ORDER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

3710.17

3/21/95

SUBJ: NAATS/FAA PARTNERSHIP

1. **PURPOSE**. This order transmits the National Association of Air Traffic Specialists/Federal Aviation Administration (NAATS/FAA) Partnership process to be used in automated flight service facilities. This order is the result of the parties' agreement that empowering employees to make decisions that affect them is both desirable and an efficient way of conducting business.

2. **DISTRIBUTION**. This order is distributed to branch level in Washington and regional Air Traffic and Human Resource Management Divisions, automated flight service stations, and Regional Directors of the National Association of Air Traffic Specialists.

3. **NAATS/FAA PARTNERSHIP (NFP)**. Appendix 1, NAATS/FAA Partnership, provides guidance that has been jointly developed and shall be utilized in the establishment and administration of the NFP process nationwide.

4. **INTERIM PROCEDURES**. A national training program will be conducted for all regions. Processes already in place shall adhere to the principles of this order.

Bill F. Jeffers
Director of Air Traffic

Distribution: A-W(AT/TH/TM/TP/TR/TZ/HR)-3; A-X(AT/HR)-3; A-FAT-5/6 (LTD)

Initiated By: ATZ-20

APPENDIX 1, NAATS/FAA PARTNERSHIP

1. **BACKGROUND**. FAA Air Traffic management and NAATS are committed to creating an environment where employees are empowered and encouraged to participate in decisions that affect their work lives through effective communications and teamwork based on a commonality of interests.

2. **STRUCTURE**.

a. The National Council shall be structured according to the NAATS/FAA National Partnership Council Charter, dated January 28, 1994, and the NAATS/FAA Partnership Principles Agreement, dated March 16-17, 1994, with applicable amendments.

b. NAATS and the regional Air Traffic Divisions will establish an NFP regional team consistent with the Partnership Principles Agreement (PPA). It shall be chaired jointly by the Manager or Assistant Manager, Air Traffic Division, and the NAATS Regional Director as gatekeepers. The NFP regional team will oversee the regional NFP process. Responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, budget, training, and resolution of regional issues.

c. At the facility level, the facility manager and facility representative will constitute the basic membership of the facility team. They shall be the respective parties' gatekeepers. They may add other NAATS representatives and management representatives (including staff and administrative), in equal numbers, to meet the individual needs of the facility. The parties agree that diversity is desirable in team structure.

d. The facility team may establish a subordinate problem-solving structure or groups that meet the needs of the facility. Nonresolution authority teams may include non-Union member bargaining unit members as determined by the NAATS facility representative.

e. NAATS and management individually retain the right to select their own representatives to any group or team.

3. **NAATS/FAA PARTNERSHIP OPERATING PROCEDURES**.

a. Representation.

(1) A quorum consists of 50 percent or more of the team's management representatives and 50 percent or more of the team's NAATS representatives and must include both the facility manager and the NAATS facility representative or their designee.

(2) All participants in the NFP, i.e., teams, facilitators, and coordinators, shall be given priority consideration for any identified required training. All other employees will receive training in problem-solving techniques.

(3) Vacancies on teams shall be filled immediately.

b. Meetings.

(1) The facility team shall establish a schedule for biweekly meetings.

(2) Times of all scheduled meetings shall be provided to the appropriate scheduler to ensure that they are included on the official duty schedule.

(3) Ad hoc meetings for matters requiring immediate action may be scheduled by mutual agreement of the team's gatekeepers.

c. Identification of Issues. The gatekeepers, or their designee, shall approve all issues prior to their submission to the team for resolution.

d. Consensus Decisionmaking.

(1) All decisions in the NFP process are based on the consensus of the team, which means that all participants must agree to implement a decision.

(2) The gatekeepers of any team may request the gatekeepers of the next higher level team to accept issues on which their group was unable to reach consensus.

(3) A consensus decision is binding on all within the jurisdiction of the team or group making the decision, provided a quorum is present.

(4) Consensus decisions shall not be changed or reversed by either management or NAATS except under extraordinary circumstances. The regional gatekeepers are the only individuals who may exercise this authority after consultation with their counterpart. Reasons for the inability to implement a resolution that is outside the authority or ability of the regional Air Traffic Division Manager or the NAATS Regional Director shall be submitted, in writing, to the resolving team and posted.

(5) Resolutions that are reached may also be reopened, but only by a consensus of the resolving team or group.

(6) If management and the Union agree to submit a matter to the NFP process in lieu of engaging in impact and implementation bargaining required under the labor relations statute, and management later invokes the provisions of paragraph 3d(4) above, the Union retains its right to subsequently request bargaining on the issue or issues originally submitted to the NFP process.

(7) If management and NAATS agree to use the NFP process to consider an issue that is not contradictory to the national contract, law, or Governmentwide regulation, any resolution that results shall be binding on the parties.

e. Problem Identification.

(1) The facility team shall establish the procedure to be followed for submission of issues or problems to an NFP team or group. The procedure must allow all employees in the facility, regardless of grade or position, to submit items for consideration.

(2) The gatekeepers may, by mutual agreement, determine that an issue is not appropriate for the team and return the issue with an explanation to the originator.

f. NFP Protocol (Facility Interface In Problem Resolution).

(1) NFP Facility to Another NFP Facility. Initial coordination should be accomplished by communication from facility manager to facility manager.

(2) NFP Facility to Non-NFP Facility. The NFP facility will follow the partnership process. The Non-NFP facility will follow traditional problem resolution processes.

4. **BASIC PRINCIPLES.**

a. The NFP process is an extension of the collective bargaining relationship that incorporates the principles of Executive Order 12871. Teams or groups shall not consider individual grievances, equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints, staff/supervisory/managerial selections, or other matters under the coverage of the statute.

b. All decisions in the NFP process are based on the consensus of a properly constituted team or group which means that all members must agree to support the decisions.

c. No decision, understanding, or practice arrived at through the NFP process, other than those resulting from the use of paragraphs 3d(4) and (6), shall be subject to the negotiated grievance procedure or any dispute resolution process established under the Federal Labor Relations Statute. Any changes that management makes as a result of these decisions, understandings, or practices shall not constitute an unfair labor practice or create a bargaining obligation.

d. The FAA and NAATS shall not limit the subjects that may be considered under the NFP process based on traditional labor management relations.

e. Management and NAATS leadership will make every effort to utilize this process for problem-solving and problem prevention.

f. A team may, by complete mutual agreement, either accept an issue as a project for resolution or discuss the issue and forward comments and/or recommendations to the appropriate manager and NAATS representative.

5. **DOCUMENTATION, PUBLICITY, AND DISTRIBUTION.**

a. Minutes of all NFP meetings shall be signed by gatekeepers and posted prior to the next meeting. The gatekeepers shall ensure that communication is accomplished with all employees.

b. The completed resolution shall be written and become the memorandum of understanding.

c. Any implementation plans associated with specific resolutions shall be posted.

d. The facility gatekeepers are responsible for compiling and publishing a yearly report of team accomplishments. The report shall be submitted to the regional gatekeepers within 30 days after the fiscal year.

e. The facility will provide clerical and administrative services, if available, to support these activities.

f. The facility team shall maintain files on all NFP activities.

6. **JOINT APPROVAL**. The following signatures represent FAA and NAATS commitment to cooperation and partnership.

Bill F. Jeffers
Director of Air Traffic

Michael F. McAnaw
President, National Association
of Air Traffic Specialists