

EASA's New Cyber and Data Risk Rule for Operators in Europe

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



On 22 Feb 2026, EASA brings the Part-IS Information Security regulation into force.

This is not a new avionics requirement, and not a connectivity upgrade mandate. It's a management system rule. **EASA wants certain aviation organisations to show they understand and manage cyber and data risks that could affect aviation safety.**

That includes things like aircraft networks, satcom and cabin connectivity, data flows, access to systems, and how cyber incidents are handled. EASA's view is simple: if a digital failure or attack could impact safety, it needs to be treated like any other operational risk.

The most important point up front: **Part-IS only applies to organisations EASA regulates.** Flying into Europe alone does not put you in scope.

What affected operators actually have to do

If you're in scope, EASA expects a **working information security management system** that fits the size and complexity of your operation. Not theory, and not a one-off document exercise.

In practical terms, inspectors will expect to see that:

- **You've assigned responsibility:** Information security sits at management level. It's owned, not outsourced to "IT".
- **You know what matters operationally:** You've identified systems and data that would hurt safety or operations if compromised. That usually includes connectivity, EFB links, maintenance and planning systems, and interfaces with third parties.
- **You actively manage risk:** There's a repeatable process to identify, assess, mitigate, and review cyber and data risks. This updates when things change - new aircraft, new satcom, new apps, new vendors.
- **Basic controls are in place:** Access control, configuration management, patching, backups,

logging, and secure remote access. Nothing exotic, but it must exist and be used.

- **You can deal with incidents:** You can detect issues, respond, recover, and learn. If an information security event could affect safety, EASA expects it to be managed properly.
- **You manage suppliers:** Part-IS pushes hard on supply chain risk. Operators are expected to understand and manage information security risks across connectivity and data providers, not just internally.

Do operators have to submit anything before Feb 22?

Short answer: no. There is no blanket requirement to submit a declaration, form, or compliance statement to EASA by 22 Feb 2026.

Instead, EASA expects that from that date, your Part-IS setup exists and is actually working.

Compliance is checked through normal oversight. That means Part-IS will typically be reviewed at your next audit or inspection, during approval changes or renewals, or earlier if there's any kind of incident or trigger event.

Bottom line: no paperwork deadline, but also no grace period. From 22 Feb, you need to be audit-ready.

Who is definitely not directly impacted

This is where most of the confusion sits.

Part-IS does not automatically apply to:

- **US Part 91 operators.**
- **US Part 135 operators.**
- **Privately owned foreign registered aircraft.**
- **Operators with no EASA approval or certificate.**
- **EASA Third Country Operator (TCO) authorisation holders.**

If you don't hold an EASA AOC, EASA has no legal way to enforce Part-IS on you.

So the common scenarios we're hearing about:

- A US owner flying a jet into Europe under Part 91, with no EASA approvals - no direct Part-IS compliance requirement.
- A US charter operator flying into Europe under Part 135 and holding an EASA TCO only - again, no direct Part-IS compliance requirement.

Flying into Europe, or holding a TCO, does not by itself make an operator subject to Part-IS.

Why you might be getting emails from your connectivity provider about this

So why are operators being told "this affects you" and "you must be ready by 22 Feb"?

Because connectivity providers sit **inside the compliance chain**.

Their EASA-regulated customers will be audited. Auditors will ask how information security is handled end to end, including customer configurations, access rights, data routing, and system interfaces.

Providers likely don't want two security standards, weak links in customer setups, or any awkward audit questions they can't answer!

So they might be pushing requirements downstream via contract changes or software upgrades.

For operators outside scope, this can feel like a regulatory mandate. It isn't. It's commercial and risk-driven pressure, not a new EASA legal obligation.

Bottom line

Part-IS is real and it matters - for EASA-regulated organisations. For non-EASA operators, the impact is indirect, driven by vendors and contracts, not regulation.

If you don't hold an EASA approval, Part-IS is not suddenly your problem on Feb 22. But expect more security questions from the companies you connect to.

Airport Spy: Real World Reports from Crews

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Imagine having a TripAdvisor for pilots. Real-world reports from people who've actually been there, flown the approach, dealt with the handler, and figured out the local quirks the hard way.

That's exactly what Airport Spy is.

Airport Spy is a shared pool of short, practical reports on airports, ATC, and ground handling around the world. It's built from first-hand experience and written for crews who just want to know what to expect.

And it's getting busy lately! Thanks to everyone who's been filing reports and helping make it more useful for the next crew.

OPSGROUP members can **read all reports in Airport Spy** via the members Dashboard here.

Spy Reports by Pilots and Operators

You can help too!

When you're back from a trip, or stuck in a hotel downroute with time to kill, take a couple of minutes to file an Airport Spy report. What you write might save the next crew a lot of hassle.

These reports are useful when you go back, but they're even more useful for crews heading somewhere for the first time.



Got some intel?

Are you an Airport Spy?

You go to unusual places and see curious things. Your turboprop friends envy you. Now, it's time to give back.

For your next trip, pack a notebook, and file your Spy Report below. You'll get a weekly ops briefing in return.

[File your report](#)

Good reports don't need to be long. **Think about what you'd want to know before turning final or shutting down on stand.** For example:

- How was ATC to work with?
- Anything unusual about the airspace, terrain, or procedures?
- Local quirks or gotchas?
- Handling quality and coordination?
- Anything better or worse than expected?

If it stood out to you, it'll probably matter to someone else.

Pilots and Operators can file a report here!

Spy Reports by FBOs and Handlers

Airport Spy isn't just for crews – FBOs and handlers can file reports too. **Before we launch your way, we want to know what's really going on.**

Are you open? Ops normal? Any new rules, restrictions, or changes crews should know about before they arrive?



Got some intel?

Can you guys handle a BBJ tomorrow morning?

Before we go, we'd like to know what's happening. You open? Ops normal? Any unusual rules or restrictions pilots should know about?

Our group of 8000 people – pilots, dispatchers, aircraft operators – is looking for the latest intel from your airport. Help us out with a report, and let us know if you're **open for business**.

Just imagine a crew is thinking of heading your way. They'll have some basic data, but a report with the latest situation is really helpful. Useful topics include:

- Airport and ATC hours
- New rules or restrictions
- Entry or permit issues
- Any recent changes
- Local tips, quirks, or common traps for first-timers

Once filed, your report goes straight to the OPSGROUP community of thousands of pilots, dispatchers, and operators.

FBOs and Handlers can file a report here!

Why bother?

Because this is what OPSGROUP has always been about. Sharing real information. Speaking plainly. Helping each other out. Keeping each other safe.

If we share, we keep each other safe. That means that if you come across a new risk, a new danger, a new procedure, something weird, something unusual – **tell us, and we'll tell everyone in the group.**

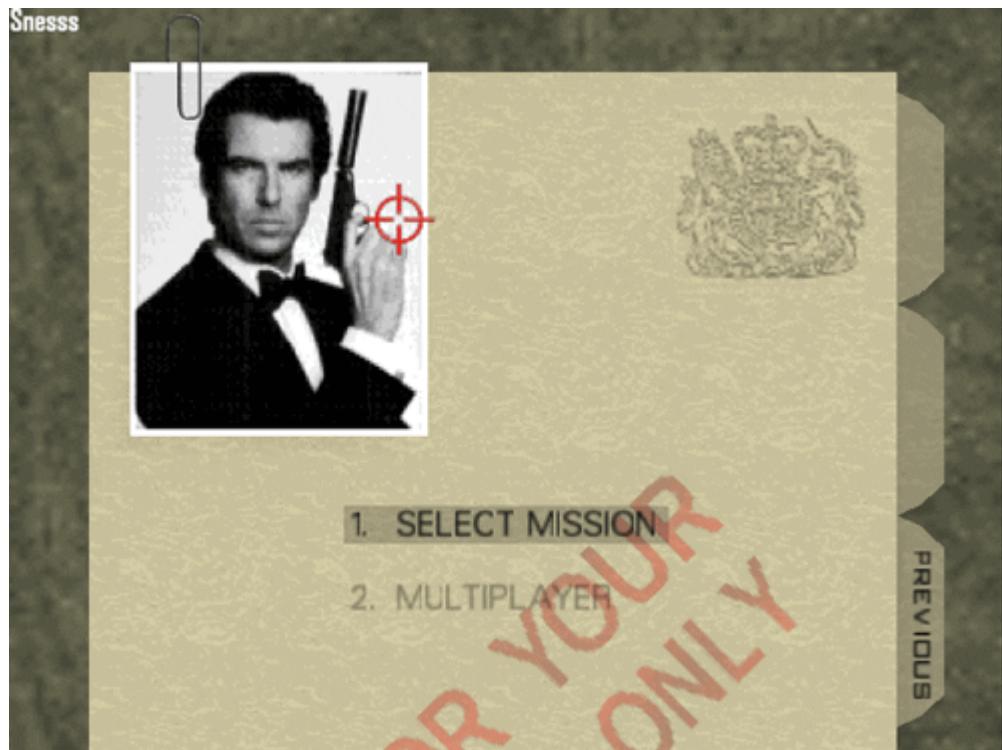
New NAT Doc 007: North Atlantic Changes from March 2026

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



A new NAT Doc has landed, effective March 2026. As ever, it's a meaty sucker, and probably not something you'll want to read cover to cover. So we've done that part for you. We've gone through it and pulled out the changes that actually matter operationally, plus a few important "this hasn't changed" reminders. If you're crossing the North Atlantic, this is the stuff worth knowing.

You can access the **new 2026 version** of the doc here, and the **old 2025 version** here, if you want to compare the two.



Shanwick OCR delay

The new NAT Doc now clearly states what operators have known for a while: **Shanwick has not implemented Oceanic Clearance Removal.** A specific note states that, due to delayed OCR implementation, Shanwick will continue issuing oceanic clearances following submission of an RCL, until further notice.

The document itself does not give a timeline. However, Shanwick has separately confirmed that **OCR is not expected to go live before summer 2026**. Operationally, nothing changes at Shanwick for now - crews must still request and fly an oceanic clearance. The key point is that, despite much of Chapter 6 reading like an OCR-style environment, Shanwick is explicitly not there yet.

Ref: Chapter 6, Section 6.3.

RCL timing switches from ETA to ETO - new terminology

The new 2026 edition **introduces ETO - Estimated Time Over Significant Point** for the Oceanic Entry Point in RCLs, replacing the way ETA was used in previous editions.

Doc 007 doesn't explicitly explain the change, but the logic is pretty clear. ETA can be vague and is often taken as a general arrival estimate. ETO is much more precise - it's the FMS-predicted time over a specific waypoint. That's what ATC actually uses for longitudinal separation in procedural airspace.

The shift also lines up with two big themes in the new doc: the move toward OCR-style operations, and growing concern about time accuracy after GNSS jamming and spoofing.

Ref: Chapter 6, Sections 6.3.23-6.3.25

Reykjavik no longer requires an RCL

Reykjavik effectively steps away from the RCL process altogether in the 2026 edition. Doc 007 now says that **an RCL is not required for Reykjavik, and that if one is sent anyway, crews will be told it wasn't needed.**

Other NAT OCAs still require RCLs, so this doesn't simplify things overall. It just means procedures are even more mixed than before. The main risk for operators is assuming the same process applies everywhere across the NAT, when it very much doesn't!

Ref: Chapter 6, Section 6.3.24

Bigger push on FMS waypoint and route verification

The 2026 doc puts much more weight on careful FMS programming and verification. It highlights known traps with half-degree waypoints, ARINC 424 coding, and CPDLC route amendments that arrive in full LAT/LONG and don't visually match stored waypoint names.

There's a strong emphasis on independent PF/PM crosschecks and verifying expanded coordinates, courses, and distances. This isn't theoretical - it's a direct response to navigation errors seen since OCR and more frequent CPDLC route changes.

Ref: Chapter 6, Sections 6.3.18-6.3.32

GNSS interference treated as a routine NAT problem

GNSS jamming and spoofing are no longer treated as rare edge cases. In the 2026 doc, they're framed as a normal operational hazard. The guidance highlights how GNSS interference can quietly degrade aircraft time, with knock-on effects to ADS-C, ADS-B, CPDLC, and longitudinal separation - even after position accuracy appears to have recovered.

The practical takeaway is simple: "it recovered" doesn't mean "it's fine". So operators need to think about downstream impacts before entering the NAT. More detailed guidance is in NAT Ops Bulletin 2025-001, which sets out what to watch for and what to do if you're entering the NAT with GPS problems.

This mainly affects westbound flights coming out of spoofing or jamming areas. Bottom line - tell ATC early in your RCL if there are any issues. Doing so can help avoid off-track reroutes, step-downs, and delays.

Ref: Chapter 1 and Chapter 6 (Plus referenced NAT Ops Bulletin as above)

Flight Level Allocation Scheme (FLAS) - now gone

Until now, NAT Doc 007 included a Flight Level Allocation Scheme (FLAS). It was a simple table that gave crews and dispatchers a sensible planning starting point for random routes outside the OTS, mainly by **biasing eastbound and westbound traffic onto different flight levels**. It wasn't mandatory, but if you planned within FLAS, you were usually aligned with what ATC expected.

