

# FAA's renegeing of 2-person mandate in towers not widely known

By Jason Hidalgo, Reno Gazette-Journal

A sleeping air traffic controller at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport on Wednesday revealed the Federal Aviation Administration renegeed on its promise to have two controllers working overnight.

The incident made Reno the focal point of the continuing debate about the safety of the nation's air traffic control system, just weeks after the FAA required two-person midnight crews at the Reno airport's air traffic control tower and several others around the country. The agency is requiring two-person crews again after the Reno incident.

In a statement, Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood called what happened outrageous and "absolutely unacceptable." U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., agreed.

"My office has contacted the Federal Aviation Administration to make it clear that this situation is completely unacceptable and to request that there be a minimum of two air traffic control personnel in the tower at all times," Reid said in a statement.

Late-night air control staffing at the airport initially was bumped to two people in late March after a couple of jetliners landed on their own at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport when a lone controller fell asleep on the job. Previously, the air traffic control center had been staffed with just one person overnight.

But after several days, the FAA went back to one controller

several days later after implementing new landing protocols, FAA spokesman Ian Gregor said. – a change that wasn't widely known. It was not immediately clear why the change back to one person was made.

**Read the whole story**