ORDER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

1070.1

4/17/00

SUBJ: HOTLINE OPERATIONS PROGRAM

1. PURPOSE. This order prescribes the operations, responsibilities, and requirements of the Hotline Operations Program. This program includes the operation of the Administrator's and Consumer Hotlines.

2. DISTRIBUTION. This order is distributed to the division level in the Washington headquarters, regions, and centers with limited distribution to each field office and facility.

3. BACKGROUND. On August 3, 1984, the Administrator established the Administrator's Hotline to provide FAA employees with high-level management attention for concerns that were not being resolved by established administrative processes. On June 13, 1985, the Administrator established the Consumer Hotline for consumers with questions about FAA services. On November 4, 1994, as part of the agency's streamlining efforts, FAA consolidated the Administrator's and Consumer Hotline programs into the Hotline Operations Program.

4. DEFINITIONS.

a. Administrator's Hotline Information System (AHIS) and Consumer Hotline Information System (CHIS)--Computerized data bases that are used to enter, assign action, coordinate, and track Hotline data.

b. Hotline Intake Forms--Forms that are completed by Hotline Operations Specialists containing information provided by the callers.

c. Hotline Call Records--Computerized (AHIS or CHIS) synopses of intake forms that are sent to the appropriate lines of business for action or information.

d. Action Offices--Washington headquarters, regional offices, and centers that have the responsibility for investigating issues resulting from calls to the Administrator's and Consumer Hotlines.

e. Investigative Records--Documents and materials that are accumulated by offices in the course of investigating issues resulting from calls to the Administrator's and Consumer Hotlines.

f. Hotline Responses--Written responses that are sent by action offices to individuals who have called the Administrator's Hotline. Responses will be sent through management channels if callers are FAA employees unless callers have requested confidentiality. Written responses that are sent by action offices directly to individuals who have called the Consumer Hotline. Written responses to FAA employees will be in memorandum format. Written responses to consumers will be in letter format.

g. Hotline Operations Program Manager--The program manager, AOA-20, who has overall program management responsibility for the planning, review, coordination, organization, and control of assigned Hotline programs.

h. Hotline Operations Specialists--The program specialists, AOA-20, who have responsibility for analyzing and coordinating Hotline programs and for providing guidance and technical advice in communicating the organization's policies and programs.

i. Hotline Contacts--Individuals who are designated in Washington headquarters, regional offices, and centers assigned to track issues resulting from calls to the Administrator's and Consumer Hotlines.

5. APPLICABILITY. This order applies to offices and services in the Washington headquarters, regions, and centers responsible for conducting inquiries and responding to issues addressed through the Administrator's and Consumer Hotlines.

a. The Administrator's Hotline will not address issues that are subject to negotiations between the exclusive bargaining representative and FAA or that are subject to challenge under the provisions of a negotiated grievance procedure. Collective bargaining agreements provide the mechanism by which such issues should be addressed. Bargaining unit employees contacting the Hotline regarding such issues will be referred to the appropriate collective bargaining agreement.

b. The Administrator's Hotline will not address problems or matters that are the subject of an administrative appeal process or currently in litigation. This includes, but is not limited to, discrimination complaints, grievances, and complaints filed with the Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General.

c. When a complaint of misconduct within the scope of Order 1110.125A, Accountability Board, is reported to the Administrator's Hotline, the Hotline Operations Specialist will assign the Hotline Call Record to the appropriate action office in accordance with normal Hotline procedures. The Hotline Operations Specialist will also provide a copy of the Hotline Call Record to the Accountability Board Coordinator within 2 work days.

6. PROHIBITION ON RETALIATION. FAA employees are entitled to contact the Administrator's Hotline without fear of reprisal. Retaliation against employees who use the Administrator's Hotline is prohibited.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES. The Hotline Operations Program Manager is responsible for managing the Administrator's and Consumer Hotlines and assuring that all issues raised by the program are adequately addressed.