Level	Time (UTC)	Direction
FL430	H24	Westbound. May be Flight Planned as eastbound by non-RVSM aircraft.
FL410	H24	Eastbound.
FL400	0801 – 2229 2230 – 0059 0100 – 0800	Westbound. Westbound (avoiding OTS). Eastbound OTS (subject to westbounds). Westbound (avoiding OTS). Eastbound (OTS).
FL390	1901 – 1029 1030 – 1129 1130 – 1900	Eastbound. Eastbound (avoiding OTS). Westbound OTS (subject to eastbounds). Eastbound (avoiding OTS). Westbound (OTS).
FL380	0300 – 0700 0801 – 2229 2230 – 0059 0100 – 0800	Westbound (ODL, on and to the North of the North datum line). Westbound. Eastbound (subject to westbounds). Eastbound (OTS and ODL).
FL370	1901 – 1029 1030 – 1129 1130 – 1900	Eastbound. Eastbound (avoiding OTS). Westbound OTS (subject to eastbounds). Eastbound (avoiding OTS). Westbound (OTS).
FL360	0801 – 2229 2230 – 0059 0100 – 0800	Westbound. Westbound (avoiding OTS). Eastbound OTS (subject to westbounds). Westbound (avoiding OTS). Eastbound (OTS).
FL350	1901 – 0959 1000 – 1129 1130 – 2000	Eastbound. Eastbound (avoiding OTS). Westbound OTS (subject to eastbounds). Eastbound (avoiding OTS). Westbound (OTS).
FL340	0801 – 2229 2230 – 0059 0100 – 0800	Westbound. Eastbound (subject to westbounds). Eastbound OTS (subject to westbounds). Eastbound (OTS and ODL).
FL330	1901 – 0959 1000 – 1129 1130 – 1900	Eastbound. Westbound (subject to eastbounds). Westbound (OTS and ODL).
FL320	0801 – 2229 2230 – 0059 0100 – 0800	Westbound. Westbound (avoiding OTS). Eastbound OTS (subject to westbounds). Westbound (avoiding OTS). Eastbound (OTS).
FL310	H24	Westbound. (ODL).
FL300	H24	Westbound.
FL290	H24	Eastbound.

In the March 2026 edition, FLAS has quietly disappeared. The attachment has been removed and there's no replacement scheme. Instead, the new wording says that **random-route flights can plan any flight level**, as long as it works with traffic flows and ATC can make it fit. ☐

4.1.9 Flights which are planned to remain entirely clear of the OTS, or which join or leave an OTS track (i.e. follow an OTS track for only part of its published length), are all referred to as Random Flights. Flight crews intending to fly on a random route or outside the OTS time periods may plan any flight level, taking into account feasibility of flight profiles due OTS and traffic flows, additional guidance described paragraphs 4.1.11 and 4.1.12 below.

So there's nothing in the new Doc to say that the old FLAS separation logic has disappeared – it's just no longer explicitly written down! We're guessing the practical impact will be less predictability up front and more tactical level changes, especially if you're flying counter-flow or close to track changeover times.

What didn't change

Despite all the discussion around NAT procedures lately, the new NAT Doc **does not introduce new requirements in several key areas:**

- NAT HLA approval is still required (though there was some chatter about this last year)
- CPDLC and ADS-C mandates are unchanged
- No new equipage requirements
- No new separation standards

So the real changes here are about **clarity, procedures, and reducing error**, not new boxes to tick.

Ref: Chapters 1, 5, and 6

So what do crews actually do now? (RCLs and oceanic clearances, made simple)

Even when the 2026 version takes effect in March, OCR will still be uneven across the NAT, so **procedures depend on which OCA you're entering**. Here's what crews will need to do at Gander, Shanwick, and Reykjavik:

Eastbound via Gander (no change)

Gander is fully in OCR mode. You still send an RCL 90-60 minutes before the OEP, but it's for planning only. You are not asking for an oceanic clearance, and none will be issued. Fly your last domestic clearance unless ATC gives you a change before the OEP. Once oceanic, expect any further changes via CPDLC or HF. This is the area that caused most of the early confusion, but the rule is simple: RCL yes, oceanic clearance no.

Westbound via Shanwick (no change... yet)

Shanwick is not on OCR yet. You must send an RCL or make a voice clearance request 90-30 minutes before the OEP, and you will receive an oceanic clearance by ACARS or voice. Fly that clearance. NAT Doc 007 confirms this will continue until further notice. Shanwick has separately said OCR is not expected until sometime after summer 2026.

Departing Iceland (changes from March 2026)

From March 2026, Reykjavik will not require an RCL. If you send one anyway, they'll tell you it wasn't needed. You'll enter the Reykjavik OCA on your existing ATC clearance unless instructed otherwise.

What the NAT Doc does not spell out is what happens next for flights leaving Reykjavik and entering either Gander or Shanwick!

We've asked Gander and Shanwick directly to confirm what the deal will be, and here's what they've said:

- **Eastbound flights entering Shanwick:** No additional RCL or oceanic clearance is required. Iceland will coordinate electronically with Shanwick, so crews should not expect to request a clearance or submit an RCL when exiting Reykjavik into Shanwick. This is similar to how

flights entering Gander from New York FIR are handled today.

- **Westbound flights entering Gander:** The same applies. Flights transitioning from Reykjavik into Gander will do so via electronic coordination between Iceland and Gander. An RCL is not required in this case. Gander RCLs are only required for flights transitioning directly from a Canadian domestic agency into Gander Oceanic.

In short: **if you're coming out of Reykjavik, don't add an extra step.** The handoff to both Shanwick and Gander will be coordinated automatically.

Other NAT Doc changes spotted by OPSGROUP members!

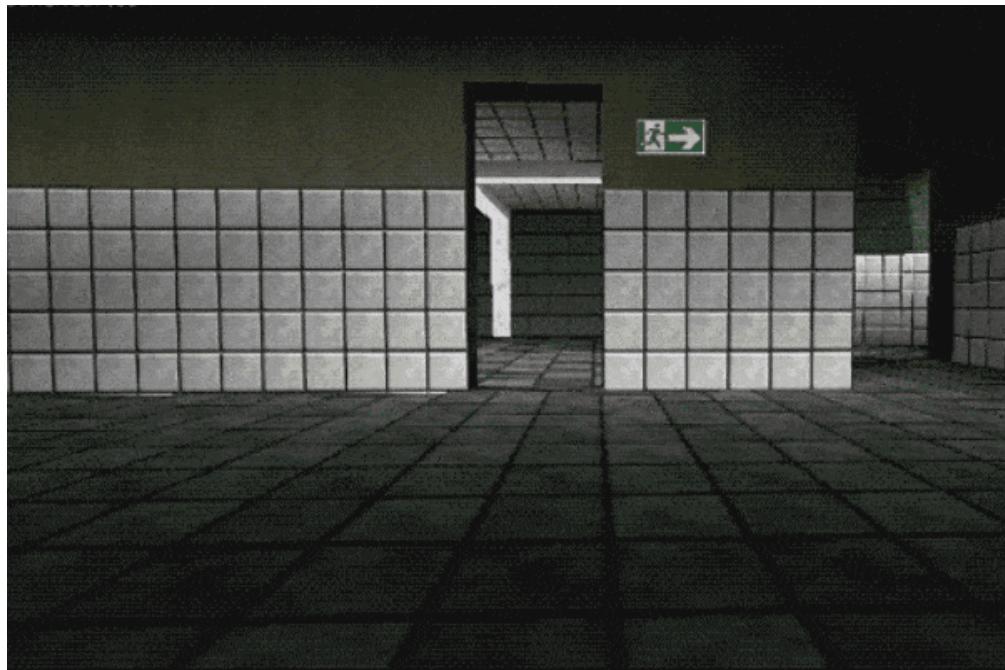
Thanks to everyone who wrote in with extra details they'd spotted in the new NAT Doc! A few of these aren't brand-new changes, but they're easy to miss and worth flagging. Here's a round-up of the most useful bits members sent in.

- **WATRS terminology unchanged:** The NAT Doc still uses the term WATRS and continues to defer the details to the US AIP. This hasn't been updated, despite the FAA having moved to "WAT" terminology in its own AIP.
- **Squawk 2000 timing (10 minutes after OEP):** This wasn't new in the 2026 NAT Doc, but we missed it in our write-up back in 2025 so it's worth flagging here! The NAT Doc says aircraft should retain the last assigned SSR code and squawk 2000 10 minutes after passing the oceanic entry point, everywhere in the NAT except when operating in the Reykjavik CTA or when transitioning Bermuda radar, where assigned codes are retained due to radar coverage. (Some older guidance and legacy SOPs often referred to squawking 2000 after 30 minutes, particularly in New York OCA.)
- **WAH reports no longer treated as mandatory:** The updated Doc removes earlier ambiguity around "When Able Higher" reports. WAH is now clearly optional unless ATC specifically requests it, aligning with how several FIRs have already been operating.
- **SLOP still treated as a blanket NAT procedure:** The NAT Doc continues to describe SLOP as standard NAT practice and does not list route-specific or FIR-specific limitations. In practice, some published ATS routes and oceanic areas have local procedures that restrict the routine use of automatic offsets. Examples include T9 and T290, which are treated as RNP 2 continental offshore routes in the UK AIP, and parts of the WAT structure in New York OCA, where procedures expect aircraft to remain on the cleared route unless otherwise instructed. These nuances come from State AIPs rather than the NAT Doc, so crews still need to check local rules before applying SLOP.
- **Magnetic variation tolerance still inconsistent:** A new note highlights that magnetic variation tables and track reference points can shift displayed tracks by up to ± 3 degrees. However, nearby guidance still refers to ± 2 degree tolerances, and earlier numeric tolerances have been removed from the sample checklist, leaving some internal inconsistency.
- **Oceanic checklist partly modernised:** The sample oceanic checklist removes the old taxi groundspeed check, which no longer makes sense for modern navigation systems. However, the present-position check remains, even though its operational value is limited on newer aircraft.
- **RCL maximum level wording updated:** The recommended RCL format for requesting a maximum flight level is now "MAX FL380", replacing the older "MAX F380" wording. Some State AIPs still show legacy formats, so crews may see differences.

- **Azores departures - no RCL to Santa Maria:** If you're departing from the Azores, you don't need to send an RCL to Santa Maria. This exemption has been in place since 201, but it isn't clearly reflected in NAT Doc 007. It's published in Portugal AIP ENR 1.1.15.1.
- **Some Santa Maria local procedures still sit outside the NAT Doc:** The NAT Doc applies a generic NAT baseline to Santa Maria, but several Santa Maria-specific procedures only live in the Portugal AIP. These include squawk handling in the surveillance area, limits on routine offsets in some sectors, exemptions from voice position reports when space-based surveillance is in use, and CPDLC-related SELCAL and RCL differences. None of this is new, but it still isn't captured in Doc 007. Bottom line - don't rely on the NAT Doc alone for Santa Maria.

Anything we missed?

Spotted any other big changes in the new NAT Doc that we missed? Please let us know, and we will update this article! Email: news@ops.group



EU-LISA: The BizAv Guide

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



The EU has officially started switching on its new border-control system, and the rollout is already affecting how flights are handled across Europe. Here's the quick version as of Jan 2026:

- **EES is live (sort of).** Launched in Oct 2025, with a staggered rollout across Europe – some airports are already using it, while others are still coming online.
- **Full switch by April 2026.** During the six-month transition, passports will still be stamped alongside digital checks, but once the rollout is complete across all 29 EES countries, manual stamping will end entirely.
- **All travellers included!** Everyone crossing an external Schengen border (no matter if they arrive by airline, private jet, yacht, car, or donkey) must comply with EES and ETIAS – but who is responsible for the checks depends on the type of operation. Commercial operators must register with EU-LISA and verify pax electronically before boarding, while border guards handle checks for private arrivals.
- **Private operators opting in.** Even though owner-operated private flights are exempt from EES and ETIAS requirements, many are registering with the system anyway so they can confirm pax docs and authorisations in advance – helping avoid surprises for their pax on arrival.

So here's a more detailed look at what's changing, when, and what actually matters for BizAv operators.

EES (live from Oct 2025)

Think of EES as the EU's new digital passport stamp. Operators flying to one of the 29 EES countries need to use the EU-LISA carrier interface to electronically verify whether passengers holding short-stay visas (single or double entry) have already used the number of entries authorised by that visa.

The 29 European countries doing EES:

	Austria		Estonia		Iceland		Malta		Slovakia
	Belgium		Finland		Italy		Netherlands		Slovenia
	Bulgaria		France		Latvia		Norway		Spain
	Croatia		Germany		Liechtenstein		Poland		Sweden
	Czech Republic		Greece		Lithuania		Portugal		Switzerland
	Denmark		Hungary		Luxembourg		Romania		

This check must be done no earlier than 48 hours before the scheduled time of departure.

Remember, this only applies to passengers with **short-stay visas for one or two entries**. For everyone else (including visa-exempt passengers) border authorities will handle checks during the six-month transition period while EES is phased in across Europe (through 10 April 2026).

So for visa-exempt travellers (like US passengers), operators don't need to do anything yet under EES – your obligations for them begin later, once ETIAS is live.

Any **commercial operators** (Part 135 / charter / commercial bizjet operators) must be registered with EU-LISA to access the carrier interface. Operators were expected to complete registration and testing before the Oct 2025 go-live. Latecomers can still apply, but should expect delays before being fully approved to use the system.

If you're **flying an owner-operated private non-commercial flight**, you're off the hook – you're not considered a "carrier" and don't need to register or query anyone (but read more on this below!).

ETIAS (coming in late 2026)

If EES is about recording entries and exits, ETIAS is about screening pax before they arrive. It's the EU's version of the US ESTA – a quick online authorisation for visa-exempt travellers.

Operators flying to one of the 30 ETIAS countries (the 29 EES states plus Cyprus) will need to **verify before boarding that all visa-exempt pax hold a valid ETIAS travel authorisation**.

As with EES, the verification query can be made anytime from 48 hours before departure (that "no earlier than 48 hours" rule).

When ETIAS launches (expected in the last quarter of 2026), there'll be a six-month transition followed by a six-month grace period, so enforcement will ramp up gradually rather than overnight.

The ETIAS fee is €20 (up from €7) and is waived for travellers under 18 or over 70.

