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Update: FAA Lifts Halt on Domestic Travel; Biden Calls For Investigation Into Notice to Air Missions System Failure

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Update: The Federal Aviation Administration at 9:00 a.m. Wednesday lifted its grounding order affecting domestic departures. The federal authority had grounded flights after an outage of the Notice to Air Missions system, which is used to alert pilots and crew.

President Biden has called for an investigation into the matter, according to Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre.

Original Story: The FAA announced in a statement Wednesday morning that it has ordered airlines to pause all domestic departures until 9:00 a.m. Eastern Time to allow the agency to validate the integrity of flight and safety information.

The FAA said it is still working to fully restore the Notice to Air Missions system following an outage. It said “operations across the National Airspace System are affected,” and that it was performing final checks to get the system back in operation.

Flights to and from the Virgin Islands have been delayed, not canceled, according to V.I. Port Authority Executive Director Carlton Dowe. "So far no cancellations but delays," he told the Consortium Wednesday.

Mr. Dowe said some inter-island travel continued while others saw delays. He said Cape Air halted flights in compliance with the FAA order, however travel through Seaborne was not interrupted. The VIPA executive director said Cape Air's move to delay flights may be tied to the carrier's headquarters in Boston, which is complying with the FAA's domestic order.

Private charters were also operating in the U.S. Virgin Islands on Wednesday, according to the Port Authority.

United Airlines Holdings earlier this morning announced the delay of flights. “The FAA system that sends out important real-time flight hazards & restrictions to all commercial airline pilots... is currently suffering a nationwide outage,” the company said. “United has temporarily delayed all domestic flights and will issue an update when we learn more from the FAA.”

Other carriers including American Airlines and Southwest Airlines, notified passengers on the developments via Twitter.

“We’re closely monitoring a data issue with the FAA that may impact the start of operations today,” Southwest tweeted.

American Airlines said, “We sincerely appreciate your patience as they work to resolve this.”