8. PROCEDURES. These procedures apply to the Administrator's and Consumer Hotlines.

a. FAA employees may contact the Administrator's Hotline by calling 202-267-9532. Consumers may contact the Consumer Hotline by calling 1-800-322-7873 or by accessing the FAA web site. The normal hours of operation for the Hotline Operations Program are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. After 4 p.m., callers may leave voice mail messages and request return calls on the next business day.

b. Hotline Operations Specialists receive telephone calls and written correspondence (letters, memoranda, or facsimile documents). Walk-in appointments are accepted for FAA employees but are not accepted for consumers. Electronic mail messages and messages received through the FAA web site are accepted from consumers but are not accepted from FAA employees. An FAA employee, who contacts the Administrator's Hotline, may request that his/her identity remain confidential. Anonymous calls to the Administrator's Hotline are accepted, but no feedback will be provided to an anonymous caller. Consumers who contact the Consumer Hotline are not granted confidentiality. Anonymous calls to the Consumer Hotline are not accepted.

c. Hotline Operations Specialists discuss issues with callers and document information provided by the callers on Hotline Intake Forms. Hotline Operations Specialists must ensure that as much pertinent information as possible is obtained from callers, especially for anonymous calls, and must maintain the confidentiality of FAA employees' identities and security of reports when required.

d. When an FAA employee contacts the Administrator's Hotline, the Hotline Operations Specialist will ask the caller if he/she has spoken with the appropriate supervisor/manager prior to contacting the Administrator's Hotline. In some cases, a caller, who has not discussed an issue with a management official, will be referred to management in an attempt to resolve the issue. If a caller requests confidentiality, the caller's identity will be removed from the Hotline Call Record before it is forwarded to the action office. However, authorized disclosure of FAA employees' identities may be made within the agency on a "need to know" basis. Further, callers' identities may be released to a Washington headquarters investigator from the Office of Civil Aviation Security Operations, on a "need to know" basis, by a Hotline Operations Specialist to be used for investigative purposes only. The Hotline Operations staff shall determine "need to know." Unauthorized disclosure of a caller's identity is prohibited.

e. Within 1 calendar day, the Hotline Operations Specialist transfers the information into the AHIS or CHIS data bases and creates a Hotline Call Record. The Hotline Call Record is transmitted by facsimile by the Hotline Operations Specialist to the regional Hotline Contact for handling, or hand carried in an FAA Form 1360-39 "To Be Opened by Addressee" envelope to the appropriate Washington headquarters Hotline Contact. The Hotline Contact shall assign action to the appropriate office at theWashington headquarters, regional, or center levels. Administrator's Hotline calls alleging

fraud, waste, and abuse will be sent by the Hotline Operations Specialist to the Office of Civil Aviation Security Operations for review. Any Administrator's Hotline call that the Office of Civil Aviation Security Operations determines does not involve security issues will be returned to the Hotline Operations Program Manager, within 1 calendar day, for forwarding directly to a line of business at a management level that is independent of the person(s) identified in the allegations. Personnel conducting such inquiries may not be named in the complaint. The individuals conducting inquiries should be absent of all bias, prejudice, sympathy, and outside influence. Any management action taken as a result of a substantiated complaint involving fraud, waste, and abuse must be coordinated with, and reviewed by, the Office of Labor and Employee Relations.

f. The action office shall conduct a thorough inquiry of issues and provide a written Hotline Response to the caller or the Hotline Operations staff, as appropriate, by the required suspense date. The normal suspense date is 14 calendar days. When the Office of Civil Aviation Security Operations is the designated action office, that office shall have an automatic 30-calendar day suspense date. If an inquiry is prolonged, an action office may request an extension of a due date by contacting the Hotline Operations staff via telephone. When a complaint of misconduct within the scope of Order 1110.125A, Accountability Board, is reported to the Administrator's Hotline, the action office must coordinate the Hotline Response with the Accountability Board Coordinator prior to its being sent to the Hotline caller or the Hotline Operations staff.

g. Responses back to Hotline callers should be carefully reviewed by the action office to ensure that any identifying information concerning action taken against an individual is not referenced in the Hotline Response. An individual's right to privacy must be protected in Federal Government information activities involving personal information. If an FAA employee has requested confidentiality, the Hotline Response shall be addressed to the Manager, Hotline Operations Program, AOA-20, for forwarding directly to the caller by the Hotline Operations staff. This response shall not be transmitted via facsimile to the confidential caller's office or facility but shall be mailed to the caller to the address provided by the caller at the time of the call. Anonymous callers will not receive responses. The action office or, in the case of a response to a confidential caller, the Hotline Operations staff must carefully review the Hotline Response to ensure that information covered by the Privacy Act is not disclosed to the caller.

h. The action office shall provide a copy of the Hotline Response to the Hotline Contact for forwarding to the Hotline Operations staff. Washington headquarters Hotline Contacts shall hand-carry a copy of the Hotline Response in an FAA Form 1360-39 envelope to the Hotline Operations staff. All other Hotline Contacts shall send a copy of the Hotline Response to the Hotline Operations staff, AOA-20, via facsimile, 202-267-5087, to close out the action item. Each Hotline Response will be reviewed by the Hotline Program Manager, prior to close out, to ensure the response satisfactorily addresses issues contained in the Hotline Call Record.

i. When an FAA employee is dissatisfied with a Hotline Response because he/she believes it did not adequately address his/her concerns, the employee may submit one written followup letter to the Hotline Operations staff and request the issues be re-addressed through the Hotline's procedures. Confidential callers may maintain confidentiality on followup issues.