ETIAS obligations mostly apply to travellers, but **operators must verify that passengers who need an ETIAS actually hold one before boarding**.

Again, this rule **only applies to commercial operators**.

For more info on all the basic stuff of EES and ETIAS, check out the homepage [here](#).

Are private flights definitely exempt?

Since 2024 we have asked EU-LISA this question many times, in different ways. Their position had always been the same. They told us that **EES and ETIAS apply to commercial flights, not private flights**.

They confirmed that:

- Private flights with non fee paying passengers are **out of scope** for EES and ETIAS.
- This remains the case **even if the pilots are paid** to operate the aircraft.
- Operators using privately owned aircraft for private purposes are **not considered “carriers”** and do not need to connect to the carrier interface.
- Company owned and operated aircraft flying to the EU for **private purposes** also fall under the private flight definition.

Based on this, the industry understanding was simple: **private flights did not need to do EES or ETIAS.**

However!!!

In Jan 2026, EU-LISA has now refined this position, with a new and much narrower distinction. They have told us the following:

Privately operated flights that are not open for public use, with a crew hired directly by the aircraft owner, do not need to comply with EES and ETIAS obligations, therefore, no need to register with eu-LISA and query the travellers in scope of EES and ETIAS.

Flights of private aircrafts managed by a professional operator (crew, maintenance, handling, etc.), or managed by a commercial charter operator, even if the flights are not open for public use, need to comply with EES and ETIAS obligations, therefore, the operator needs to register with eu-LISA and query the carrier interface.

Therefore, if you transport solely the owners of the plane and their guests, you will not need to register with eu-LISA.

In other words:

Owner-operated private flights with owner-hired crew = no EES / ETIAS.

Professionally managed or charter-operated private flights = EES / ETIAS required.

This explains why two aircraft that both look like “single owner private flights” can now fall on opposite sides of the rule, depending on how the aircraft and crew are managed.

Why some private flights are registering anyway

Several OPSGROUP members who do purely owner-operated private flights have told us that they have **registered for the system anyway**. The benefit of doing this is that you will be able to confirm prior to the flight that your pax have all the proper documentation they need – potentially avoiding any nasty surprises on arrival.

With the **EES system**, passports will no longer be stamped, so in the case of a limited visa that only allows a certain number of visits, operators will have no way of confirming that all the allowed visits have not been exhausted unless they check the system.

Also, similar story when ETIAS starts. Though there will be a website to confirm a passenger has an **approved ETIAS**, EU-LISA says there are a lot of reasons for an ETIAS to be revoked, so checking the system prior to the flight will help make sure the ETIAS is still valid.

More info for operators

For more info, you can check the EU-LISA homepage for operators here.

For answers to pretty much all the questions we can think of, including how to actually use the system as an operator, check this FAQ document provided by EU-LISA.

Greece Winter Runway Closures

David Mumford

9 February, 2026



Key Points

- **Several airports in Greece will be affected by winter runway works through to the end of March.**
- **These include: LGZA/Zakynthos, LGKF/Kefalonia, LGKR/Corfu, LGMK/Mykonos, LGSR/Santorini, LGRP/Rhodes, LGSK/Skiathos, LGTS/Thessaloniki, LGSA/Chania, LGIR/Heraklion and LGMT/Mytilene.**
- **Expect a mix of recurring weekly closures and day to day restrictions, and in many cases reduced runway distances. At some airports, declared distances are down to around 1400m, which will rule out certain aircraft types altogether.**

You can find all the details on the Notams, but here's a quick rundown of the planned closures and reductions in runway lengths:

LGZA/Zakynthos

Full Runway Closure: RWY 16/34 closed from Feb 2-17.

LGKF/Kefalonia

Full Runway Closure: RWY 14/32 closed at various times on different days until Jan 30. Times vary daily but mostly around midday, up to 4 hrs.

LGKR/Corfu

Full Runway Closure: RWY 16/34 closed from Jan 12-27.

LGMK/Mykonos

Shortened Runway: RWY 16 reduced to 1400m, RWY 34 reduced to 1400m until Mar 25.

Full Runway Closure: RWY 16/34 closed Tuesday through Wednesday nights on a recurring weekly basis until Mar 19.

LGSR/Santorini

Shortened Runway: RWY 15 reduced to 1802m, RWY 33 reduced to 1874m until Feb 25.

Full Runway Closure: RWY 15/33 closed from Jan 12 to Jan 20.

LGMT/Mytilene

Full Runway Closure: RWY 14/32 closed every Tuesday all day until Mar 25.

LGRP/Rhodes

Shortened Runway: RWY 06 reduced to 1900m, RWY 24 reduced to 1900m until Mar 25.

Full Runway Closure: RWY 06/24 closed on a recurring weekly basis, typically from Tuesday evening until late Wednesday evening until Mar 25.

LGSK/Skiathos

Full Runway Closure: RWY 01/19 closed for most of January, with only short morning or afternoon reopening windows on certain days, until Feb 1.

LGTS/Thessaloniki

Full Runway Closure: RWY 16/34 closed from Jan 19 to Mar 6. RWY 10/28 remains in use.

LGSA/Chania

Shortened Runway: RWY 11L/29R reduced to 1900m until Mar 27, with RWY 29R threshold displaced.

Straight-in minima are not authorised (circling only). RWY 29R approach lights are out of service.

LGIR/Heraklion

Full Runway Closure: RWY 09/27 closed from Jan 19-26 due to resurfacing works. Operations are on RWY 12/30 for day ops only, limited to Code letter B aircraft (incl. ATR42/72). IFR arrivals are suggested via RNP RWY 27, then visual or circling. If visibility drops below 10 km or ceiling below 2000 ft, arriving aircraft must fly VFR.

Further closures may be announced beyond the end of March - check on Fraport's homepage for updates.

Have you operated into Greece during the winter recently? How was it on the ground, and did anything catch you by surprise?

If you have tips, experiences, or useful local insight to share, we would love to hear from you. Drop us a note at team@ops.group!

2026 Davos World Economic Forum: Airport Restrictions

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



The World Economic Forum will take place in Davos from 19-23 Jan 2026. Parking at airports in the region will be limited - make sure you reserve your spot asap!



Here's what to expect at the airports:

LSGG/Geneva

- BizAv flights will need **parking permission** from Jan 16-26 due to congestion.
- Airport operates roughly 0600-2200 local time for BizAv. Arrivals outside these hours need prior approval and are not guaranteed, especially during WEF. **If you arrive late without approval, expect a diversion.**
- Repositioning from **LSGG to LSMD will not be allowed** - aircraft would have to land and depart directly from LSMD.

LSZH/Zurich

- **Maximum 2 hour ground time** for BizAv without parking permission (so drop-and-go's are fine, as long as you stay within that 2 hour window).
- You will **not be able to use LSZH as an alternate** from Jan 16-24.
- Airport operates from 0600-2200 local time daily, and overtime is not available - **make sure you land before closing time** or you'll get diverted to another airport.
- Customs clearance is available at the FBO for **up to 24 pax**. Any more than that and they will need to clear through the main pax terminal instead.
- Repositioning from **LSZH to LSMD will not be allowed** - aircraft would have to land and depart directly from LSMD.
- For handling, email Jet Aviation FBO at vip.zrh@jetaviation.ch, or CAT Air Service at info@cat-airservice.com

LSMD/Dubendorf

- Located in downtown Zurich. Normally a military airfield, but opens to civilian traffic each year for the Forum. **BizAv flights can only operate here during this period if pax are heading to the WEF.**
- During the event, they are open from 0700-2100 local time weekdays, and 0900-2000 on weekends. No overtime available.
- Slots not required, but **PPR is required**.
- Customs clearance is provided in the military terminal building.
- For handling, email the airport on: aircraft.handling@topmotion.ch
- Here is the 2026 pilot guide for operating at LSMD, it has all the information from the Swiss airforce which is applicable for this years event.
- **Operator report:** *A few years ago, several operators were issued SAFA findings at LSMD, due to the fact that the ILS GS is 4.5°, which qualified for a steep approach in their AFMs, which they did not have approval for. My info shows the ILS is still 4.5° and the RNP is 4.4°. Operators planning on using Dubendorf may want to check this out.*

LSZR/St Gallen-Altenrhein

- Could be a good option - if you're small enough to cope with their **4774ft runway!**
- Opening hours: 0630-1200 and 1330-2100 local time Mon-Fri, 0730-1200 and 1330-2000 Sat, 1000-1200 and 1330-2000 Sun.
- **The standard fire cover is Cat 2**, but they can provide up to Cat 6 for an extra fee.
- No slots or PPR are required.
- Parking is available, hangar might be available on request (up to G650/GLEX etc).
- For handling, contact the FBO at groundservices@peoples.ch
- For more ops info check out this page.

LSZS/Samedan

- First things first, this is a **VFR airport** with some IFR traffic. Pilots heading here need to take this test first. If you haven't flown in here before, now might not be the best time to give it a try, because...
- For the WEF, the **airspace around Davos (which includes LSZS airport) will be restricted**: there are special procedures for arrivals and departures, and all flights need **PPR**. The airport has published this briefing which includes everything you need to know.
- Open from 0800 local time until "the end of evening civil twilight" – as they beautifully put it. Customs clearance is available during these times.
- For handling, contact the airport at handling@engadin-airport.ch

EDNY/Friedrichshafen

- Open 0600-2200 local time.
- **No slots or PPR required** (although in previous years they introduced PPR for stays of more than 90 minutes, so that might happen again).
- Parking available, but expect to be repositioned for longer parking and servicing.
- For handling, email the local agent at fdhops@aviation-services.net

Permits

Landing permits are not required for private BizAv flights to Switzerland or Germany. You'll only need a landing permit if you're operating a charter flight on an aircraft not registered in the EU.

For Switzerland charter flight permits, read this guidance and email the authorities direct at trafficrights@bazl.admin.ch. And for Germany, read this guidance and email einflug@lba.de.

What's Changing on the North Atlantic?

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update Jan 2026

If you're crossing the NAT in mid-January, expect a temporary change to how OTS tracks are built.

From Jan 12-25, Gander and Shanwick will include half-degree coordinates in some daily tracks to test whether operators can reliably file and fly them.

Nothing else changes: you still plan the NAT the same way and PBCS tracks stay labelled as normal. The goal is to see if wider use of half-degree points can give more flexibility in OTS design and free up more random-route airspace. Make sure your flight planning system and FMS handle half-degree coordinates properly, and check this doc for more info.

Update Nov 2025

There's a special ICAO group called the NAT SPG - the North Atlantic Systems Planning Group. They meet once a year to decide what's next for the North Atlantic, and then publish a big summary of what was agreed. **It's one of the few places you can actually see what changes are being planned before they hit the real world.**

Their latest meeting was in Paris in June 2025, and here's what's coming that will actually matter to operators crossing the NAT...

RCL messages are on the way out

Iceland and Gander both intend to discontinue the RCL (Request Clearance) message as soon as possible.

The NAT SPG report mentioned possible timelines from late 2025, but when we contacted both ANSPs they said **no firm dates have been set yet**. Other NAT centres haven't announced plans to follow, so expect mixed procedures for some time.

This is the next big step in the ongoing Oceanic Clearance Removal rollout, aimed at simplifying

procedures and cutting down on confusion.

OCR still needs work

The Oceanic Clearance Removal (OCR) rollout in 2024 caused more trouble than expected. **Crews struggled with CPDLC message formats, leading to route errors, incorrect clearances, and heavy ATC workload.**

The NAT SPG wants ICAO to remind States to tighten up crew training and operator procedures for OCR. Iceland and Gander are taking the next step by planning to drop the RCL message altogether, which should help simplify things once everyone is ready!

For the absolute latest on where we are right now with the whole OCR/RCL thing, and what crews need to do, check here ↓



GNSS interference now a serious NAT issue

Reports of GNSS jamming and spoofing keep rising, and some aircraft still can't recover once affected.

The NAT SPG wants more crew training and better tools for ATC to spot and manage affected flights. We've already had a NAT Ops Bulletin from ICAO on this – if you missed it, we covered what to do if spoofed before the NAT.

Key takeaway: if your aircraft experiences any kind of GPS interference, you must tell the first NAT ANSP in your RCL, even if everything seems to have recovered.

For our full article on what to do if spoofed/jammed before entering the NAT, check here ↓



Possible end of HLA approval requirement

Iceland has reviewed the old MNPS/HLA approval system and says it may no longer be needed.

The reason: the navigation performance standards that used to be covered by an HLA approval are now built into other rules (mainly the modern PBN requirements for RNP 10 or RNP 4 operations). **In other words, if an aircraft already meets current NAT HLA standards, the separate “HLA approval” adds little value.**

Iceland plans to complete a safety assessment on removing the HLA approval requirement and present it to the NAT Safety Oversight Group (SOG) in Dec 2025 (that's the NAT team that reviews safety cases before any major change goes live). The UK, US, and Spain have said they'd prefer to keep the approval requirement for now, so this is still very much under discussion rather than a confirmed change.

Safety models might be getting an upgrade

A semi-interesting one. So the NAT's current collision risk figures look worse than reality because they use 1960s-era maths. **New modelling is coming that reflects today's surveillance environment, which should better represent actual safety levels.**

It won't change anything for crews right now, but it sets the stage for the future – once the numbers catch up with reality, we could possibly see tighter spacing or more flexible routing across the ocean.

Commercial space launches are still disrupting routes

Rocket launches are becoming a regular headache, forcing reroutes and last-minute airspace closures.

The NAT SPG is planning a workshop in late 2025 or early 2026 to develop a common approach, since there's still no global standard on coordination or cost recovery.

Document updates inbound...

Hooray! Everyone loves document updates!

