



Midair Collision Involving US Army PAT25 and PSA Airlines Flight 5342 Washington, DC January 29, 2025

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Overview – Air Traffic Control Postaccident Testing

- FAA controller postaccident drug and alcohol testing requirements
- Postaccident testing of involved controllers

FAA Controller Postaccident Testing Requirements

- FAA-employed air traffic controllers are subject to federal workplace drug and alcohol testing requirements for US Department of Transportation (DOT) employees
- Requirements established by DOT Order

FAA Controller Postaccident Testing Requirements

- Testing required when (any):
 - Fatality
 - Substantial damage
 - Medical treatment away from site
 - Certain other unsafe practices
- Controllers subject to testing when (any):
 - Reason to believe performance may have contributed
 - Performance cannot be completely discounted as contributing

FAA Controller Postaccident Testing Requirements

- Required testing must be done as soon as possible
- Whenever possible, drug testing must be completed within 4 hours, alcohol testing within 2 hours
- Drug testing allowed up to 5 days, alcohol testing up to 8 hours

Postaccident Testing of Involved Controllers

- Controllers underwent workplace postaccident urine drug testing about 18 to 20 hours after accident
- Testing did not find evidence of prohibited substance use
- Required alcohol testing not performed

Postaccident Testing of Involved Controllers

- FAA Air Traffic Organization (ATO) made drug and alcohol testing determination almost 3.5 hours after accident
- Decision made to test for drugs only, because controllers released from facility about 15 minutes earlier
- Drug testing scheduled for following afternoon

What We Found: Postaccident Testing

- ATO testing determination was not timely and violated DOT requirements
- ATO staff had inadequate understanding of DOT requirements
- ATO initial event response procedures are inadequately designed to meet requirements for timely testing, because procedures tie testing determination to Services Rendered Telephone Conference (SRT)
 - SRT has multiple administrative and initial investigative actions
 - Prepare audio communications and radar display playback for SRT

What we propose:

- Two recommendations to FAA
- One recommendation to DOT



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