

7/10/2026

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

2026-243/6-27

2372074

To: FAA (ATM PCT TRACON, AJW-19)

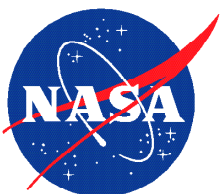
Info: FAA (AVP-1, AVP-200, AEA-600, AFS-260, AFS-200, Director of Air Traffic Operations ESA North), A4A, ALPA, AOPA, APA, ASAP, CAPA, ATSAP, ATSG, IATA, ICAO, ICASS, IFALPA, IPA, NATCA, NBAA, NTSB, RAA, SWAPA

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

Re: PCT TRACON Communication Radio Reliability Concerns

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 2372074**DATE / TIME**

Date of Occurrence	202606
Local Time Of Day	1801 to 2400

PLACE

Locale	IAD.Airport
State	DC
Altitude - MSL	7000

AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

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

PERSON 1

Function - Air Traffic Control	Approach
ASRS Report Number	2372074

EVENTS

Anomaly	ATC Issue - All Types
Anomaly	Deviation / Discrepancy - Procedural - Published Material / Policy
Anomaly	Ground Event / Encounter - Ground Equipment Issue
Anomaly	Inflight Event / Encounter - Weather / Turbulence
Detector - Person	Air Traffic Control
Result - Air Traffic Control	Separated Traffic

NARRATIVE 1

I was working the ZZZZZ position, frequency 120.45, with a string of arrivals inbound to IAD on the GIBBZ5 Arrival. It was a bit of an unusual sequence due to weather near IAD. Airplanes on the north leg of the arrival were being vectored off the arrival and given to the ZZZZZ1 / ZZZZZ2 sector for Runway 19L and the south leg of the arrival I was vectoring to a right base leg to Runway 19C. Aircraft X checked in on the north leg and I instructed them to descend to 070. I then went to issue a turn to Aircraft Y to the base leg and got no response. I tried the turn again, no response. I reached out to two other aircraft with no response. I changed my transmitter to standby and tried again with no response. I plugged into the Emergency Communication System (ECS) orange box and tried that and still got no response. All of a sudden, I had lost any way of communicating with any of the aircraft I was talking to and they were all on vectors. My last chance was to plug back into the RDVS (Rapid Deployment Voice Switch) and attempt the tunable frequency which finally worked. However, due to the delay in communication, two aircraft had left my frequency (one to guard and one to a different approach sector). So now I was scrambling to keep aircraft separated and sequenced with a very limited capacity to talk to any of them, as well as coordinate with the other sectors who had gotten aircraft they weren't expecting. It made an already complicated session exponentially more difficult and affected the flow of traffic to the airport.

Recommendation: There needs to be more reliable equipment to start with, but certainly a wider array of backup options. For me to be working and have aircraft on headings to lose everything was a very disconcerting experience. It's almost daily that there are frequencies that are out of service or being worked on so there is no backup. And often, when they are returned to service, the quality isn't great. Coverage is less

than ideal. Even when the actual frequency came back, I reached out to a pilot and they said they were only receiving me 3x5.

SYNOPSIS

PCT TRACON Controller reported losing all methods of communication with aircraft with little to no back-up options and even after the frequency returned, the quality and coverage was less than ideal.