9. ACCESS CONSTRAINTS. Hotline Operations staff are permitted to search the AHIS and CHIS data bases for a record using tailored search fields, such as the caller's last or first name, control number, date of initial call, routing symbol, and operator identification number. However, the Hotline Operations staff is not permitted, under any circumstances, to search the AHIS or CHIS free-form text field for a record using a person's name or other personal identifier, such as a Social Security Number.

10. SECURITY. Hotline documents and materials shall be provided secure storage and will not be disseminated to persons other than those directly involved in processing, conducting inquiries, or resolving the allegations. Each individual handling these documents will:

a. Maintain all materials containing information that could identify a caller, or of allegations against individuals, in a secure area when not in use.

b. Release materials outside Hotline channels only with the approval of the Hotline Program Manager.

11. RETENTION OF FILES. The files of the Administrator's and Consumer Hotlines will be maintained or destroyed according to a set schedule pursuant to the requirements of Order 1350.15B, Records Organization, Transfer, and Destruction Standards.

a. Administrator's Hotline.

Administrator's Office.

Paper Files.	Cutoff files annually. Destroy when 5 years old.
Electronic Records.	Destroy individual data records when paper files are destroyed.
System Documentation.	Update as needed. Destroy documentation when superseded.
All other offices.	Cutoff files annually. Destroy when 2 years old.

b. Consumer Hotline.

Paper Files.	Cutoff files annually. Destroy when 2 years old.
Electronic Records.	Destroy individual data records when paper files are destroyed.
System Documentation.	Destroy superseded documentation.

12. PRIVACY ACT.

a. The information collected from individuals in the course of receiving Administrator's and Consumer Hotline complaints, and the responses provided to individuals, becomes part of the DOT/FAA Privacy Act System of Records, DOT/FAA 845, Correspondence Control and Information System. The information in that system must be protected against unauthorized disclosure to third parties. Misuse and/or unauthorized disclosure of this information is punishable by internal disciplinary action and/or civil or criminal penalties with a possible fine of up to $5,000. However, necessary information will be disclosed only on a need-to-know basis, or in accordance with the routine uses specified in DOT/FAA 845. The investigative records used to develop responses are not part of the Privacy Act System of Records, DOT/FAA 845, Correspondence Control and Information System.

b. The Privacy Act provides the individual whose record is accessed by his/her name or personal identifier with various rights. First, the individual about whom the record pertains has the right to access the record to see what is there; and second, the individual has the right to request amendment to the record if he/she believes the information is not correct. In the case of the Privacy Act System of Records, DOT/FAA 845, the record pertains to the caller, not the subject of the complaint. Therefore, those rights of access and amendment apply to the caller. Other provisions of the Privacy Act protect the information from disclosure to a third party. Requests for access to, or amendment of, information contained in this system of records must only be responded to by the Hotline Operations Program Manager. The action office may have the same information as the Hotline Operations Program Manager to use in responding to the Hotline complaint; however, the action office does not have the authority to respond to a Privacy Act request. Any request for information from a Privacy Act System of Records must go to the Hotline Operations Program Manager or his or her delegate. Guidance on the Privacy Act can be found in the current version of Order 1280.1, Protecting Privacy of Information about Individuals.

13. RELATIONSHIP TO THE AVIATION SAFETY HOTLINE PROGRAM.

The Administrator established the Aviation Safety Hotline Program on July 1, 1985. The toll-free Hotline, 1-800-255-1111, provides a means for persons with knowledge of unsafe aviation situations, improper recordkeeping, or safety violations to report these without fear of recrimination. Anonymous and confidential reports are accepted. The Office of System Safety has responsibility for the Aviation Safety Hotline Program. Order 8000.73, Aviation Safety Hotline Program, sets out the operations, responsibilities, and requirements of the Aviation Safety Hotline Program. The Hotline Operations staff, AOA-20, provides telephone coverage for the Aviation Safety Hotline Program from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday, except on Federal holidays. The FAA Headquarters Operations Center provides telephone coverage beyond that provided by volunteer standby personnel in the Office of System Safety for reports considered time critical that should not wait for the next business day. Callers are directed to the FAA Headquarters Operations Center for transfer to the person on standby.

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Administrator