

# ALERT BULLETIN

AB 2025:29/7-2  
12/31/2025  
2295953, 2268226

TO: FAA (AJI-1, Director of Air Traffic Operations - WSA, CSA, ESA (North and South))

INFO: FAA (AVP-1, AVP-200, AFS-260, AFS-200), A4A, ALPA, AMFA, APA, ASAP, ATSG, CAPA, IAM, IATA, ICASS, IFALPA, IPA, NTSB, PAMA, SWAPA, TWU

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

SUBJ: ARTCC / TRACON Transfer of Control Issues

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 reports from ARTCC controllers describing concerns with having to take over TRACON departure and approach operations. The controllers alleged they are not sufficiently trained to handle TRACON operations.

(ACN 2295953) A Center Controller reported their facility took over the airspace of two underlying TRACONs. The reporter stated Center Controllers have insufficient training and experience to work these types of airspace.

(ACN 2268226) ZDV Center Controller reported their sector was assigned responsibility for underlying TRACON airspace which could not open due to staffing. The Center Controllers had not been trained on procedures or techniques to work air traffic in that airspace.

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 2295953

### DATE / TIME

Date of Occurrence 202510  
Local Time Of Day 0001 to 0600

### PLACE

Locale ZZZ.ARTCC  
State US

### AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - Center ZZZ  
Make Model Name Any Unknown or Unlisted Aircraft Manufacturer

### PERSON 1

Function - Air Traffic Control Enroute  
ASRS Report Number 2295953

### EVENTS

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

### NARRATIVE 1

This report is being filed to bring your attention back to a systemic safety issue within the FAA's contingency plan in reference to ZZZ [ARTCC] sectors taking over ZZZ [TRACON] and ZZZ1 [TRACON] airspace during limited services (ATC Zero) planned and unplanned events. I offer the safer resolution to rewrite the contingency plan to have the two adjoining approach controls share the responsibility for providing limited services to the users during ATC Zero events for ZZZ [TRACON] or ZZZ1 [TRACON].

On Day 0 around XA:00, my area assumed ZZZ [TRACON] airspace for a planned ATC Zero event. The controller who ended up working through the left over traffic in ZZZ1's airspace was visibly shaken the next day as they were describing the stress they went through trying to keep things safe in an unfamiliar configuration. They mentioned the earlier start to the ATC Zero event left much more traffic than expected and the flight school was still actively pursuing services as if nothing was limited.

I reached out to the ZZZ1 Supervisor and from that conversation I learned two things. The facility would normally schedule eight people at this time of the shift, just because of the high workload the flight school demands. Secondly, the Supervisor and the Facility Chief advised the flight school of the limited services planned for the evening but the Supervisor was not surprised to hear the flight school did not slow their operations or curtail their expectations towards ATC services. The Supervisor explained during other limited operations, such as our COVID schedule, this flight school disregarded the FAA's request to spread out their schedule in order to allow safer scheduling for the controllers shifts. One could deduce that these decisions are most likely not safety driven.

I've already mentioned my recommendation and I realize the easy effort is to keep saying, "we have addressed the issue with bi-annual training." This is not the safest options for our users and for the sanity of our controllers. I've gone through the training and put effort towards understanding the foreign rules and procedures. I've also applied this training towards an ATC Zero event. Twice a year training for such an unpracticed skill should not be accepted as a safe remedy. The surrounding approaches should be made capable and are already much more practiced in the art of approach control services which is why they should be tasked with this duty during scheduled ATC Zero events.

During a natural disaster, ATC Zero event where the surrounding approach controls have to evacuate, it makes sense to expect ZZZ [ARTCC] to provide very limited services.

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## **SYNOPSIS**

A Center Controller reported their facility took over the airspace of two underlying TRACONS. The reporter stated Center Controllers have insufficient training and experience to work these types of airspace.

## ACN 2268226

### DATE / TIME

Date of Occurrence	202507
Local Time Of Day	1801 to 2400

### PLACE

Locale	ZDV.ARTCC
State	CO

### AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - Center	ZDV
Make Model Name	No Aircraft

### PERSON 1

Function - Air Traffic Control	Enroute
ASRS Report Number	2268226

### EVENTS

Anomaly	ATC Issue - All Types
Anomaly	Deviation / Discrepancy - Procedural - Published Material / Policy

### NARRATIVE 1

On Day 0, at XA:00 COS TRACON/Tower informed ZDV that they will not be able to keep the TRACON open today due to staffing. ZDV - Area 3 - 41R would be assuming the COS airspace in approximately 20 minutes, while COS Tower would remain open and revert to a VFR Tower. This is an operation that Area 3 has not been properly trained on and never works. An adequate briefing on these contingency procedures has never occurred, and no one in Area 3 is proficient on the operation, which is a major safety concern. Lab problems [simulated training scenarios] have been requested on COS Tower only operations for the last five years, but they have been repeatedly ignored. A last-minute closure of COS TRACON, with the assumption that Area 3 will be able to accommodate assuming the airspace, on a beautiful VFR Saturday, while ZDV is already hitting record traffic counts consistently with less CPC's than ever, adds unnecessary stress to the already overworked and fatigued controllers and is an unacceptable risk to the NAS.

Recommendation: More Training for Area, to prepare us for the next time we have to take COS airspace.

### SYNOPSIS

ZDV Center Controller reported their sector was assigned responsibility for underlying TRACON airspace which could not open due to staffing. The Center Controllers had not been trained on procedures or techniques to work air traffic in that airspace.