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*Air Traffic Safety Engineering Professionals Belgium*

Steenokkerzeel, 28 May 2015

Wednesday May 27, 2015 at about 9h15 local time, Belgocontrol encountered an electrical power failure.

Due to an overvoltage a large number of static transfer switches (used to transfer power from the prime power source to a secondary power source) were destroyed resulting in the shutdown of important systems in the operational Air Traffic Control Centre (ACC/APP) of Belgium.

Fortunately the emergency transmitters remained operational allowing the air traffic controllers to transfer aircraft to neighboring air traffic control centres and airports after which the airspace under the control of Belgocontrol was closed. The military Air Traffic Control Centre at Semmerzake assisted in this operation.

This interruption had no influence on the air traffic control towers as these have their own power supply systems and therefore could continue to operate.

The technical services of Belgocontrol made all efforts to find a solution and restart the operational systems (which was the case from 14h00 local time with reduced capacity).

If the testing of the emergency generators that morning was the cause of the incident or has contributed to the incident is still under investigation. It is however to be emphasized that the monthly testing of the emergency generators has been taken place for more than 10 years without any problems.

This electrical power failure demonstrates that the technical services responsible for the (emergency) power supply are, next to CNS (Communication, Navigation & Surveillance) and ATM (Air Traffic Management), an essential part of the air traffic safety chain.