



NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and* RECORDS ADMINISTRATION  
8601 ADELPHI ROAD COLLEGE PARK, MD 20740-6001  
[www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov)

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

June 25, 2018

Mr. Jonathan Jones  
Department of Transportation  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20591  
[jonathan.jones@faa.gov](mailto:jonathan.jones@faa.gov)

Dear Mr. Jones:

On June 12, 2018, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received an allegation about the unauthorized disposition of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) records. This allegation is related to an inquiry Mr. Harold Rutlia made to FAA concerning deletion of audio recordings of new-hire evaluations at the FAA Academy.

The allegation stated that:

The FAA Academy trains and evaluates air traffic controllers in simulators that have an audio recording capability. This capability records ambient audio as well as audio directly from the headset of the air traffic control trainee as he speaks instructions to aircraft in the simulator. The FAA admitted that it does not have a retention schedule for such records. Instead, the FAA claimed they must delete the audio within 7 days due to "space limitations."

As required in 36 CFR 1230.14, Federal agencies must promptly report to NARA any unauthorized removal, alteration or destruction of agency records. Based on the allegation referenced above and in accordance with 36 CFR 1230.16(b), NARA is requesting that you provide us with a response within 30 calendar days that includes a complete description of the audio records (including an approximation of the volume and dates of all deleted recordings); a statement of what safeguards have been put into place (or will be put into place) to prevent any future unauthorized disposition of agency records; exact details of the circumstances surrounding this alleged deletion of records; and an outline of any actions taken to retrieve or recreate the deleted audio records.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact Andréa Noel, Senior Records Analyst, at 301-837-3564 or by email at [andrea.noel@nara.gov](mailto:andrea.noel@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

Enclosures

Email-to-GRS Team-Rutila-062018.pdf  
Original FRA Complaint to FAA (Highlighted).pdf  
June-14-2017\_FAA Response Letter (Highlighted).pdf  
May-18-2018\_FAA FRA Complaint Response.pdf  
Doskow - There is not a disposition schedule.pdf

CC: Claire Barrett



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***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

October 15, 2018

Mr. Jonathan Jones  
Department of Transportation  
Federal Aviation Administration  
800 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20591  
[jonathan.jones@faa.gov](mailto:jonathan.jones@faa.gov)

Dear Mr. Jones:

On June 12, 2018, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) received an allegation about the unauthorized disposition of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) records. This allegation is related to an inquiry Mr. Harold Rutlia made to FAA concerning deletion of audio recordings of new-hire evaluations at the FAA Academy, from the Adacel Tower Simulator System (TSS).

The FAA letter, dated August 30, 2018, indicated that FAA conducted a thorough investigation into Mr. Rutlia's allegation and determined that the audio files Mr. Rutlia referred to are non-record material that does not meet the statutory definition of a federal record. Therefore, both the TSS and the audio files are not subject to any records retention schedule.

Additionally, the letter describes the TSS specifications as it relates to the audio files in greater detail.

The TSS does not capture complete, continuous, or fully coherent voice recordings produced by TSS. The TSS is the air traffic control simulator system used by the FAA Academy to train and evaluate air traffic control students in a simulated environment. The system contains voice recognition software that allows students to verbally direct simulated aircraft displayed on the system's screen. The TSS is simply an electronic medium to display simulator scenarios and does not record evaluations. Instead, to operate its voice recognition function, the system generates thousands of .wav files, each file consisting of either a syllable, a single word, or a short group of words. By default, the .wav files generated in the TSS create a text file that is sent to the simulator to control the aircraft in real time. The text file is then broken down into a list of commands, which is carried out during a tower simulation event. There is no accurate and complete recording of each scenario that the system runs as a record output, as the .wav files are strictly part of the system's program execution files.

Based on the information provided in the report and the supporting documentation, NARA concludes that the unauthorized disposition is unfounded. NARA considers this matter closed. If you need further

assistance regarding this issue, please contact Andréa Noel, Senior Records Analyst, at (301) 837-3564 or by email at [andrea.noel@nara.gov](mailto:andrea.noel@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence A. Brewer".

LAURENCE BREWER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government

CC:

Geraldine A. Gour  
Acting Executive Director, Administration & Management  
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Federal Aviation Administration  
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Claire Barrett  
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