

2023 Flight Ops Changes: The Big Ones

OPSGROUP Team
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"The only constant in life is change" – once said a Greek philosopher... or maybe Russel Crowe in Gladiator.

Either way, it's been another busy year of change in the world of international flight ops! Here are some of the big'uns from 2023...

January

- **Beirut Gunfire Damage:** At OLBA/Beirut, two jets (and almost a person) were hit by falling bullets. Celebratory gun fire is common in Lebanon – including on New Years. [Read](#)
- **FAA Equipment Codes:** Addition of new equipment codes for Field 18 in international flight plans. [Read](#)
- **US Flight Grounding:** FAA grounded all flights due to a Notam system glitch. [Read](#)
- **Somalia Airspace:** US reg aircraft remain banned but now allowed to transit for flights to HDAM/Djibouti. [Read](#)
- **ICAO Doc 007:** New ICAO Doc 007 for the North Atlantic with significant changes. [Read](#)

February

- **More ICAO Doc Updates:** ICAO updated more of their North Atlantic Docs, not just 007! Both NAT Doc 006 (the one about Contingency Situations) and NAT Doc 008 (the one about Separation Minima) too. [Read](#).
- **Africa Airspace Risk:** Alert regarding border airspace between Rwanda and Congo DRC, after a military jet was shot at near FZNA/Goma. [Read](#)

- **US Arrivals:** The US FAA introduced continuous descent arrivals into eleven airports in Florida, Kansas City, Omaha and Reno. [Read](#)
- **Big Fuss Over Big Balloons:** And then other unidentified objects in the upper levels of North American airspace. [Read](#)
- **Ops Differences:** Comparison between ops in Europe and the US. [Read](#)
- **Haneda Airport Update:** Publication of a runway incursion hazard map for RJTT/Tokyo Haneda airport. [Read](#)

March

- **Mali Warning:** Expanded airspace warning for Mali by the US FAA. [Read](#)
- **Oman's Open Skies:** Oman allows flights to overfly its territory, easing routes between Israel and Asia. [Read](#)
- **Private Flights to US:** Deeper insights for private operators to the US. [Read](#)
- **Aviation Safety in Indonesia:** Deteriorating security in Indonesia's Papua region and incidents targeting aircraft. [Read](#)
- **Global Reporting Format:** Insights on the Global Reporting Format for runway surface conditions. [Read](#)
- **China Reopens:** China reopened its doors to tourists after three years of border restrictions. [Read](#)
- **MAYDAYS:** Danger Club looked at why pilots are getting MAYDAYS wrong. Between us all, we did some figuring out. [Read](#)

April

- **NAT Datalink Exempt Airspace:** North Atlantic datalink exempt airspace boundaries changed – airspace over Greenland now requires it. [Read](#)
- **US Aviation Rules:** New rules for foreign operators doing P135 charter flights to the US. [Read](#)
- **Updated Risks on the South China Sea:** Recent incidents involving civil aircraft and military warships. [Read](#)
- **European Flight Planning:** Insights on planning flights in Europe without alternate routes. [Read](#)
- **Sudan Airspace Closure:** Sudan's airspace was closed following a military coup. [Read](#)

May

- **Circling Approaches:** We wrote about the dangers of circling approaches, and the difference between PANS OPS and TERPS. [Read](#)
- **Formidable Shield 2023:** North Atlantic airspace closures for Formidable Shield exercises. [Read](#)
- **FAA's Northeast Improvements:** The FAA finally finished its big North-East Corridor

Improvement Project. Operators need to file preferred routes to avoid delays. [Read](#)

- **NOTAMs Fixed:** We hosted the Great Notam Sprint. Three hundred volunteers found an AI-based solution that fixes the Notam problem – a working model that ingests all NOTAMs for a flight, and outputs a simple, colourful, ranked and pilot-friendly briefing the way we want it. [Read](#)
- **US Airport CBP Fact Sheets:** With help from the NBAA, we built a collection of handy CBP cheat sheets. [Read](#)
- **NOPAC Routes Redesign:** Redesign of the North Pacific NOPAC routes by the FAA. [Read](#)
- **North Korea's Satellite Launch:** Potential risks to aircraft due to North Korea's recent satellite launch. [Read](#)

June

- **TCAS in North Atlantic:** We talked to Shanwick and Gander about whether TCAS was essential to cross the NAT. [Read](#)
- **5G Retrofit Deadline:** FAA's decision not to delay the 5G aircraft retrofit deadline. [Read](#)
- **Mexico Challenges:** Overview of challenges affecting bizav ops to Mexico. [Read](#)
- **ADS-B Mandates:** Changes and mandates for ADS-B globally. [Read](#)
- **China's Limits Lifted:** China's removal of domestic sector limits for foreign bizav flights. [Read](#)
- **ATC Short Codes:** Inmarsat published an updated list of Short Codes for getting hold of various ATC & ACC centres worldwide. [Read](#)

July

- **NAT Region Changes SSR Transponder Procedures:** EGGX/Shanwick FIR updated, with other NAT FIRs to follow. [Read](#)
- **US Operators Can Overfly Venezuelan Airspace Below FL260:** Long-standing Notam cancelled, allowing overflight. [Read](#)
- **INMARSAT Device Registration for China:** You might need to register your INMARSAT device if headed to China.
- **Tightened Passport Control in Iceland:** Increased scrutiny during tech-stops. Expect to have to get off the plane for passport checks, even in grotty weather. [Read](#)
- **Air Traffic Controller Shortage in Australia:** Uncontrolled airspace due to staff shortage. [Read](#)
- **Portugal's New Punishment Tax:** New tax in Portugal, targeting business aviation and small aircraft. Similar costs can be expected for an Azores (LPAZ, LPLA for example) tech stop. [Read](#)
- **Mexico City Airport Safety Alert:** Several reports of loss of GNSS signal in the terminal area. [Read](#)
- **New Datalink Mandate in France:** If you're flying in France above FL195 and you have ATN CPDLC – you must use it! [Read](#)