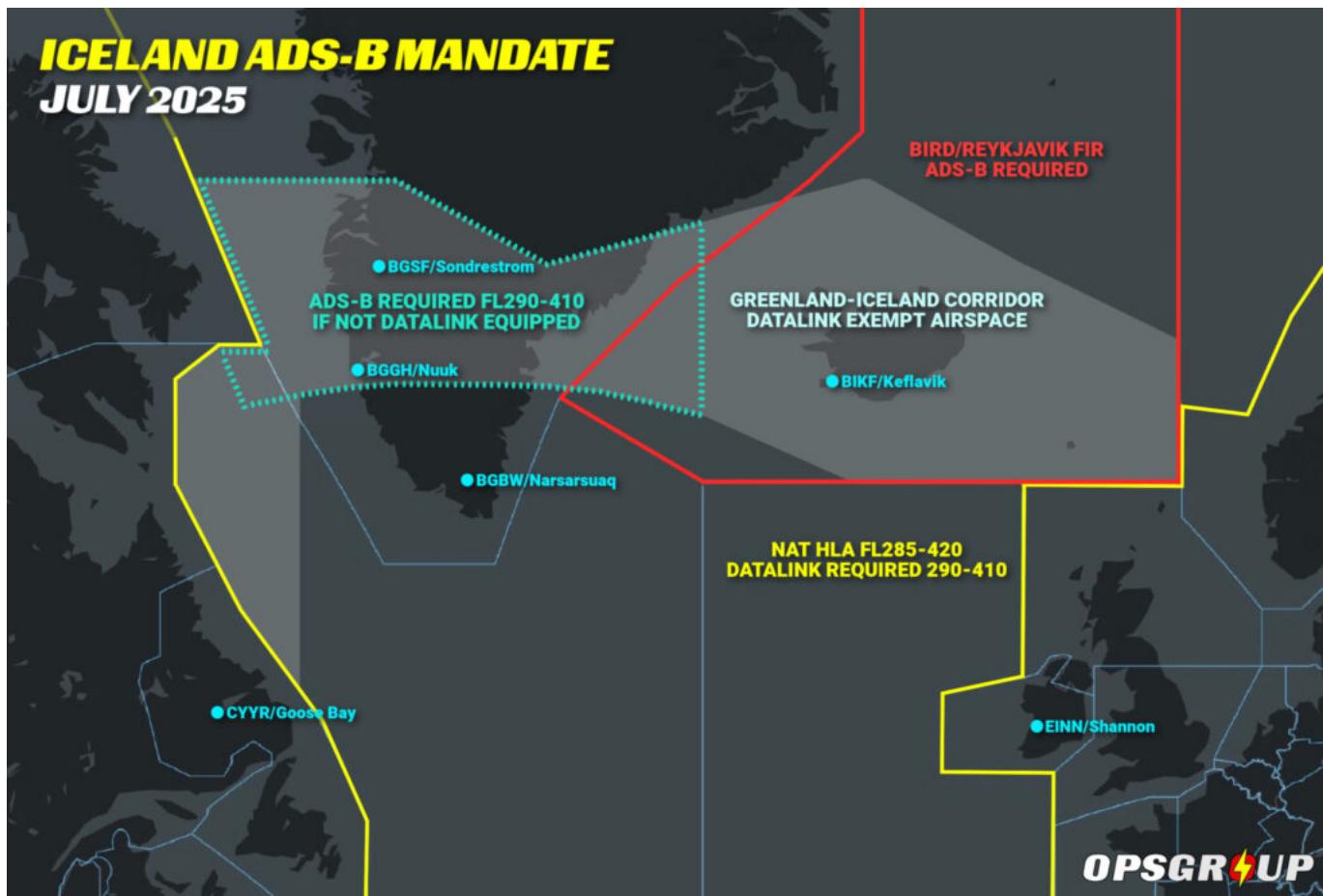
NAT Doc 007 (Operations and Airspace Manual) and NAT Doc 003 (HF Management Guidance) will both be updated soon to reflect current procedures and OCR changes – plus probably a bunch of other stuff, who knows...

In previous years this has normally happened every **March**, but sometimes we get a cheeky update in **Jan or Feb** – so stay tuned!

ADS-B now mandatory everywhere in Iceland

Here's one that's not actually in the NAT SPG report, but still worth mentioning! **As of 1 July 2025, Iceland made ADS-B mandatory for all IFR flights in the BIRD/Reykjavik FIR.**

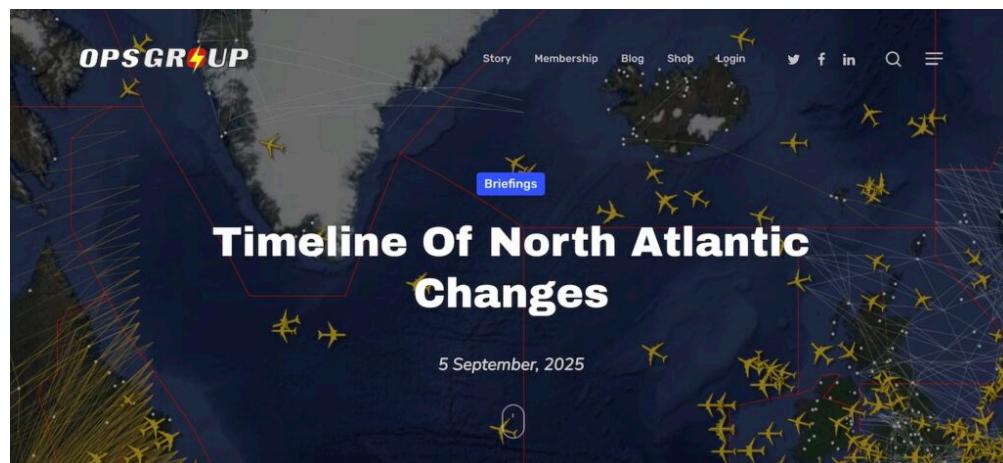
So now the NAT datalink/ADS-B rules look something like this:



The rule applies to every aircraft flying IFR, at any altitude. Exemptions include flights to maintenance, export deliveries, or aircraft that will retire by 31 Oct 2025. If your ADS-B system fails, you can still operate for up to three days while it's being repaired. You can check AIC 1-2025 for more info.

Give me ALL the NAT updates in one place!

Sure thing, friendo. For a nice/concise timeline of NAT changes stretching back to the dawn of time, check here ↓



And barring any more North Atlantic related changes in the next couple of months, we'll see all you NAT addicts again in 2026!

GAR Procedure for UK Flights

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update Jan 2026

The UK's Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme enters full enforcement on 25 Feb 2026.

From this date, when submitting a General Aviation Report (GAR), all pax must hold valid permission to travel, either a UK/Irish passport, valid visa, or a valid ETA. GAR submissions may now return a "No Record of Valid Permission to Travel" response if this requirement isn't met. There are some crew exemptions, but these are complicated so review the latest UK Home Office FAQ for details. Ensure all documentation is checked in advance to avoid delays or denied entry, and remember the fine for a GAR screw up is hefty and falls onto the PIC!

Update Sep 2025

Since April 2024, there have been major changes to the UK's General Aviation Report (GAR) submission for international flights. Here's a reminder of what you need to know.

- **The GAR form is now required for departures (not just arrivals).**
- **You have to submit it via an online portal, or through a third-party app (no longer directly to UK Border Force via email).**
- **If you get it wrong, you can now get fined up to £10,000 (there were no fines before). These apply to both the operator AND the captain.**

These rules apply to all international flights arriving/departing the UK (including within the Common Travel Area: Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands). Details on how the rules work within the CTA are explained below.

You can read the rules in full on the UK Government website, but here's a summary of the main points:

How to submit the GAR

You need to submit info online about the flight and crew/pax, no earlier than 48 hours and no later than 2 hours prior to the expected time of departure. There are 3 ways to do this:

1. The government's free-to-use online portal.

Alternatively, you can download this GAR template (Excel doc), complete it electronically and upload it to the portal.

2. Approved third-party applications: Rocket Route, OnlineGAR

3. Direct connections: FB01, Streamlane, Mobile-Edge, PnrGo

More info on the UK government site [here](#).

After you submit the GAR, **you should get a response telling you whether that crew/pax is allowed to travel.** It will be one of the following (thanks to our friends at FlyingInIreland for this table):

Response Message	Action
Valid permission to travel	<p>The Home Office can find a valid permission to travel for the person. Pilots, operators and agents are not required to check visas, but Passport or Travel Document checks still apply. They must check that the passport or travel document presented is genuine and valid, and that the person is the rightful holder.</p> <p>For more information on checking passports and travel documents click here Guidance on examining identity documents (publishing.service.gov.uk)</p> <p>Pilots, operators and agents are required to check visas for Visa Nationals. Passport or Travel Document checks apply for all passengers. They must check that the passport or travel document presented is genuine and valid and that the person is the rightful holder.</p>
Authority to carry granted	<p>For more information on checking passports and travel documents click here Guidance on examining identity documents (publishing.service.gov.uk) Follow this link to check visa requirements Check if you need a UK visa - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</p>
Authority to carry refused. DO NOT BOARD.	<p>This response message will not be displayed on the screen. Pilots, operators and agents will be instructed not to board an individual (NO BOARD) via a call and email when Authority to Carry (ATC) has been refused.</p>

Because fines apply if the GAR is submitted incorrectly, many handling agents may no longer be willing to do it on your behalf.

If you're not already using a third-party application, the safest option is to set up an online account and handle the submission yourself.

Submit a General Aviation Report (GAR)

Use this service to:

- Submit a GAR
- View or cancel a GAR and edit draft GARs
- Add, remove or manage people on your flight

Start now ➔

Common Travel Area flights (Ireland, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Northern Ireland)

Flying within the CTA is where GAR rules can catch people out. On top of the standard UK GAR, there are two extra layers to watch.

First, some destinations have their own local GAR forms. The **Channel Islands (EGJJ/Jersey, EGJBGuernsey) require local GARs inbound and outbound, and the Isle of Man/EGNS has its own form too**. Requirements can vary, so best practice is to confirm with your local handler. **Opsgroup member report:** *At EGJJ/Jersey, Border Force has at times required full residential addresses for crew and pax, and commercial operators also need local permits separate from UK CAA permits.*

Second, the 12-hour police rule. If you are flying to or from the CTA and using a UK aerodrome that is not police-designated, extra steps apply. **For private flights, you need to notify the local police at least 12 hours in advance.** For commercial flights, it's stricter: you must obtain prior police approval before operating from a non-designated aerodrome. **Opsgroup member report:** *A flight originally planned from EGKB/Biggin Hill to EGJJ/Jersey made a last-minute stop in EGTK/Oxford. Because Oxford is not police-designated, the 12-hour rule kicked in. The crew had filed a GAR only a few hours before departure, so Border Police enforced the rule and the jet was stuck in Oxford overnight.*

For Northern Ireland, the designated ports are **EGAC/Belfast City, EGAA/Belfast Intl, and EGAE/City of Derry**. If you use any other airport, you must notify the local police at least 12 hrs in advance (GAR@psni.pnn.police.uk).

You can find the full list of police-designated aerodromes in Annex A of the official UK GAR guidance.

Getting it wrong

Again, check the official guidance on this, but here's what "getting it wrong" basically means:

- Failing to provide correct info about the flight and people on board.
- Not submitting it within the required timeframe (no earlier than 48 hours and no later than 2 hours prior to the expected time of departure).
- Not doing it in the right format (i.e. through the web portal or via an approved third party).

The big things to know / watch out for:

- **Fines:** Getting it wrong could mean a fine for the “*owner or agent and captain*”. So that means the operator AND captain are subject to enforcement action and fines. These start at £5,000 for first-time offenders (ouch!), subsequent breaches start at £7500, followed by the maximum of £10,000.
- **Errors on the GAR submission:** Watch out for incorrect spelling of names, omitting middle names, not using the full names exactly as shown on passports, and incorrect crew assignment (which pilot is the PIC). Anything like this is likely to get you a “warning” from UK Customs on arrival, and potentially a fine if it happens again. ***Opsgroup member report:*** At EGPH/Edinburgh, Border Force issued a non-compliance report because a crew member’s middle name was missing from the GAR, even though it appeared on the GenDec. All given names (including middle names) must be included in GAR submissions. When using the GAR portal, enter the middle name(s) in the “Given name(s)” field along with the first name.
- **Last minute changes:** Bad news. If you get an extra passenger last minute, or someone shows up with a different passport than the one you sent on the GAR submission, you have to file a new GAR and then wait 2 hours until you depart. Same applies if you change your arrival airport in the UK. One exception here: if a passenger was provided on the GAR and they do not travel, a new GAR is not required to be submitted.
- **Diverts:** If you have to divert due to weather, that’s fine. If this happens, UK Border Force want you to call them if you can, on +44 300 123 2012. Make sure you’re diverting to the alternate listed on your flight plan (should also be an international airport with Customs). If you’re diverting somewhere other than what’s listed on your flight plan (i.e. it’s an emergency), call UK Border Force after you land to explain.
- **Late departures:** If the flight will operate on the same day, albeit later, no new GAR submission is required. If a flight is delayed to the next calendar day, a new GAR must be submitted.
- **Early departures:** If you depart early headed to the UK, don’t update the GAR! ***Opsgroup member report:*** We had a flight to UK that departed 45 mins early, so we thought it wise to update the GAR to correct ETA. This resulted in a UK Customs warning for ‘submitting’ a GAR once flight airborne (8hr leg). We’ve been told that we should not have updated the ETA and it is UK Customs’ responsibility to keep up to date with the ETA.

More info

Check out this page from PnrGo. It has a bunch more info for pilots and operators, including a recent webinar recording plus an extensive Q&A on this topic.

