

Attachment 4.

Technical Memorandum for 2023 TAF: Explanation of TAF Terminology and Forecasts for Passenger Enplanements and Commercial Operations

The purpose of this technical memorandum is to clarify the terminology used for passenger enplanements and commercial operations in the TAF. In recent years a misunderstanding regarding this terminology and forecasting assumptions has led to confusion about the TAF forecasts. This is especially true about the forecasts prepared using the Modernized TAF (TAF M) network model. This model is used to forecast those airports with more than 100,000 enplanements. In addition to clarifying the terminology an explanation of the forecast assumptions for aircraft reallocation and on demand air taxi operations is provided. This explains what may appear as an inconsistency between the passenger enplanements and commercial operations presented in the TAF.

Terminology:

Air carrier enplanements: Sum of domestic and international revenue passenger enplanements on mainline US commercial air carriers plus international revenue passenger enplanements on mainline foreign flag air carriers. Mainline air carriers provide service primarily using aircraft with 90 or more seats.

Commuter enplanements: Sum of domestic and international revenue passenger enplanements on US flag and foreign flag carriers whose primary function is providing feed to mainline carriers, regardless of aircraft size. Commuter airlines primarily operate aircraft with 89 or fewer seats.

Air carrier operations: Airport operations by US flag and foreign flag carriers, performed on aircraft with seating capacity of more than 60 seats or a maximum payload capacity of more than 18,000 pounds, carrying passengers or cargo for hire or compensation.

Air taxi/commuter operations: Airport operations performed by aircraft with seating capacity of 60 seats or less or a maximum payload of 18,000 pounds or less, carrying passengers or cargo for hire or compensation. Includes both scheduled commuter and on demand air taxi operations.

The discussion above highlights that the distinction between air carrier and commuter enplanements is generally a 90 seat breakpoint whereas the distinction between air carrier and air taxi/commuter operations is a 60 seat breakpoint. Therefore one cannot simply divide air carrier passenger enplanements by air carrier departures or commuter enplanements by commuter departures (i.e., air taxi/commuter departures minus on demand air taxi departures) to assess enplanements per departure by category. In addition, for many TAF M airports the air taxi/commuter operations show a decline for a period of time because of aircraft reallocation. As smaller RJs are replaced by larger RJs they shift from the air taxi/commuter operations category to the air carrier operations category. By FY 2028 most small RJs are assumed to be out of the fleet and the remaining operations in the air taxi/commuter operations category are on demand air taxi operations. These operations are assumed to increase 1% per year.