August

- **US Operators Can Overfly Afghanistan at FL320:** Contingency routes in place, but risks persist. [Read](#)
- **Niger Airspace Closure Due to Coup:** Significant impact on Central Africa traffic. [Read](#)
- **ZSSS/Shanghai Off-Limits:** Bizjets had to re-route to ZSPD/Pudong for a few months. [Read](#)
- **Libya: Aircraft Evacuation Due to Clashes:** Reminder of ongoing risks here. Avoid! [Read](#)
- **Navigating NO FIR Airspace in Eastern Pacific** – Procedures for uncontrolled oceanic airspace. [Read](#)
- **Approved Airports for Flights to Israel:** Our guide on all things “ops to Israel” related. [Read](#)
- **CPDLC Gotcha - Clearance Busts:** In 2022, the FAA recorded 20 aircraft deviations due to issues with CPDLC and partial reroute messages. Here’s what not to do! [Read](#)

September

- **Canada Mandates ADS-B Above FL180:** Flight plan requirements, exemptions, and application process. [Read](#)
- **Niger Airspace Reopens After Coup:** Major airlines resume traffic, but security concerns persist. [Read](#)
- **EU Temporary Admission of Aircraft:** OPMAS debunks myths about EU aircraft admission. [Read](#)
- **Armenia-Azerbaijan Airspace Risk:** Brief flare-up in the conflict, closure of cross-border waypoints, most East-West flights started avoiding the region and routed via Georgia’s UGGG/Tbilisi FIR instead. [Read](#)
- **WATRS Renamed:** The US FAA officially renamed WATRS airspace to WAT. Existing B050 authorizations will be re-issued within 24 months. [Read](#)
- **GPS Spoofing in Iraq:** We several reports of enroute aircraft being targeted with fake GPS signals, leading to complete nav failures. [Read](#)

October

- **OPSGROUP Goes To Vegas:** We had the pleasure of meeting up with OPSGROUP members at NBAA-BACE 23 in Las Vegas! [Read](#)
- **New Rules for Outbound US Private Flights:** APIS updates for passenger changes and ETD. [Read](#)
- **EU-LISA Screening System Postponed:** The EES bit will be delayed to some time towards the end of 2024, and the ETIAS bit will start no earlier than 2025. [Read](#)
- **Tel Aviv Airspace Risk:** Israel is now an active war zone. The Safe Airspace assessment is at Level 1 – Do Not Fly. Operators should especially avoid LLBG/Tel Aviv, despite assurances from the authorities that the airspace is “safe”. It isn’t! [Read](#)

- **Bizav Clampdown at Amsterdam Airport:** Reduction in slots with potential future ban for bizav. [Read](#)
- **NAT Changes 2024 Announced:** No more Oceanic Clearances, simplified procedures, squawking changes. [Read](#)
- **US Border Overflight Exemptions:** We made a super simple How-to Guide. [Read](#)
- **More GPS Spoofing:** Watch out if you're in the Cairo, Nicosia, or Amman FIRs – at some point, your GPS sensor inputs may try to tell you you're overhead LLBG/Tel Aviv airport. [Read](#)

November

- **Bizav Roadblock: Turkey and Armenia:** Turkey blocks bizav overflights to/from Armenia. [Read](#)
- **GPS Spoofing Update and Types Identified:** GPS spoofing incidents detailed, including the Beirut scenario. [Read](#)
- **The Annual Shanghai Airports Meltdown:** Restrictions in November for bizav flights. [Read](#)
- **UK Airspace Warning for Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba:** Caution urged due to increased military activity. [Read](#)
- **North Atlantic Volcanic Threat:** Iceland impending eruption may impact NAT traffic. [Read](#)
- **US Visual Approaches:** Ooh, people got angry about this one! A cautionary tale involving a crew of an A350 inbound to KSFO who found themselves in a seemingly unnecessary last-minute diversion to Oakland after a long-haul flight. The incident highlighted issues with visual approaches in the US, particularly during late-night arrivals. [Read](#)
- **New GPS Spoofing Scenario - The Black Sea:** Several reports from members of GPS spoofing over the Black Sea in Turkish airspace. [Read](#)
- **Datalink Rules in Europe:** All your European Datalink questions answered! Plus there are now some additional places where Datalink logon will soon be mandatory. [Read](#)

December

- **UK Implements ETA for Passengers:** Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme for passengers. [Read](#)
- **US Domestic Enroute CPDLC Update:** CPDLC available with specific avionics. [Read](#)
- **New Approaches at KDEN/Denver:** RNAV/RNP Approaches introduced to mitigate TCAS RA events. [Read](#)
- **Niger Overflights:** Several reports of aircraft being denied entry into Niger airspace at short notice, even though a valid overflight permit was in place.
- **Anti-Aviation Protests:** Some anti-aviation protestors targeted a couple of airports in Belgium. Here's a look at some of the most notable incidents over the past few years. [Read](#)

As the year draws to a close, we wanted to say a **big “thank you” to everyone in OPSGROUP** for showing up, sharing stories, experiences, and information, and in turn keeping us all safe and up to date.

We'll be taking some time off from the Daily Brief and Bulletin emails over the holiday period. It's all fairly straightforward this year dates-wise, we'll basically be **closed from Mon 25 to Fri 29 Dec** – as this tasteful, festive postcard points out.



Happy Holidays everyone, and see you in 2024! ♥❄️🏠➔