



5G Deployment Can Pose Risks to Aviation Safety, FAA Union Cautions

Today, the Professional Aviation Safety Specialists, AFL-CIO (PASS), [released a white paper](#) analyzing the impact that 5G deployment could have on the National Airspace System (NAS) and aviation safety, and offers recommendations for mitigating risks.

“There has been a great deal of media attention and of course a congressional hearing on the subject,” said PASS National President Dave Spero. “It’s important to hear from frontline aviation employees and not just executives and senior leadership.”

PASS represents 11,000 employees at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Department of Defense who install, maintain, support and certify air traffic control and national defense equipment, inspect and oversee the commercial and general aviation industries, develop flight procedures, and perform quality analyses of complex aviation systems used in air traffic control and national defense. The crucial work these employees perform has the potential to be impacted by the deployment of 5G and is why the union felt compelled to turn to these experts for their first-hand experience with 5G and interference. “They have the knowledge and expertise to thoroughly examine the issues around 5G implementation in the service of aviation safety,” said the PASS leader.

Utilizing extensive review of various aviation and telecommunication industry resources, PASS members developed their analysis of the 5G radio, focusing on 5G and its potential to cause interference with both NAS and user equipment.

They looked at the known interference potential with the RADAR/Radio altimeter in aircraft, as well as other potential interference issues that may arise with various ground- and space-based navigation systems within the NAS. Any interference with these altimeters poses a serious safety risk in many landing situations.

“Anything that can compromise aviation safety can jeopardize the lives of flight crews and passengers,” continued President Spero, himself a former airway transportation systems specialist with over three decades of experience at the FAA. “The employees we represent approach their jobs every day knowing that lives depend on their ensuring aviation safety every step of the way.”

Among the recommendations PASS sets forth are: requiring all manufacturers of 5G radios to send them to the FAA Technical Center for evaluation of possible interference; installing antennas tilted downward to reduce potential interference; and different placement of antennas relative to airfields. The full set of recommendations can be found in this [executive summary](#) as well as the [paper itself](#).

“By working collaboratively with all their partners, including the aviation and telecommunications industry and especially the employees actively working on the equipment, PASS believes that the FAA can resolve these issues with 5G and keep the American flying public safe,” concluded President Spero.



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On February 3, 2022, the Aviation Subcommittee of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing entitled, [“Finding the Right Frequency: 5G Deployment & Aviation Safety.”](#) FAA Administrator Steve Dickson was among those who testified. PASS has submitted its paper, which has been peer reviewed, to be entered into the official hearing record.

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