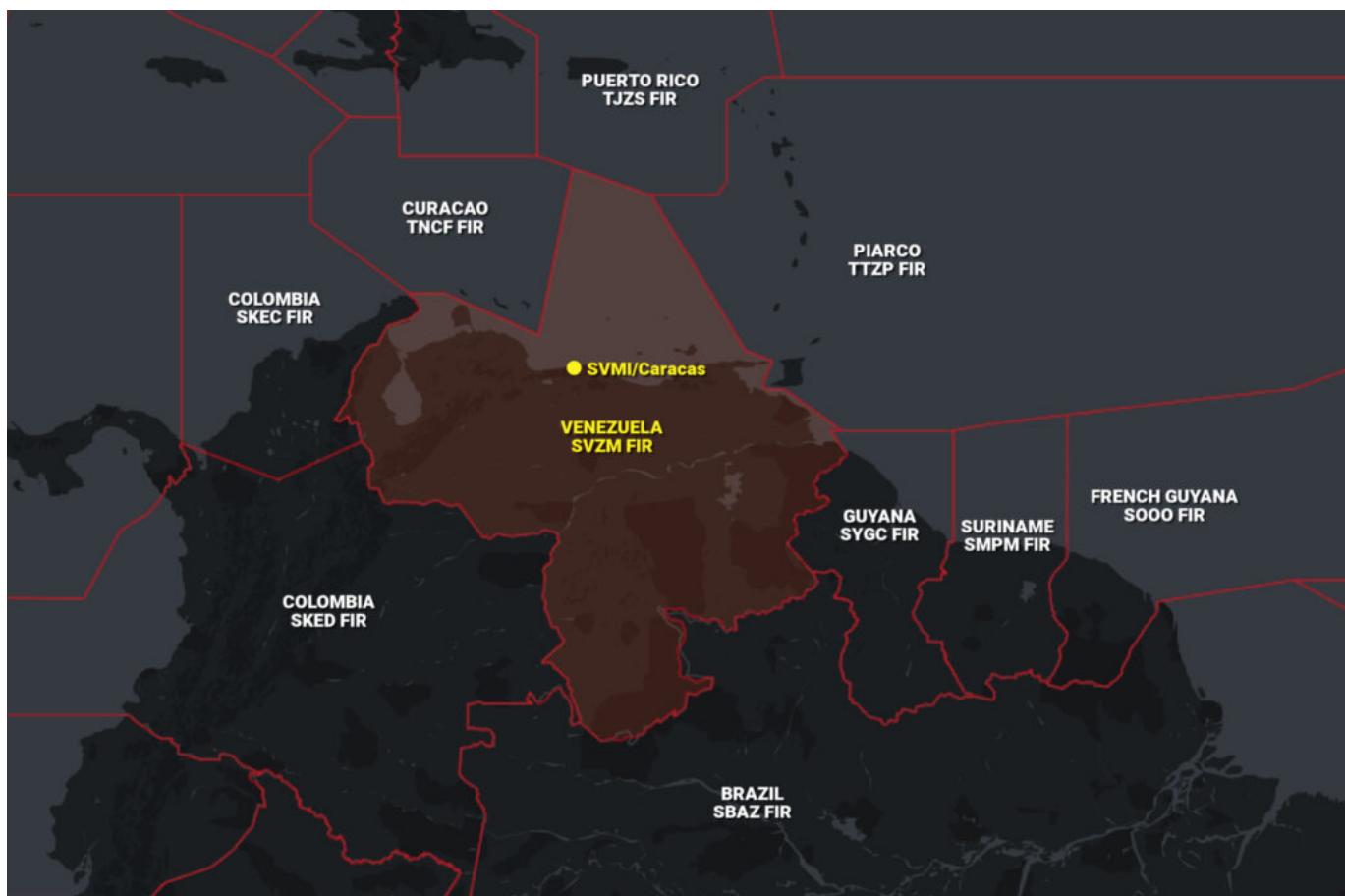
Venezuela & Caribbean Airspace Update

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



It's been a busy few days across Venezuelan and Caribbean airspace.

On Jan 3, the US FAA issued a temporary flight ban for US operators in Venezuela's SVZM/Maiquetia FIR, the TJZS/San Juan and TNCF/Curacao FIRs, plus the TTZP/Piarco FIR west of 57W – which in practice covers the entire eastern Caribbean island chain.



The move followed US airstrikes in Venezuela and was driven by **safety-of-flight concerns linked to military activity and misidentification risk**.

Venezuelan and Caribbean airspace from late last night (local time) through this afternoon.
pic.twitter.com/oxu5ha3dXs

— Flightradar24 (@flightradar24) January 3, 2026

That prohibition was short-lived. Within hours, the FAA lifted the ban and reverted to advisory Notams, returning to earlier guidance for **US operators to exercise caution at all altitudes in the affected FIRs.**

While the temporary FAA ban has ended, **airspace warnings still remain in place.** The US, Canada, EASA and several European states continue to advise avoiding Venezuelan airspace and to exercise caution across the surrounding region.

These sit on top of earlier warnings from late 2025 flagging **GPS interference, reduced ATC visibility, and unpredictable traffic.** Operators have been reporting these issues for months, with no clear indication they've fully gone away.

For several days after Jan 3, departures from parts of the eastern Caribbean were heavily delayed, with aircraft held on the ground due to parking constraints and ATC flow controls. **Most of that disruption has now cleared.** FAA flow programs are no longer active and the situation at the airports has largely returned to normal. The main exception is TNCM/St Maarten, where ramp congestion continues to limit GA flights through Jan 12 as per the current Notam.

A0019/26 NOTAMN

Q) TJZS/QFAXX/IV/NBO/A/000/999/1802N06307W005

A) TNCM

B) 2601081100 C) 2601120100

E) GA OPS RESTRICTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DAILY DAILY RATE
PUBLISHED BLW.

PRIOR APPROVAL REQUIRED TO BE COORDINATED WITH THE RESPECTIVE
FIXED BASE OPERATOR.

FROM 11:00 UNTIL 15:00 UTC 4 PER HR

FROM 15:01 UNTIL 21:00 UTC 2 PER HR

FROM 21:01 UNTIL 01:00 UTC 4 PER HR

FLTS NOT OBTAINING PRIOR APPROVAL WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

If you're operating in the area and have updates to share with OPSGROUP members, please email news@ops.group and we'll update this article as things change.

ReFuelEU: Europe's new anti-tankering rules explained

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Jan 2026 update:

ReFuelEU Aviation now also applies at LSZH/Zurich and LSGG/Geneva. Switzerland isn't in the EU, but it has chosen to adopt the rules, which means both airports are treated just like Union airports. The official list is attached if you want to double-check. It does look like the Swiss ICAO codes are wrong, but it's just a typo. Zurich and Geneva are clearly intended and this should be fixed in a future update.

Jan 2025 update:

- **New anti-tankering rules came into force on Jan 1 2025, heavily restricting large commercial operators from tankering fuel into or within Europe.**
- **The first annual reporting deadline fell in March 2025, marking the first real compliance test for operators.**

There's a still relatively new framework in Europe called ReFuelEU, and it looks like it's going to be a real headache for operators.

Since January 2025, **the rules have applied to all large commercial operators** (those doing 500+ flights from EU airports each year). Over the course of a calendar year, operators must ensure that, on average, 90% of the fuel required for flights departing from a specific EU airport is uplifted at that airport. **The reporting is done annually, so it's about maintaining compliance as a yearly average rather than for each individual flight.**

These rules applies to **all commercial operators** – both EU-based and non-EU-based. Private flights and all non-commercial operations are exempt.

This whole ReFuelEU thing is being run by the EU. They claim it's part of the general push to "**make things more green**". Maybe. Or maybe these anti-tankering rules are actually more to do with the **EU getting fed up with big airlines blazing into Europe with their tanks still half-full** of the cheap fuel they brought from "home". European airports, unable to sell as much of their expensive fuel, have been missing out.

But remember - the rules apply to intra-EU flights as well! So it's not just all those Middle East to Europe flights that are affected. For example, a flight from Bulgaria (cheap fuel) to Germany (expensive fuel) will not be allowed to tanker either.

Politics aside, these new rules are going to be **disproportionately tough on bizjet operators** with unscheduled, last-minute flights. Whilst one could claim this whole thing might make some sense for airlines, it will make planning extremely tricky for other large non-scheduled commercial operators who don't necessarily know what they'll be doing next week, let alone across the entire year! Also, there's really not so much value on the "make things more green" front either. 777s, A380s and A380s often tanker tonnes of fuel; Citations, Falcons and Gulfstreams - not so much. Then there's the added complexities with reporting, reduced fuel flexibility, and even potential safety risks if operators start running tighter fuel margins.

Reporting rules for operators

Welcome to hell. We're not going to dive deep down into this basket of snakes here, but just to give a rough outline of what operators have to do...

1. Prepare an annual report.

This should include:

- The yearly aviation fuel required (trip and taxi fuel for all flights departing from a given EU airport).
- The yearly aviation fuel uplifted at that airport.
- Any fuel shortfalls below the 90% requirement, with justifications (e.g., safety or other exemptions).

2. Pay to get the report verified.

The verifier will ensure the report is accurate, complete, and compliant with the rules. They will review the operator's data, including:

- Fuel uplift records.
- Supporting docs (e.g. flight logs, fuel invoices, operational flight plans) to justify fuel usage, especially for exemptions.
- Justifications for exemptions (if applicable). If operators want an exemption, they have to justify it with detailed reasons (e.g. safety concerns, operational difficulties) and provide evidence to the authorities.

Any discrepancies or missing data must be resolved before the report is finalized.

3. Submit the report.

- After verification, the report has to be submitted to the competent authority of the Member State responsible for the operator, as well as the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).
- The report must follow a specific format (specified in Annex II). This includes tables and fields for annual aviation fuel required, fuel uplifted, and justifications for exemptions.

Key dates for reporting.

The reporting period is the calendar year, from January 1 to December 31. So the key dates for this are as follows:

- **January 1 - December 31:** Reporting period.
- **(following year) January - March:** Verification by an independent verifier, with March 31 submission deadline to competent authorities and EASA.

The first annual report was due by March 31 2025, covering the reporting period from Jan 1 to Dec 31 2024.

What airports in the EU are impacted?

Not all of them!

The rules apply to “Union Airports” that meet certain thresholds – mainly **those where pax traffic exceeds 800,000 passengers annually**. Smaller airports that do not meet these thresholds are excluded to avoid placing “undue operational and financial burdens” on them.

Also, airports in “**Outermost Regions**” (e.g. the Azores, Madeira, Canary Islands, and French overseas territories) are generally excluded too, due to their geographic and logistical challenges. These airports can opt-in to the rules if they like though.

The EU publishes and updates an **annual list of airports** that fall under the scope of these rules. You can access it [here](#).

Other concerns for Business Aviation

The European Business Aviation Association (EBAA) are currently working on presenting some of the issues to the EU. But ultimately, they highlight **three big issues**:

1. **Lack of flexibility.** Business aviation’s dynamic and diverse operations require more flexibility than what the anti-tankering rule allows.
2. **Administrative Burden.** Reporting requirements, including detailed fuel data, create significant workload and could divert resources away from safety-critical tasks.
3. **Safety Risks.** Increased risks include in-flight fuel emergencies, crew fatigue, missed ATC slots, fueling-related hazards, and more. There are also concerns about compromised fuel quality and strained infrastructure due to increased refueling requirements.

For more info on all this, check the ReFuelEU website. It includes the list of airports affected, plus

the official rules in full (Article 5) – check the docs at the bottom of the webpage.

US CBP biometrics: BizAv rollout still unclear

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update Jan 2026

Universal is reporting a clarification from US CBP that the widely cited 26 Dec 2025 date is **not an implementation deadline for BizAv operations**. (Note: CBP uses the broader term *General Aviation*, but for the purposes of this article we're sticking with *BizAv*!)

Although CBP now has legal authority to collect biometric entry and exit data from non-US citizens, it has **not yet defined how this will work for BizAv, and no operational rollout has been announced**. Until CBP publishes specific guidance in the Federal Register, BizAv flights will carry on as they did before. Much of the confusion comes from treating the rule's effective date as if it were an enforcement date – which CBP is now saying it isn't.

What's changing

From 26 Dec 2025, a rule took effect that gives CBP legal authority to collect facial biometrics from all non-US passengers and crew entering or exiting the US, across all modes of travel, including BizAv. **This is a legal change, not an operational one**. The rule removes previous limitations on who CBP may collect biometrics from, including exemptions that applied to certain nationalities and categories such as many Canadian nationals and diplomats.

What's actually new

CBP has collected biometric data on entry for years, and biometric exit already exists for airline flights at many airports. **What's new is the legal scope, not the process.** The rule makes biometric entry and exit a nationwide requirement in law for all non-US nationals, regardless of how they travel. For BizAv, the unresolved issue is how this will be applied in practice, particularly on departure, where biometric exit has not previously been routine.

Airport reality and BizAv impact

OPSGROUP members report that there's no single way biometrics are handled today. Sometimes CBP clears passengers onboard using a mobile device, sometimes everyone goes into the CBP office, and sometimes it depends entirely on the officer. **With no BizAv guidance published yet, that variability isn't likely to go away any time soon.**

What operators should do now

For now, don't treat 26 Dec 2025 as an enforcement deadline for BizAv. **No immediate operational changes are required.** Continue normal CBP arrival and departure procedures as before!

Separate proposal: ESTA changes under review

CBP has published a separate proposal to significantly change how the ESTA works for non US travellers. These changes are not final and are open for public comment until 9 Feb 2026. You can check the official proposal [here](#), and send an email to CBP_PRA@cbp.dhs.gov if you want to submit any comments.

