

7/10/2026

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

2026-246/7-8

To: Airport Manager, San Francisco International Airport (SFO), CA,
FAA (ATM SFO Tower, ATM NCT TRACON, AAS-1)

2370024

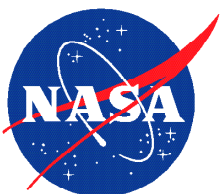
Info: FAA (AWP-600, AAS-300, AFS-260, AFS-200, AVP-1, AVP-200, Director of Air
Traffic Operations WSA, Runway Safety Team), A4A, AAAE, ALPA, APA, ASAP,
ATSAP, ATSG, CAPA, IATA, IBT, ICAO, ICASS, IFALPA, IPA, NATCA, NTSB, RAA,
SWAPA

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

Re: SFO Operational 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 2370024**DATE / TIME**

Date of Occurrence	202606
Local Time Of Day	No Local Time Of Day Stated

PLACE

Locale	SFO.Airport
State	CA

ENVIRONMENT

Flight Conditions	VMC
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AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - Center	ZOA
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	2370024

EVENTS

Anomaly	ATC Issue - All Types
Anomaly	Deviation / Discrepancy - Procedural - Published Material / Policy
Anomaly	Inflight Event / Encounter - Fuel Issue
Anomaly	No Specific Anomaly Occurred - Unwanted Situation
Detector - Person	Flight Crew
Result - General	Flight Cancelled / Delayed

NARRATIVE 1

The ongoing prohibition of parallel visual approaches at the San Francisco Airport has escalated from an operational inconvenience to a critical safety hazard. The resulting daily Ground Delay Programs (GDP) introduce two unmitigated risks into our system: chronic flight crew fatigue and unpredictable, near-minimum fuel operations.

The SFO GDP frequently spans to XA:00 to XQ:00, causing domestic delays ranging from 45 to over 90 minutes. This systematically pushes flight crews to the limits of their Flight Duty Period (FDP), transforming a standard 8 to 10 hour duty day into exhausting 10 to 12 hour marathons. Pilots are regularly forced to fly complex arrivals into a high-density environment after being delayed – sometimes for multiple hours – where fatigue becomes a major factor.

This threat materialized on day two of our pairing. Our schedule consisted of a three leg sequence: ZZZZ – SFO, SFO – ZZZZ, and a return to SFO. Both segments into SFO were hit by GDP delays exceeding one hour. The second GDP would have pushed us past our legal 13-hour FDP limit. While the crew desk was able to proactively remove us from the final turn – at considerable financial cost and inconvenience to our customers – many other crews had not timed out. Instead, they are being forced to fly into SFO fatigued, having already exhausted their mental and physical reserves waiting out ground delays.

The current SFO configuration also severely compromises fuel planning predictability. Because a GDP of over an hour does not guarantee a clear path upon arrival, clear weather (CAVOK) days now yielding traffic saturation risks usually reserved for low-visibility operations.

The severity of this breakdown was demonstrated on our flight from ZZZZ to SFO. The weather at SFO was pristine; endless blue skies with standard westerly winds. Normally, a remaining fuel of 1 hour 15 minutes is sufficient fuel to conduct an approach, handle a go-around, and land with a comfortable 60-minute reserve. Recognizing the SFO volatility, we planned a conservative gate fuel giving us an increased remaining fuel of 1 hour 45 minutes.

The fuel preservation effort began immediately on the ground in ZZZZ, where our wheels-up time meant a 15-minute wait at the runway end. We proactively taxied on one engine and shut down the motor during our wait to preserve our margins. However, as we approached SFO our situation deteriorated. While on the BDEGA Arrival, ZOA assigned us a published hold at BGGLO due to traffic saturation on the SFO final approach.

We immediately slowed the aircraft and began coordinating our fuel status with dispatch. I determined a bingo fuel of approximately 7,500 lb. before we needed to divert to SMF (1 hour remaining fuel of 5,100 lb. plus 2,300 lb. burn to SMF). We entered the BGGLO hold at 8,900 lb. After just one circuit our fuel had dropped to 8,300 lbs. Recognizing that a third circuit would push us below our diversion threshold, I informed ZOA that the second lap would have to be our final circuit; we either needed to press to SFO or immediately divert to SMF.

Fortunately, ZOA released us from the hold with 7,700 lb. remaining. This left us with almost no buffer. To maintain a safe margin at SFO, I wanted a minimum touchdown fuel of 6,300 lb. (1 hour remain fuel of 5,100 lb. plus 1,200 burn to SJC allowing for a go-around at SFO and a diversion to SJC with a 45-minute reserve). I was mentally prepared to declare "minimum fuel" and even "emergency fuel" to NORCAL Approach if given any further delay vectors, as the low-speed and low-altitude small box patterns frequently used by ATC during these saturation periods consume fuel at an accelerated rate. I realize 6,300 lb. remaining fuel is higher than Company policy. However I never want to box myself into a position where a go-around will result in an unsafe fuel state.

NORCAL managed to sequence us with minimal vectoring, and we landed at SFO with 6,500 lb. While safe, this was significantly below our flight-planned remaining fuel of 8,281 lb.

Despite departing ZZZZ with an extra 30 minutes of fuel on a perfect clear-weather day, the compounding ground and airborne delays brought us to within minutes of an unnecessary diversion. The current SFO arrival restrictions are creating a compound hazard: crews are being kept in the air longer resulting in increasingly narrower fuel margins, all while operating at the tail end of extended and fatigue-inducing duty days. The FAA MUST re-evaluate the prohibition on parallel visuals to restore system predictability and preserve safety margins.

SYNOPSIS

Air carrier Captain reported the prohibition of parallel visual approaches at SFO and the resulting daily Ground Delay Program is causing chronic flight crew fatigue and unsafe, near-minimum fuel operations.