

CAD follows up on brief hitch of ATMS

Individual workstations of the Main System of the Air Traffic Management System (ATMS) in the Air Traffic Control (ATC) Centre of the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) today (June 13) experienced a brief hitch, during which some flights and their flight information could not be shown. The technical staff switched the ATMS to the Fallback System, an identical system, in accordance with the established procedures. Throughout the occurrence, Air Traffic Control Officers (ATCOs) were able to continue to monitor and provide ATC services to all flights in the Hong Kong Flight Information Region (HKFIR) through the Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) display.

"At 9.06am today, individual workstations of the ATMS in the ATC Centre experienced a brief hitch, which intermittently could not show some flights and their flight information. The technical staff on-site immediately followed up and carried out investigation. After co-ordinating with the ATC supervisors on-site, the technical staff switched from the Main System to the Fallback System according to the established procedures at 9.22am," a CAD spokesman said.

"Aviation safety was not affected by the occurrence. The ATCOs were able to keep direct voice communication with the pilots at all times as well as monitor and obtain full information of all flights (including the three essential types of information, i.e. flight position, altitude information and secondary surveillance radar code) in the HKFIR through the ADS-B display to provide ATC services.

"The operation of the original Main System returned to normal after it was rebooted and checked by the contractor. It then served as a backup as per system design," he emphasised.

The ATMS has multiple built-in fallback systems to tackle different scenarios. The Main System and the Fallback System are independent but identical systems with the same design and functionality, and can immediately take up the role of each other in the event of an outage for maintaining ATC services continuity. During the occurrence, the ATMS dealt with unexpected situations and sustained continuous ATC operations as per system design. Professional ATCOs and engineers also responded to the occurrence in a timely and prudent manner in accordance with training and established procedures. It was not necessary to activate the Ultimate Fallback System of the ATMS in the process.

"The inclement weather this morning had already caused flight delays. Only a few flights were able to take off and land in Hong Kong. During the hitch of the Main System, the ATCOs deferred giving clearance to departing flights for about 16 minutes as a precaution in accordance with procedures. Two departing flights were affected. Arrivals and flights flying through the HKFIR were not affected," he added.

The CAD attaches importance to the occurrence. The contractor was tasked

right after the occurrence to conduct a thorough investigation and submit a report as soon as possible. The CAD will continue to follow up on the occurrence.