If adopted, ESTA would become far more app based and data heavy. Proposals include a mobile app only ESTA, mandatory live selfies, and a big expansion in the personal info travellers must provide. That includes several years of social media history, along with phone numbers, emails, and family and business contacts. Yes, they really want the socials!

There is also a proposal to let travellers confirm their departure via a CBP app using a selfie and location data. That would help CBP close long standing exit gaps, but it sounds like it wouldn't remove any existing operator admin.

Bottom line, these are proposals, not requirements. If adopted, ESTA would push more work onto pax and add more ways for trips to get stuck before departure! Expect more chasing pax for app downloads, selfies, and old social accounts. Yay! ☺



Milan targets business jets with 650% rate increase

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Jan 2026 update:

Effective 1 Jan 2026, Milan parking fees have been cut back after the sharp increases introduced in July 2025. But rates are still well above 2024 levels, especially for longer BizAv stays at both LIML/Linate and LIMC/Malpensa.

The first two hours remain free, but after that costs add up quickly. **Under the new Jan 2026 rates, parking a 50-ton aircraft for more than 72 hours now runs at around €1,000 per day at Linate and roughly €600 per day at Malpensa.** That's down from the 2025 peak, but still several times higher than pre-2025 pricing – don't be fooled, Milan parking is not "cheap" again!

You can check out the new rates [here](#).

July 2025 update:

- **Milan's LIML/Linate and LIMC/Malpensa airports have hiked Business Aviation parking rates by up to 650%, effective 1 July 2025.**
- **The changes apply to both private and commercial flights, and were published without prior notice.**
- **A large business jet crew reports pays nearly €29,000 for three weeks on the ground – previously around €6,800.**

Without warning, Milan's airport authorities have slapped a massive increase on General Aviation parking fees at LIML/Linate and LIMC/Malpensa – a change that's already catching operators off guard and racking up huge costs.

One OPSGROUP member told us their aircraft, parked at Linate for a three-week stay, saw the bill shoot up from a previously quoted **€6,800** to nearly **€29,000**, following the new rate introduction on July 1.

Local handlers confirm the price hike. One local FBO outlined the new pricing structure, which now uses a tiered pricing model based on duration, with rates charged per ton per hour:

Linate (LIML):

- 0-24h: €0.57 / ton / hr
- 24-72h: €0.80 / ton / hr
- Over 72h: €1.09 / ton / hr
(Old rate: €0.15)

Malpensa (LIMC):

- 0-24h: €0.44 / ton / hr
- 24-72h: €0.52 / ton / hr
- Over 72h: €0.77 / ton / hr
(Old rate: €0.13)

The first two hours are still free, but that's about the only mercy left in this new setup.

This means parking a 50-ton aircraft at **Linate** for more than 72 hours now costs **€1300 per day** – a whopping **650% increase** from the old rate. At Malpensa, the impact is slightly less brutal but still substantial, with costs up **nearly 500%** in some cases.

The airport authority has offered absolutely nothing in the way of explanation, but handlers suspect the move is part of a strategy to **discourage long-term “empty leg” parking and reserve space for active operations**. No consultation, no warning – just a new tariff sheet published in July and backdated to take effect immediately. (You can see the old tariffs from 2024 [here](#)).

Some large operators are already lodging complaints. Whether those efforts will gain traction remains to be seen. In the meantime, if you're flying into Milan for anything longer than a fuel stop, you might want to seriously reconsider!

Also watch out for landing fees

Both LIML/Linate and LIMC/Malpensa charge **higher landing fees for non-AOC flights**.

Commercial flights (Part 135) get the standard rate, while private flights (Part 91) **pay about 1.5-2x more** for the same landing and take-off. The gap grows with aircraft size – large jets can see several thousand euros extra per stop.

Be clear about your flight type when booking handling and have your AOC ready if you have one!

Other airports to consider in the region



LIMP/Parma

Parma is a bizjet-friendly airport with a 2,100m (6,900ft) runway, a dedicated GA apron, no slot restrictions, and full handling support – so this can be a pretty decent alternative to Milan’s airports if they have the space.

You can check the parking costs at Parma here. Parking is charged at €0.60 per hour per ton of MTOW, starting from the third hour, with the first two hours free. So a **50-ton aircraft parked for 24 hours would pay €660**, which is similar to the cost at Linate, but the key difference here is that the rate stays flat for longer stays!

LIPO/Brescia

Brescia is another decent option, with a 2,990m (9,800ft) runway, dedicated GA facilities, and no slot restrictions.

Charges are published here. Parking is charged at €0.07 per hour per ton of MTOW, starting from the third hour, with the first two hours free. If our calculations are correct, that means a **50-ton aircraft parked for 24 hours would pay just €77** – making it one of the most affordable options in the region.

LIME/Bergamo

Bergamo has a 2,990m (9,800ft) runway, full GA handling, no slot restrictions, and is the closest of the three alternatives to Milan—just about an hour’s drive from the city centre—so you might even be able to drop your passengers here directly, rather than using LIML/LIMC and repositioning elsewhere for parking.

Charges are published here. Parking is charged at €0.17 per hour per ton of MTOW, with the first two hours free. So that means a **50-ton aircraft parked for 24 hours would pay €187** – still significantly cheaper than Milan’s new rates.

Major runway shutdowns ahead at KVNY/Van Nuys

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



KVNY/Van Nuys will shut 16R/34L for multiple 80-hour blocks plus recurring night closures through February 2026, so expect serious disruption to operations.

Here's what's currently planned:

Van Nuys Cross Taxiways Reconstruction Project 80-Hour Closures with Follow-up Nightly Closures

November 2025 – February 2026 (Third Revised Schedule – Jan. 14, 2025)

From	To	Description
Nov. 9 th at 22:30 pm	Nov. 13 th at 06:00am	Full 80-Hour closure of 16R-34L from Sunday night through Thursday morning
Nov. 16 th at 22:30 pm	Nov. 20 th at 06:00 am	Full 80-Hour closure of 16R-34L from Sunday night through Thursday morning
Nov. 18 th at 22:30	Nov. 19 th at 06:00 am	One Nightly Closure of 16R-34L from Tuesday Night through Wednesday morning
Nov. 30 th at 22:30 pm	Dec. 4 th at 06:00 am	Full 80-Hour closure of 16R-34L from Sunday night through Thursday morning
Dec. 7 th at 22:30 pm	Dec. 11 th at 06:00 am	Full 80-Hour closure of 16R-34L from Sunday night through Thursday morning

Dec. 11 th at 22:30 pm	Dec. 12 th at 06:00 am	One Nightly closure of 16R-34L from Thursday night through Friday morning
Dec. 14 th at 22:30 pm	Dec. 19 th at 06:00 am	Five Nightly Closures (7.5 Hours each night) of 16R-34L: each night from 22:30 to 06:00.
Dec. 21st at 22:30 pm	Dec. 22nd at 06:00 am	One Nightly closure of 16R-34L from Sunday night through Monday morning
Dec. 22nd at 22:30 pm	Dec. 23rd at 06:00 am	One Nightly closure of 16R-34L from Monday night through Tuesday morning

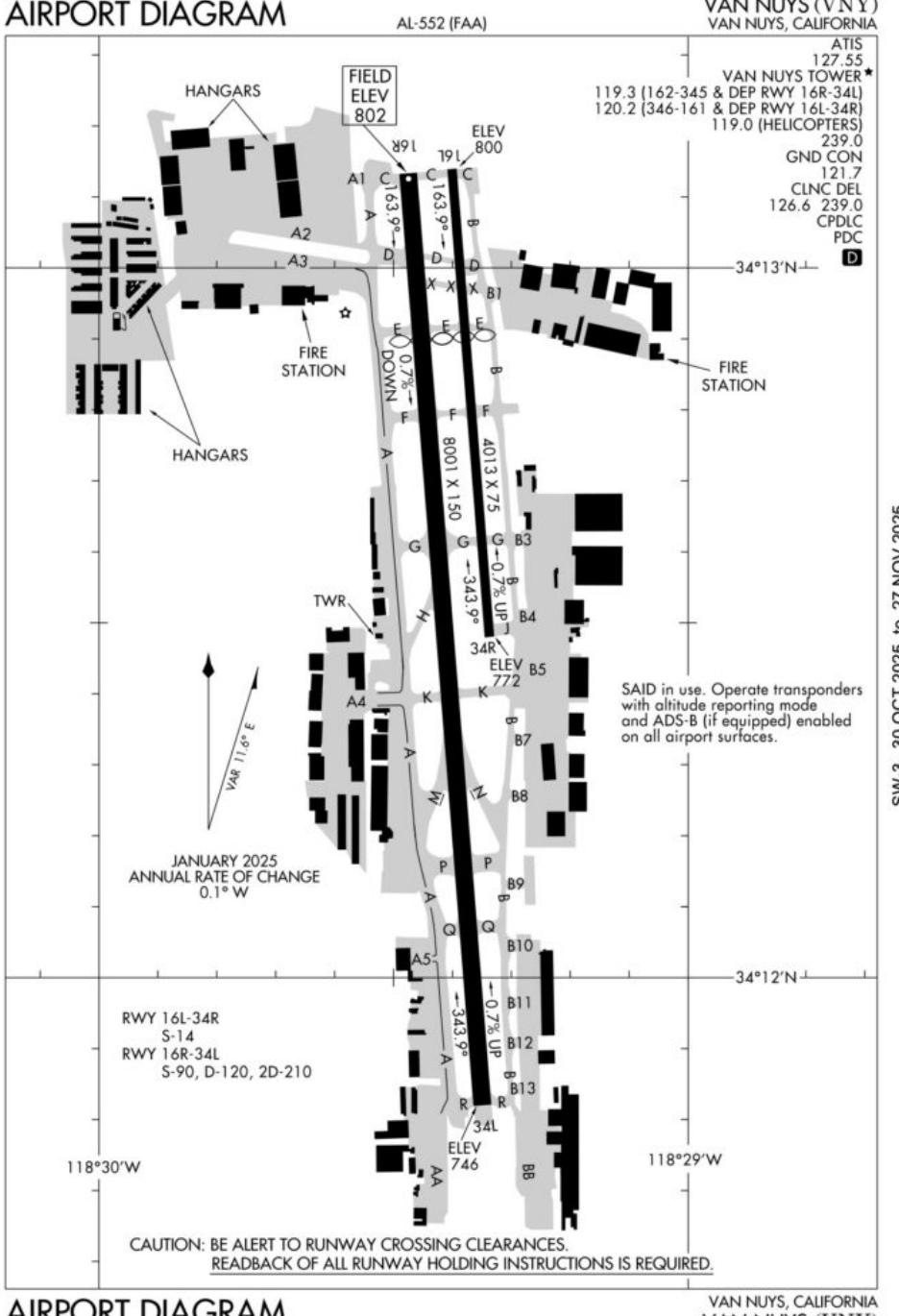
Dec. 23 through January 4th: No closures over the holiday period

From	To	Description
Jan. 4 th at 22:30 pm	Jan. 8 th at 06:00am	Full 80-Hour closure of 16R-34L from Sunday night through Thursday morning
Jan. 5 th at 22:30 pm	Jan. 9 th at 06:00 am	Full 80-Hour closure of 16R-34L from Monday night through Friday morning
Jan. 11 th at 22:30 pm	Jan. 15 th at 06:00 am	Full 80-Hour closure of 16R-34L from Sunday night through Thursday morning
Jan. 18 th at 22:30 pm	Jan. 22 nd at 06:00 pm	Full 92-Hour closure of 16R-34L from Sunday night through Thursday evening
Jan. 25 th at 22:30 pm	Jan. 29 th at 06:00 am	Four Nightly Closures (7.5 Hours each night) of 16R-34L: each night from 22:30 to 06:00.
Feb. 1 st at 22:30 pm	Feb. 5 th at 06:00 am	Four Nightly Closures (7.5 Hours each night) of 16R-34L: each night from 22:30 to 06:00.

Those big 80-hour closure blocks are the ones to really watch out for. They start Sundays at 2230 and end Thursdays at 0600 local time, so the **runway is effectively unavailable all day Mon/Tue/Wed** during those periods. You can check the airport advisories for any changes to these planned times (due to weather), but the easiest place to view them is the calendar on the airport website here.

25163

AIRPORT DIAGRAM



Based on the Notams available right now, **the short runway 16L/34R has no closures planned**. But watch out here – it's only 4000ft long, is limited to a single wheel configuration with a max weight of about 14000 lbs, so it will not be an option for most BizAv aircraft during the closures.



