



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.

January 24, 2023

Richard W. Mattison
Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW, Bldg., 10A, 4th Floor
Washington DC 20591
9-faa-records-management-program@faa.gov
202-267-0540

Dear Richard Mattison,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has become aware of a potential unauthorized disposition of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) records. This allegation is based on an article published by Reuters on January 19, 2023 (see attached) that quoted FAA officials as saying that, “a preliminary review found that contract personnel unintentionally deleted files disrupting a key computer system and prompting a nationwide groundstop on Jan. 11 that disrupted more than 11,000 flights.”

In accordance with 36 CFR 1230.14(a), NARA requests that FAA respond within 30 calendar days to this allegation. If it is determined that an unauthorized disposition of records has occurred, the response should include the following information:

- A complete description of the records with volume and dates if known;
- The office maintaining the records;
- A statement of the exact circumstances surrounding the removal, defacing, alteration, or destruction of records;
- A statement of the safeguards established to prevent further loss of documentation; and
- Details of the actions taken to salvage, retrieve, or reconstruct the records.

If it is determined that there has been no unauthorized disposition, please provide us with sufficient documentation to support that finding. I appreciate your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss further, please contact me at laurence.brewer@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurence V. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

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



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February 24, 2023

Richard W. Mattison
Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue SW, Bldg., 10A, 4th Floor
Washington DC 20591
9-faa-records-management-program@faa.gov

Dear Richard Mattison,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) acknowledges receipt of the Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) report regarding the unintentional deletion of computer files that disrupted more than 11,000 flights.

We understand that a database administrator deleted the files while performing maintenance activity. No files were actually lost as they were recovered from backup tapes. To prevent future incidents, the FAA has taken immediate steps to make the system more resilient. For example, synchronization of a backup database is staggered by an hour to guard against a cascading system failure. Additionally, the FAA now requires at least two individuals to be present during maintenance of the system and that such work be supervised by a federal employee.

Based on this information, NARA is satisfied with the actions FAA has taken and considers this matter closed. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at laurence.brewer@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

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