

# Transfer of air traffic control services to MCAS Cherry Point to improve local civilian-military air

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Aviation officials are touting an agreement that will give Cherry Point air traffic control an expanded role in the skies of Eastern North Carolina.

The Federal Aviation Administration plans to transfer airspace management and other air traffic control duties to Cherry Point from its Washington Center on Thursday, according to a release from Marine Corps Installations East at Camp Lejeune. The change is designed to improve coordination and communication among civilian and military pilots while also easing the burden on air traffic controllers, according to the release.

Cherry Point will now have air traffic control service over civilian airports in Plymouth, Washington, Manteo and Kitty Hawk as well as two bombing ranges in Dare County. The switch will result in real-time information going to military pilots in special-use airspace and provide improved service over the Albemarle Sound and Roanoke Island, according to the release.

"Airspace is a precious resource and improvements such as these will greatly benefit aviation and commerce in this region of the state," Bobby Walston, director of the N.C. Division of Aviation, said in a statement. "This transfer has been a goal of the state and our military partners for some time and we are extremely excited to see this transfer of management and services take place."

The switch also will make training airspace available on demand over Cherry Point, easing the burden of trying to coordinate with the Washington Center, according to the release. Information on the change, including Cherry Point air control radio frequencies, is to be sent to pilots and aviation publications, according to the release. Nat Fahy, Marine Corps spokesman at Camp Lejeune, said the switch would not result in any additional personnel at Cherry Point's air traffic control tower.

On Feb. 5, the Federal Aviation Administration's Washington Center will transfer airspace management and air traffic control responsibilities to Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point's Approach Control to address deficiencies in high altitude tactical maneuver space, meet training requirements for Department of Defense aircraft, and better serve general aviation needs. Cherry Point's expanded ATC service area will include the Warren Field Airport in Washington, NC, Plymouth Airport in Plymouth, NC, Dare County Regional Airport in Manteo, NC, First Flight Airport in Kitty Hawk, NC, and Dare County Ranges.

New communication lines between U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy Ranges and U.S. Marine Corps ATC will provide real time information when military aircraft are operating in special use airspace. As a result, Cherry Point's Approach Control capabilities will substantially improve ATC services, real time restricted area and route information for civilian and military aircraft in a formerly underserved area over the eastern Albemarle Sound and Roanoke Island. "Airspace is a precious resource and improvements such as these will greatly benefit aviation and commerce in this region of the state," said Bobby Walston, Director of the North Carolina Division of Aviation. "This transfer has been a goal of the state and our military partners for some time and we are extremely excited to see this transfer of management and services take place."

"We've been working together with the Federal Aviation Administration for quite some time to improve ATC services in Eastern North Carolina," said Marine Corps Installations East airspace representative, David Plummer. "In the past, we had issues with having to 'borrow' the training airspace over top of Cherry Point from Washington Center. The borrowing and giving back required lots of coordination and was a burden on the air traffic controllers. This new arrangement will make the formerly 'borrowed' airspace available on demand and removes the coordination burden. As part of the agreement, Cherry Point also agreed to expand the ATC service area to include airports where Washington Center currently performs airport services typically performed by Approach Controls. The outlook going forward for the local aviation community looks very positive."

Notices to airmen will be sent and flight information publications will be updated to announce Cherry Point Approach Control radio frequencies for pilots to use.