



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF
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NEWS RELEASE

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**Connecticut Airport Authority and Bradley International Airport Announce New
Technology to Lead Region in Airport Operations**

The Connecticut Airport Authority (CAA) and Bradley International Airport today announced they are now using a new digital notification system that enables them to communicate more quickly with the airlines about significant safety or airport operations issues. This system will allow Bradley to issue a “Notice to Airmen” (NOTAM) electronically through the Federal Aviation Administration’s national system. The FAA distributes the NOTAMs directly to the airlines and its own flight service stations.

If the digital system had been in place last October 29, when a sudden snow storm severely impacted Bradley and created substantial delays on the tarmac, the airport could have updated NOTAMs in more real time, giving the airlines more advance warning of possible ground delays.

Participants in a national diversion management forum the FAA and U.S. Department of Transportation hosted in Washington last November suggested the digital NOTAM idea as a tool to help manage diversion events. Bradley is now one of 55 airports in the country that are using the digital NOTAM system.

“This is a major step forward to help keep all parties as fully informed as possible about ground conditions so we can all work together to better coordinate diversions,” said Amy Lind Corbett, the FAA regional administrator for New England. “Communications during weather events is especially critical and the use of digital NOTAMs will help.”

CAA Chair Mary Ellen Jones, hailed the move to digital NOTAMs, adding that it would “put Bradley at the forefront of regional airports in the Northeast as a highly reliable airport and the regional airport of choice for customers and airlines.”

This is just one of a host of improvements and plans that Bradley has implemented since the October 29th snow storm that crippled the Northeast and resulted in 29 planes being diverted to Bradley – the hardest hit airport during that storm. Since that experience, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), other federal

partners, airlines, ground services, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) and the CAA have partnered to develop comprehensive plans and programs aimed at preventing the kind of diversions and delays that Bradley experienced that day and providing the highest quality services to airline customers and to the airlines.

All airline and Bradley International's contingency plans have been reviewed and are being updated to address the conditions experienced on October 29. In addition, Bradley is leading a collaboration with regional airports to develop mutual protocols and will host a 'diversion drill' to test them. And, to make additional space available when needed, Bradley, working closely with CBP, has opened two gates in the old terminal, along with waiting areas and rest rooms, creating new sterile areas for unloading domestic and international passengers as needed.

Today's announcement is aimed at maximizing the region's ability to provide the highest quality services to the airline customers and to the airlines.

James P. Redeker, Commissioner of the DOT – which, along with the CAA – currently oversees Bradley operations, said that better customer service is the ultimate goal. “While Bradley consistently gets high marks for delivering safe, high quality service, the unprecedented impacts from the storm produced conditions that resulted in delays and great inconvenience to our customers and our airline partners,” said Redeker. “We all learned a great deal that weekend, and I am certain we are now better prepared for any recurrence of that nature.”

The October 29-30, 2011, Nor'easter produced more than a foot of snow in 12 hours, knocked out power statewide and completely disrupted operations at Bradley and at airports throughout the Northeast. Planes remained out on the tarmac far longer than usual and more than 1,500 people found themselves at Bradley, far from their intended destinations and, because hotels were closed with the power out, looking for a place to sleep. All of the Bradley community rallied to accommodate these unexpected guests. Normally, flights are diverted when there are adverse weather conditions at their intended airport destination; in this case, even though Bradley was experiencing unprecedented weather and ground servicing conditions, flights were diverted to Bradley because runways were clear and it provided the best alternative for pilots to land – at least eight of which were running low on fuel.

Immediately after the storm, Bradley and the airlines, TSA, CBP, FAA and Aircraft Service International Group (the ground service provider for the airlines responsible for fueling, de-icing, busing and other services) developed a series of specific actions to improve response during major diversions.

“The Bradley team immediately turned from managing the diversions and returning the airport to normal operations to partnering to learn from the experience and develop best-case practices for managing future incidents. I am truly impressed with the commitment of all the partners at Bradley,” said CAA Chair Jones.

The forum in Washington in November included USDOT, FAA, the Department of Homeland Security, TSA, CBP, airlines and airport operators to develop recommendations for handling diversions regionally and nationally.

Other moves announced today:

- CBP has agreed that in extreme conditions, international passengers may be allowed to unload without checked luggage; the new sterile areas will be

utilized for off-loading and re-loading passengers; and co-mingling of international passengers from two or more flights will be permitted

- Back-up power for fueling at Bradley has been installed; protocols for remote fueling with fuel trucks have been updated
- The FAA will alert all regional airports of planned maintenance projects that would take critical navigation systems out of service
- Bradley will convene several pre-storm planning events when a storm is forecast. Multiple weather forecasts will be monitored to identify the range of potential impacts
- Between the airlines and Bradley, a supply of water, MRE's, baby formula, diapers and pet food, cots, blankets, etc., has been established. Bradley is working with the National Guard to find storage areas on site.
- The TSA has made an agreement with Bradley so that needed supplies can be processed through security more expediently
- Bradley will be actively pursuing more redundant communication systems on-airport to prevent communication failures related to cell tower and radio problems.
- A Memorandum of Understanding with CTTransit will provide additional bus support; on-airport buses will be pre-screened.

The new plans have already proven to be effective. On Saturday, January 21, an international flight from St. Kitts was diverted to Bradley during a snowstorm. "Pre-planning and constant communications, led by Bradley Airport with the solid support from CBP and TSA allowed the plane to land safely, and the customer experience was excellent," said Eric N. Waldron, Bradley Airport Administrator.

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