In terms of where else to consider, **KBUR/Burbank** and **KLAX/Los Angeles** are likely to be the main two contenders. We checked with the local handlers at both - no closure or restrictions are planned, so these should hopefully stay fully usable during the KVNY closures. Contact deets for both:

KBUR/Burbank

Hollywood Burbank Jet Center: csr@hbjetcenter.com

Atlantic Aviation: burfrontdesk@atlanticaviation.com

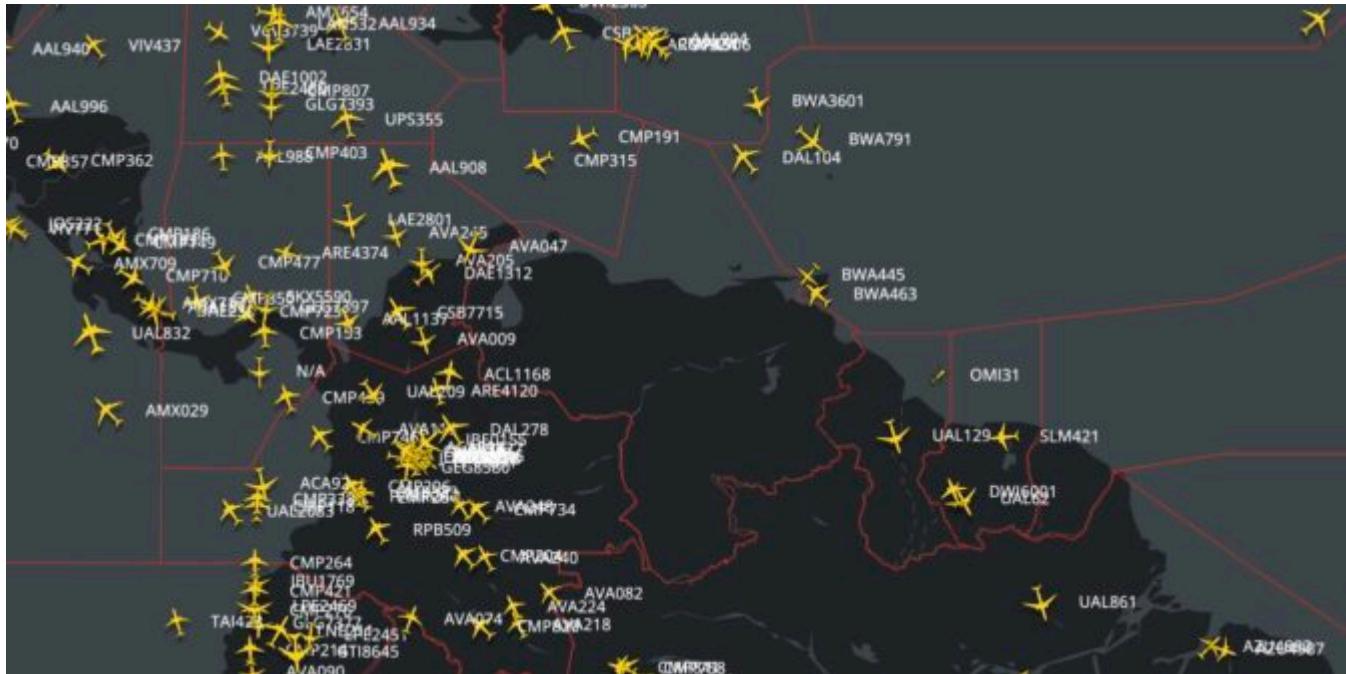
KLAX/Los Angeles

Signature Aviation: LAXFBO@signatureaviation.com

Atlantic Aviation: laxfrontdesk@atlanticaviation.com

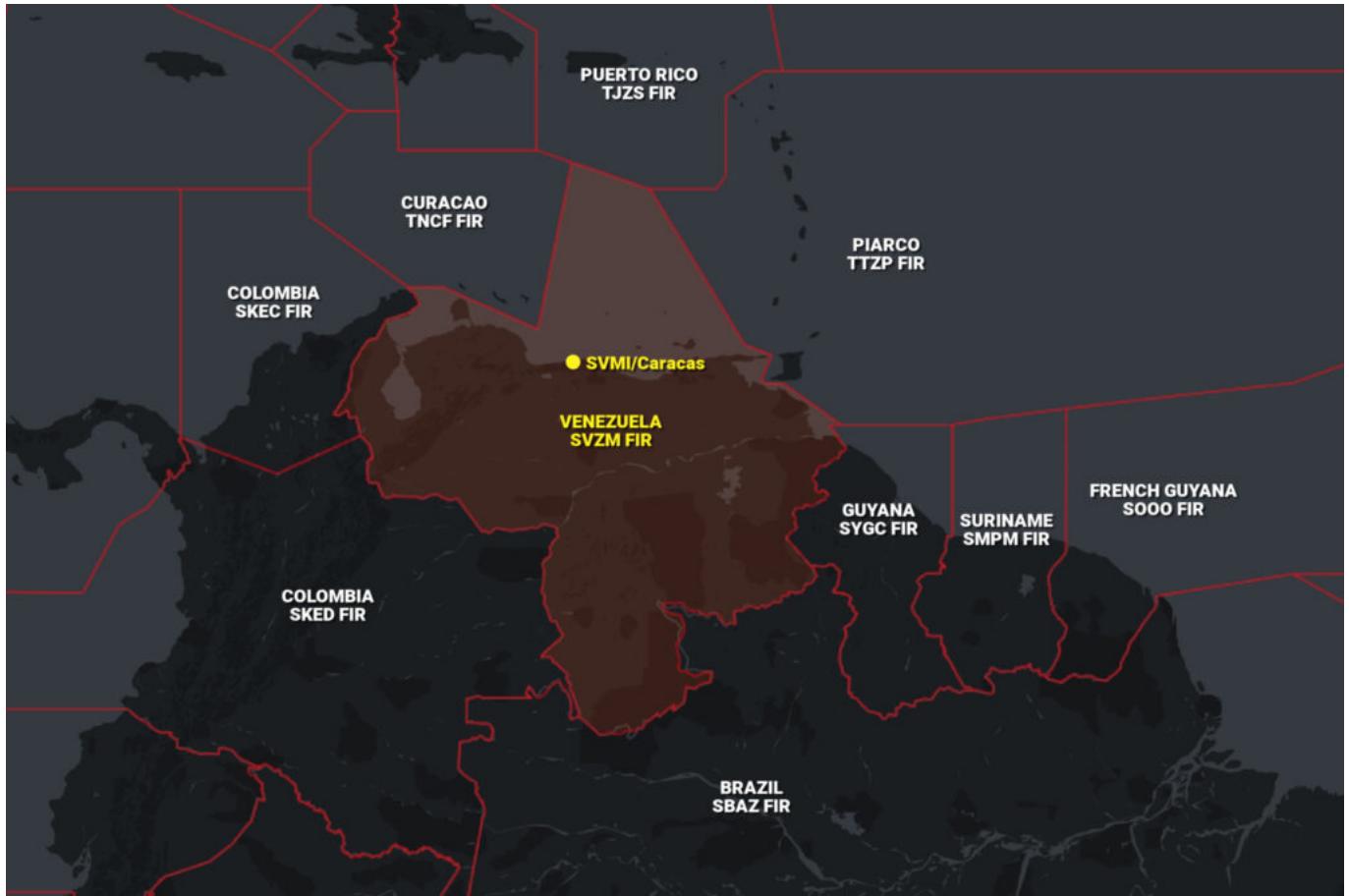
New FAA Airspace Warnings for Venezuela and Puerto Rico

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Key Points

- The FAA has issued new airspace warnings for both the TJZS/San Juan and SVZM/Maiquetia FIRs, following a sharp rise in state aircraft activity across the southern Caribbean.
- SVZM is the main concern: the FAA cites a worsening security picture, GPS interference, and increased Venezuelan military mobilisation, including air-defence capability that raises the overflight risk.
- Airlines have already suspended flights to Venezuela and are routing around the SVZM FIR via Colombia and neighbouring FIRs.
- Avoid SVZM unless absolutely necessary. The risk level for overflights is higher than usual.
- TJZS remains open, but expect more state traffic, occasional non-standard ATC coordination, and busier airspace as military activity increases near Puerto Rico.



Puerto Rico: New FAA warning for the TJZS/San Juan FIR

On 18 November, the FAA issued KICZ A0010/25, advising **extreme caution at all levels in the TJZS FIR because of an increase in state aircraft operations**. They don't say who these aircraft are, but the language almost always means military traffic that may not be working standard civil ATC.

That matches what's happening: more US reconnaissance, tanker and transport flights, plus a larger naval presence in nearby waters. The US has also carried out strikes on suspected drug-smuggling boats. Venezuela has publicly objected to the buildup, raising tension across the wider region.

For crews, the key point is that **TJZS may now see unpredictable state movements and non-standard ATC interactions**.

Venezuela: A much stronger FAA warning

On 21 November, the FAA issued the more serious KICZ A0012/25 for the entire SVZM FIR. It cites a **worsening security situation and increased military activity**, and requires 72 hours' advance notice from US operators planning to enter the FIR.

A0012/25 NOTAMN

Q) KICZ/QRDLD/IV/NBO/AE/000/999/

A) KICZ PART 1 OF 2

B) 2511211743

C) 2602192359

E) SECURITY...UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ADVISORY FOR POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS SITUATION IN THE MAIQUETIA FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (SVZM)

OPERATORS ARE ADVISED TO EXERCISE CAUTION WHEN OPERATING IN THE MAIQUETIA FLIGHT INFORMATION REGION (SVZM FIR) AT ALL ALTITUDES DUE TO THE WORSENING SECURITY SITUATION AND HEIGHTENED MILITARY ACTIVITY IN OR AROUND VENEZUELA. THREATS COULD POSE A POTENTIAL RISK TO AIRCRAFT AT ALL ALTITUDES, INCLUDING DURING OVERFLIGHT, THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PHASES OF FLIGHT, AND/OR AIRPORTS AND AIRCRAFT ON THE GROUND.

REFER TO THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION NOTICE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THREAT CONCERN FOR U.S. CIVIL AVIATION OPERATIONS IN THE Affected AIRSPACE AT https://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/us_restrictions.

Provide AT LEAST 72-HOUR ADVANCE NOTICE OF PLANNED FLIGHTS TO THE FAA AT FAAWATCH@faa.gov WITH SPECIFIC FLIGHT DETAILS.

REPORT ANY SAFETY/SECURITY INCIDENTS OBSERVED/EXPERIENCED WHILE OPERATING IN THE Affected AIRSPACE TO THE FAA'S WASHINGTON OPERATIONS CENTER AT +1 (202) 267-3333

F) SFC

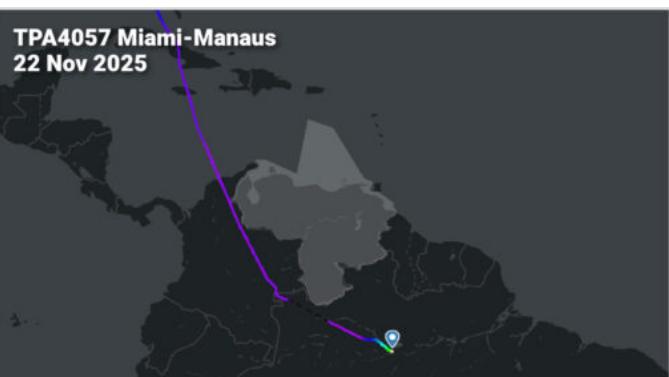
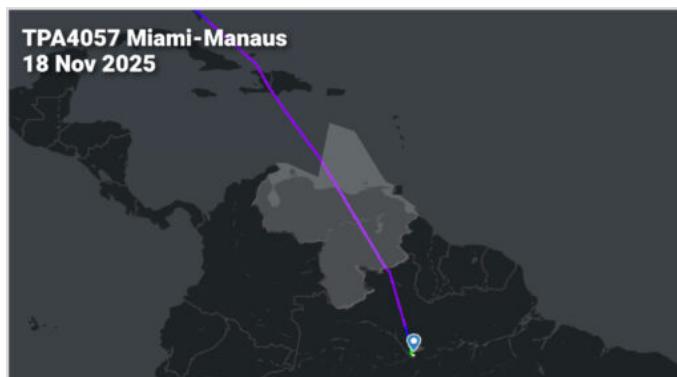
G) UNL

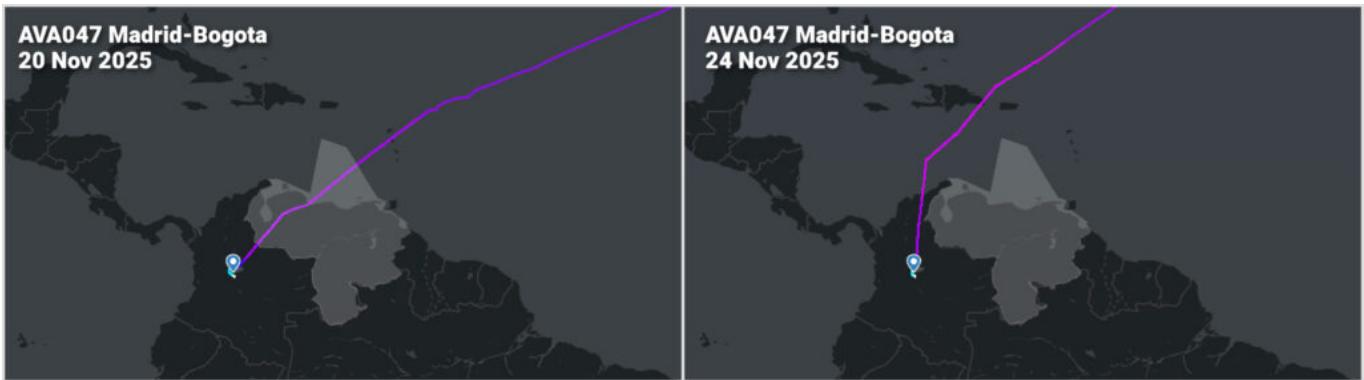
The FAA's Background Note backs this up: crews have reported **GPS interference** in the SVZM FIR with effects that can extend 250 nm from the source, and Venezuela has stepped up its military posture with **mass mobilisation and air-defence systems that can reach civil levels**. There's also a low-altitude risk from MANPADS. Venezuela isn't threatening civil aviation, but the overall environment means the **risk level for overflights is higher than usual**.

Spain and Portugal have also issued their own near-identical warnings for Venezuelan airspace. Both tell crews to avoid the SVZM/Maiquetia FIR until early December. They cite increased military activity, air-defence systems active at all levels, and poor coordination between parties in the area. This matches the FAA's view and adds **two more state recommendations to stay clear of Venezuelan airspace**.

