



October 16, 2026

Centennial Airport Statement Regarding FAA Operational Restrictions

Airport Authority Statement

Centennial Airport would like to address the significant operational changes recently implemented at the airport following a directive from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Outlined in a timeline of events below, Centennial Airport's FAA Air Traffic Control Tower received direction on October 1 to cease simultaneous parallel departure operations until additional safety mitigations can be identified and approved. Neither the FAA Control Tower nor the Airport Authority received advance notice of the directive, or the standard opportunity for stakeholder engagement before the restrictions took effect.

As a result, the Tower is currently not authorizing regular touch-and-go operations and has restricted most other pattern work. We recognize the significant impact these changes have had on flight schools, pilots, airport businesses, aircraft owners, and the broader airport community. We understand the uncertainty this has created and are committed to working collaboratively with the FAA and airport stakeholders to better understand the restrictions, evaluate their impacts, and identify appropriate next steps.

Safety is, and will always remain, the highest priority for Centennial Airport. At the same time, Centennial Airport has operated at similar, and at times higher, traffic levels for decades without an accident involving aircraft departing simultaneously from our parallel runways. Given this history, we believe it is important to understand the data and rationale behind the FAA's conclusions and to work collaboratively toward appropriate safety mitigations that address the identified concerns while considering the airport's operational needs.

The FAA has scheduled a Safety Risk Management (SRM) Panel on October 27–28 to evaluate the identified risks and potential mitigations. We are encouraging this process to move forward promptly and are advocating for local FAA Tower personnel, Airport Authority/Board Members, airport stakeholders, and Noise Roundtable/Community representatives to have a meaningful role in the discussions.

We recognize that these operational changes affect a wide range of people and interests, both on and around the airport. We remain committed to working with the FAA and engaging with our airport community to ensure that safety considerations, operational needs, and the broader impacts of any proposed changes are carefully evaluated. Our focus is on supporting a thorough, informed process that leads to appropriate mitigations that reduce risk to aircraft conducting simultaneous parallel departures at Centennial Airport, while preserving our operations and ensuring these mitigations do not adversely affect our neighboring communities. We will share additional information as it becomes available.



Timeline of Events

In mid-September 2026, FAA personnel at Centennial Airport's Air Traffic Control Tower were advised of concerns regarding aircraft drifting toward one another during simultaneous parallel departures. In response, FAA personnel immediately began exploring potential safety mitigations to address the identified concern.

On October 1, 2026, Centennial Airport FAA Air Traffic Control Tower Manager William Flowers received a memorandum dated September 30, 2026, from Franklin J. MacIntosh, Chief Operating Officer of the FAA's Air Traffic Organization, directing the Tower to cease simultaneous parallel departure operations until mitigations could be approved to reduce the identified risk to an acceptable level. The memorandum included a September 29, 2026, memorandum from Hope Kubala, Vice President of FAA Operational System Intelligence, to Franklin J. Macintosh, and an accompanying Preliminary Safety Risk Assessment.

Later that day, the FAA Tower Manager notified Centennial Airport Executive Director Mike Fronapfel of the directive and advised that the Tower would initially be unable to accommodate touch-and-go operations. Neither the FAA Control Tower nor the Airport Authority received advance notice of the directive, or the standard opportunity for stakeholder engagement before the restrictions took effect.

On October 5, 2026, the FAA advised that a Safety Risk Management (SRM) Panel was scheduled for October 27–28 to evaluate the identified risks, potential long-term mitigations and monitoring plans.

On October 13, 2026, the Airport Authority's executive team met with local, regional, and national FAA representatives. An immediate cease of simultaneous parallel departures without prior stakeholder engagement or a SRM Panel review is highly unusual. The Airport Authority requested local stakeholder participation in the upcoming SRM Panel and outlined the substantial impacts on flight schools and airport tenants, as well as the unintended consequences of redirecting traffic to other local airports, some of which are non-towered or have limited tower operating hours.