

8/13/2026

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

2026-288/10-25

To: FAA (ATM ZLC ARTCC, AJV-A)

2383685

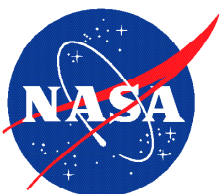
Info: FAA (AFS-260, AFS-200, AVP-1, AVP-200, Director of Air Traffic Operations, WSA), A4A, AAAE, ALPA, APA, ASAP, ATSAP, ATSG, CAPA, IATA, IBT, ICAO, ICASS, IFALPA, NATCA, NTSB, RAA, SWAPA, Jeppesen Sanderson Inc.

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

Re: Similar Sounding Fix Names - WHATZ/WAATS

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 2383685**DATE / TIME**

Date of Occurrence	202607
Local Time Of Day	No Local Time Of Day Stated

PLACE

Locale	ZLC.ARTCC
State	UT

ENVIRONMENT

Flight Conditions	VMC
-------------------	-----

AIRCRAFT / EQUIPMENT X

ATC / Advisory - Center	ZLC
Make Model Name	Large Transport, Low Wing, 2 Turbojet Eng
Operating Under FAR Part	121

PERSON 1

Function - Flight Crew	First Officer
Function - Flight Crew	Pilot Not Flying
ASRS Report Number	2383685

PERSON 2

Function - Flight Crew	Captain
Function - Flight Crew	Pilot Flying
ASRS Report Number	2383675

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 - Automation	Air Traffic Control
Result - Flight Crew	Became Reoriented
Result - Air Traffic Control	Issued New Clearance

NARRATIVE 1

While at cruise, we asked for weather deviations. ATC gave us the deviation and instructed us to proceed to WHATZ intersection after we were done deviating. Once the deviation was completed, we proceeded direct WHATZ and informed ATC. After a few minutes, ATC inquired as to which waypoint we were navigating to. We informed them that we were direct WHATZ as previously instructed. They told us that they were showing us off course. We checked our navigation equipment and made sure we were in LNAV mode. Everything checked out on our end. We were curious as to where the disconnect was and later found out that there was another WAATS intersection in our flight plan. When ATC gave us the instruction to proceed direct WAATS after the deviation, they never spelled it out. We informed ATC that we were direct WHATZ intersection and spelled it out for them. That's when we all noticed the disconnect. They gave us another fix to proceed to and the rest of the flight was uneventful.

NARRATIVE 2

During cruise, we requested a weather deviation from ATC. A clearance to deviate around weather was issued. We were instructed to proceed direct to Waats when clear of weather. However, ATC did not provide a phonetic spelling. Upon completion of our weather deviation, I looked at the legs page and saw the fix Whatz, but missed Waats. Following normal SOP, I inserted Whatz to go direct, verified it with my FO, and we proceeded on course. After a few minutes, ATC asked which fix we were proceeding direct to. We said Whatz. ATC, based on the pronunciation, said that we were showing off course by about 15 miles. I don't believe that ATC realized that there were two fixes with the same pronunciation on our route. Everything looked correct to us. We had proper modes selected and no nav errors. Neither me, nor my FO were aware that there were two fixes pronounced the same on our route. But, upon the questioning from ATC, we began looking at our route closer and saw that we had selected Whatz, instead of Waats. We told ATC what had happened. They said they saw why there was confusion and issued us a clearance to Whatz (the fix we were already going direct to). We continued to our destination without further incident.

SYNOPSIS

Air carrier flight crew reported that similar sounding fixes, WHATZ and WAATS, resulted in confusion and course deviation during cruise.