



Specialist's Factual Report – Attachment 4

ZHU Covered Event Review

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

CEN20FA032

Covered Event Review

ZHU-C-2019/12/08-0001

A1. FAC ID			A2. Date UTC (mm/dd/yyyy)							A3. Start Time UTC				A4. End Time UTC				A5. Position	
Z	H	U	1	2	0	9	2	0	1	9	0	1	4	5	0	2	1	6	R58
A6. Aircraft #1										A7. Aircraft #2									
Aircraft ID			Aircraft Type/Suffix				IFR/VFR			Aircraft ID			Aircraft Type/Suffix				IFR/VFR		
MRA679			C208				IFR												

Individual Performance		
B1. Was any notable Individual performance identified? (Exemplary and/or needing improvement)		
☒ Yes ☐ No		
B2. Employee #1		
Employee Christo, Stephen D (NB)	Position R58	ATSAP Filed ☒ Yes ☐ No
Explanation The pilot initially seemed disoriented. The controller tried to correct the heading, and subsequently told the pilot he was showing him going left, right, left. At this point, the pilot stated he was having instrument problems. This portion of the audio was very difficult to understand, and the controller was uncertain whether the pilot stated engine problems or instrument problems. At this point the controller asked if the pilot needed to go back to VCT. Upon the pilot's decision to return to VCT, the controller treated the situation as an emergency. The controller advised the supervisor and operational manager of the emergency situation. The pilot was very difficult to understand. The R58 controller thought the pilot said he had the field in sight. One of the controllers assisting during the event questioned this, which prompted the R58 controller to ask the pilot to verify he had the field in sight. When the pilot stated he was looking, the controller made the decision to change to an instrument approach. The weather was not issued prior to the approach clearance, and communication was lost with the aircraft before this could be rectified.		
B2. Employee #2		
Employee Davila, David O (XD)	Position D58	ATSAP Filed ☒ Yes ☐ No
Explanation The controller initially worked the R58 position. He gave the release off of VCT and handled the initial check on with MRA679. He gave a relief briefing and moved over to the D position. MRA679 checked on during the relief briefing, the controller did not give a position or verify mode-C, the altimeter was not issued at that time. On the D-side position, he made several good calls to delay BTQ465 departure and then later having VCT assign a 180 heading. He also coordinated the inbound, giving the position and nature of distress of the aircraft and type of approach at that time.		
B2. Employee #3		
Employee Strickland, Jesse G (SJ)	Position H58	ATSAP Filed ☒ Yes ☐ No
Explanation This controller is also a pilot and had been monitoring the situation. As the situation developed, it was decided to have him take the position due to his experience level. He was attempting to vector the aircraft for an instrument approach when radar and communications were lost. He then vectored BOMR816 to the last known position to look for the aircraft.		

Training
C1. Were any training issues identified?
☐ Yes ☒ No

Weather
D1. What were the prevailing weather conditions?
☐ IFR ☐ VFR ☒ Other
If yes, explain
The weather was VFR with 4,700 ceiling and 6 miles visibility with haze.

	Weather (continued)
	D2. Was any pertinent precipitation depicted on the radar? ☐ Yes ☒ No
	D3. Did LLWAS alert? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A
	D4. Were weather phenomena a factor? ☐ Yes ☒ No
	D5. Were any SIGMETs or PIREPs in effect? ☐ Yes ☒ No

	Airspace/Airport
	E1. Were any airspace/airport issues identified? ☐ Yes ☒ No

	Procedures
	F1. Were any procedural issues identified? ☐ Yes ☒ No

	Directives
	G1. Were any directive issues identified? ☐ Yes ☒ No

	Equipment
	H1. Were any equipment issues identified? ☐ Yes ☒ No

	Resource Management
	I1. Were any resource management issues identified? ☐ Yes ☒ No

	Additional Comments
	The audio quality of communication was very poor. The controllers at the sector were unsure whether the pilot stated he had engine or instrument problems, and there was uncertainty regarding many of the pilot's responses. The controller did not state on the frequency that he was declaring an emergency; however, the aircraft was handled as such once the controller noticed that he was navigating erratically.

	QC Comments
	While weather was not a factor in the accident, the facility was not soliciting PIREPS as required. A CAP should be developed to address this deficiency.

	Review Team
	TBD