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Collaborative Aviation Weather Statement – An Impact-based Decision Support Tool

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Historically, convection causes the highest number of air traffic constraints on the United States National Air Space (NAS). Increased NAS predictability allows traffic flow managers to more effectively initiate, amend or terminate planned or active traffic management initiatives, resulting in more efficient use of available airspace. A Collaborative Aviation Weather Statement (CAWS) is an impact-based decision support tool used for the timely delivery of high-confidence, high-relevance aviation convective weather forecasts to air traffic managers.

The CAWS is a graphical and textual forecast produced by a collaborative team of meteorologists from the Aviation Weather Center (AWC), Center Weather Service Units, and airlines to bring attention to high impact areas of thunderstorms. The CAWS addresses thunderstorm initiation or movement into the airports having the highest volume of traffic or into traffic sensitive jet routes. These statements are assessed by planners at the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Air Route Traffic Control Centers and are used for planning traffic management initiatives to balance air traffic flow across the United States. The FAA and the airline industry use the CAWS to plan, manage, and execute operations in the NAS, thereby improving the system efficiency and safety and also saving dollars for industry and the traveling public.