



City of Yakima

News Release

Subject: Closure of Yakima Air Traffic Control Tower
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Closure of Yakima Air Traffic Control Tower Will Not Curtail Flights

Airplane traffic at Yakima's airport is expected to continue as normal even after the scheduled closure of the Yakima Air Terminal air traffic control tower in the next few weeks.

Specifically, the three daily commercial flights to Seattle provided by Horizon Air, a subsidiary of Alaska Airlines, will not be interrupted by the closure of the air traffic control tower.

The Yakima tower is one of 149 in the U.S. that the Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") has announced will close over a four-week period beginning April 7th. The tower closures are part of the steps the FAA is taking to meet its cost cutting requirements as part of the federal sequester – the budget reduction measures that began being made on March 1st because of a stalemate between the Congress and President Obama.

"Pilots are trained to be able to coordinate landings and takeoffs without help from ground controllers," said Interim Yakima Air Terminal Manager Rob Peterson. "Pilots will use a shared radio frequency in order to assure landings and takeoffs are done safely. There should not be any interruption in air traffic at the airport," said Peterson.

Peterson said that, if needed, air traffic control can be provided for the Yakima airport from either the Tri-Cities Airport or the Sea-Tac Airport.

The FAA announced that four other air traffic control towers in Washington State will also be closed as part of the federal sequester. Those towers are at the Olympia Regional Airport, Felts Field in Spokane, Tacoma Narrows Airport, and the Renton Municipal Airport.

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