X left heading 330 and maintain 8,000 to keep them clear of the parallel traffic.

When I asked what they were doing, it was clear they didn't load the approach correctly and were self-cleared for the RNAV Y and had put in the TF leg off the STAR. This was the 3rd airplane that same day I saw make that same turn in error. This new RNAV Y (changed about a month ago) continues to be confusing and creates a

dangerous setup when traffic is busy. The current fix of NOTAM the TF portion out solution isn't working. We need some help from outside our building to address and fix the issue.

Split the RNAV Y into two approaches. Keep the current RNAV Y with transitions, and publish a new straight-in RNAV X (like the old one from over a year ago). That would prevent crews from flying the wrong TF leg and cut down the confusion. The straight-in and curved portion was already flight checked so implementation should be doable pretty quick. I think we just need some higher level help.

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## **SYNOPSIS**

D01 TRACON Controller reported the new RNAV Y approach for Runway 16R at DEN is causing considerable confusion for flight crews and recommended the procedure be modified.