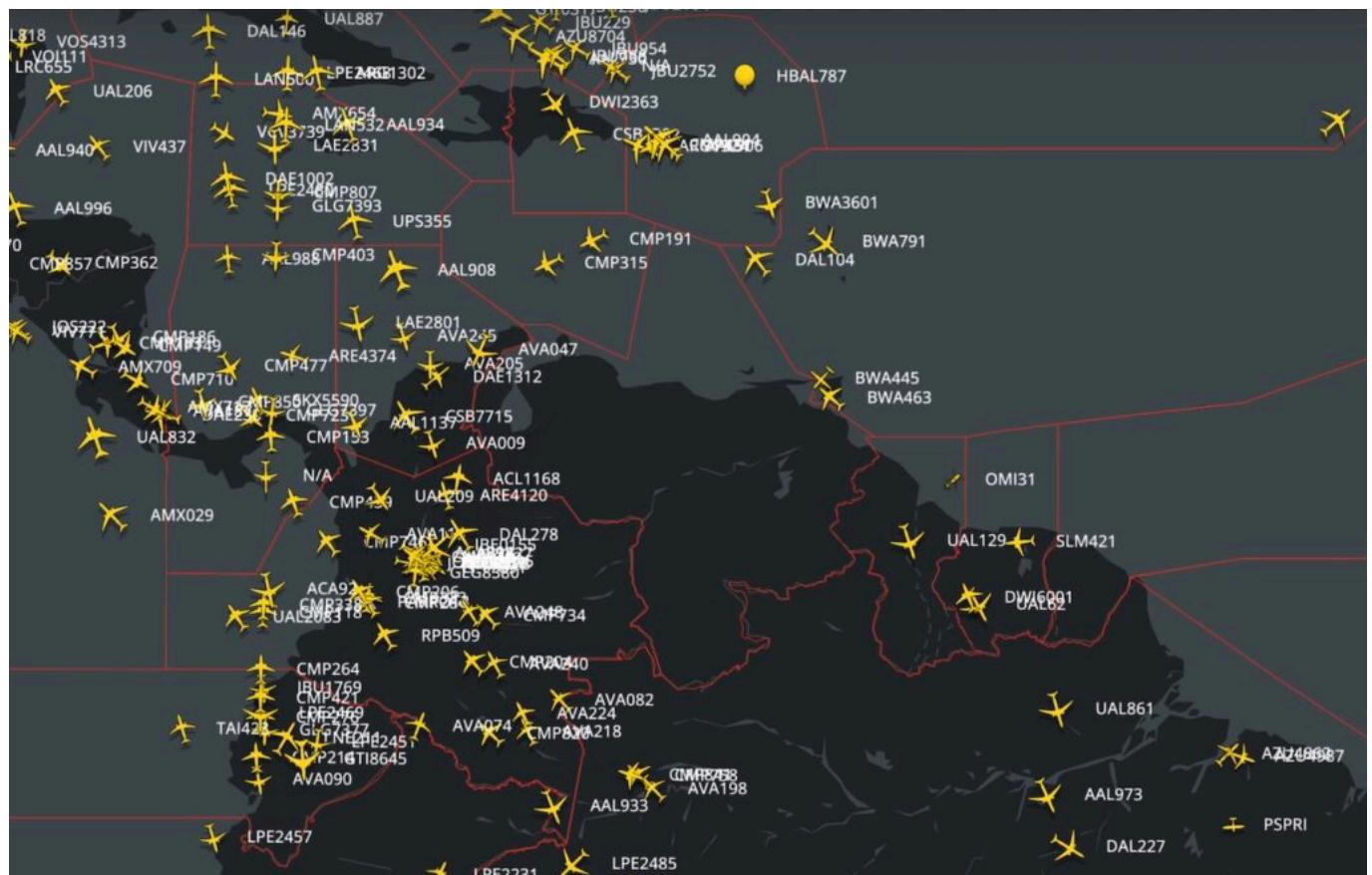
Airlines are already pulling back

In the past few days, several airlines have **suspended services to Venezuela** (the ones we know about so far: Iberia, Air Europa, Plus Ultra, TAP, LATAM, Avianca, GOL, Caribbean Airlines and Turkish Airlines).





It looks like most overflights are now adopting the same strategy: **avoid SVZM completely and route via Colombia or neighbouring FIRs**, rather than cut across Venezuelan airspace.



Venezuela's civil aviation authority INAC has announced that it revoked operating permits for six foreign airlines on 26 Nov 2025: Iberia, TAP Air Portugal, Avianca, LATAM Airlines Colombia, Turkish Airlines and GOL. INAC said the decision followed the airlines' move to suspend their services to and from Venezuela after recent air safety alerts issued by the US and Spain. IATA has urged the Venezuelan authorities to reconsider the move.

Why all this is happening

The FAA hasn't given a detailed explanation, but recent US military activity in the region gives plenty of context. Public reporting shows:

- The USS Gerald R. Ford carrier group and several destroyers off northern South America.
- USAF heavy bomber flights along the Venezuelan coast.
- Multiple recent strikes on suspected drug-smuggling boats.

- Venezuela condemning the buildup and calling the US presence a direct threat.

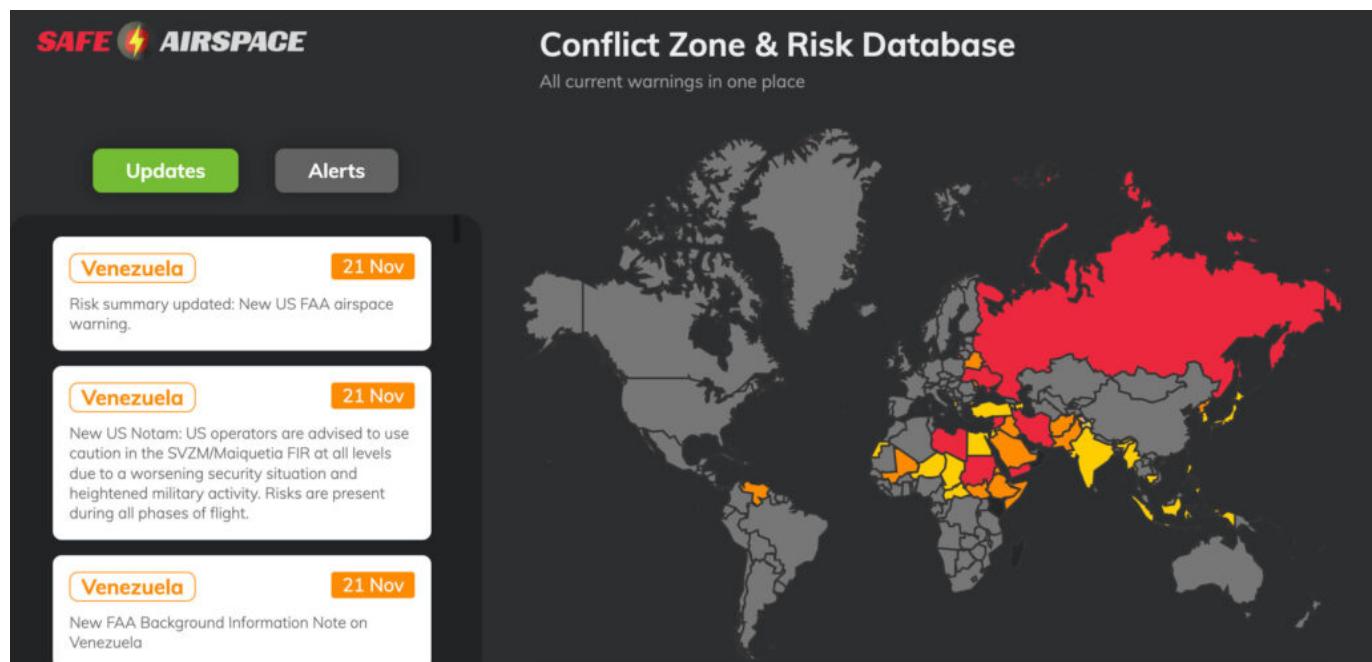
All of this is happening in airspace corridors used by civil traffic, which explains the new warnings.

What crews need to watch for

Three main things:

1. **GPS interference is active.** Crews have reported GNSS issues in SVZM with lingering effects after exit.
2. **Military traffic is up and less predictable.** State aircraft may not be on civil ATC, may appear without ADS-B, and may manoeuvre unexpectedly – particularly in TJZS and on the northern edge of SVZM.
3. **Avoid SVZM unless absolutely necessary.** Airlines are already doing this, and the FAA warning together with Venezuela's current military activity makes overflight risk higher than usual.

For more info on these airspace warnings, check safeairspace.net – our conflict zone and risk database. And if you have any info you'd like to share with us, please get in touch via news@ops.group.



Belgium airports impacted by another nationwide strike

David Mumford
9 February, 2026

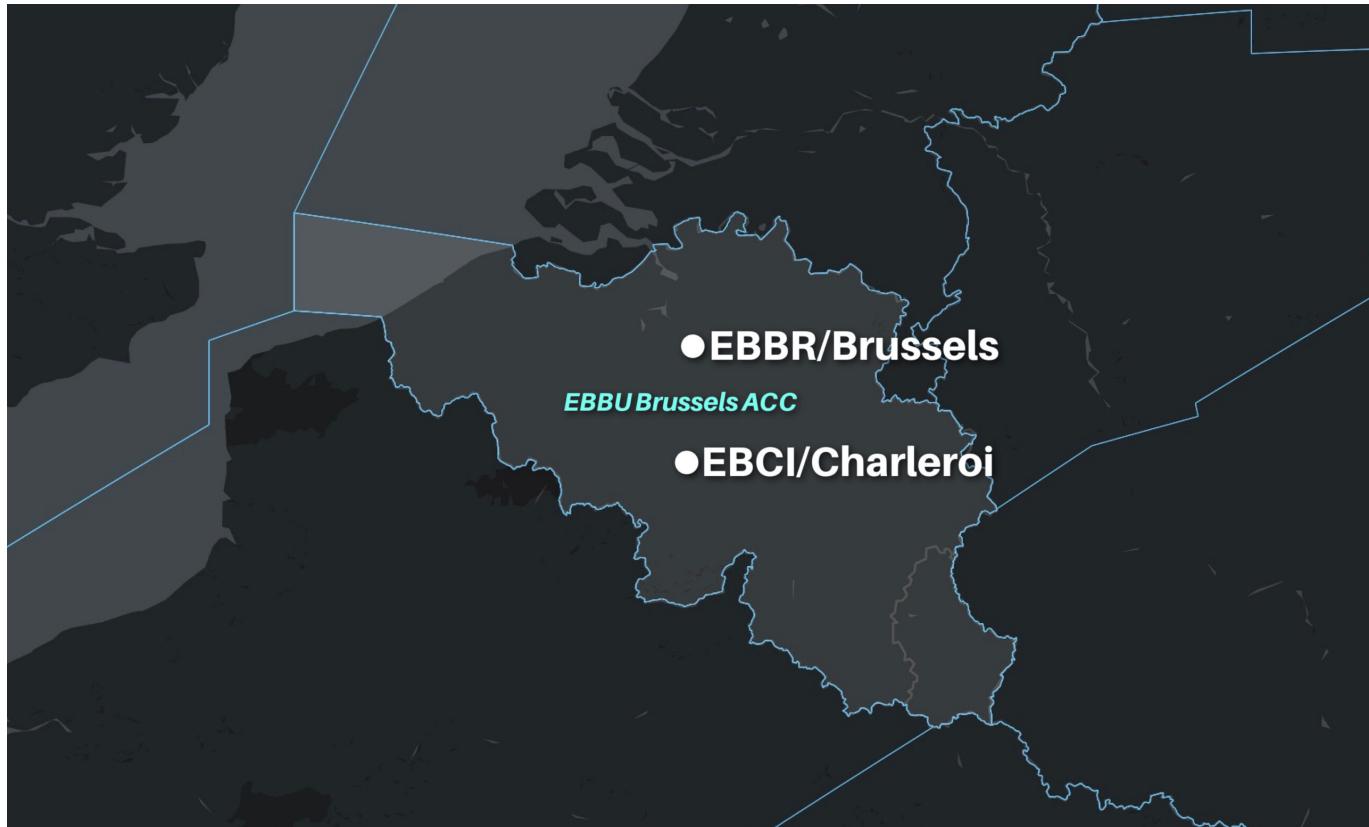


Another **nationwide strike is taking place in Belgium on Wednesday, 26 November**, and it is going to cause significant disruption at the country's main airports **EBBR/Brussels** and **EBCI/Charleroi**.

The last major strike on 25 June did not involve ATC, but airport operations were still severely disrupted. Airlines had to cancel all departures and in some cases arrivals at both EBBR and EBCI. BizAv at Brussels saw only minor delays to services, while at Charleroi availability was still being evaluated on the day.

For the upcoming strike on 26 November, the situation is similar in terms of airport staffing. However, **ATC has now been confirmed as fully operational**, so BizAv services should remain largely unaffected despite the wider airport disruptions.

In addition to flight disruptions, **significant delays to public ground transport are expected** across Belgium, affecting trains and local services. Plan for potential delays getting to the airport.



Here's what we currently know about the impact of the strike at the main airports:

EBBR/Brussels

Notam issued requiring airlines to cancel all departures that require passenger security screening:

A4394/25 - AD LTD DUE TO A NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION - FORCE MAJEURE. STAFFING LEVELS FOR MANY OPERATIONAL PARTNERS AT EBBR WILL BE SEVERELY IMPACTED. NO FLIGHTS ARE TO BE OPERATED WITH LOCAL DEPARTING PAX. TO AVOID MAJOR DISRUPTIONS, ALL AIRLINES ARE URGED TO REDUCE THEIR FLIGHT PROGRAM ACCORDINGLY. NO IMPACT ON GENERAL AVIATION

The airport has announced that **no departing flights requiring passenger screening will be possible**, as security staff will be fully involved in the strike. Only cargo flights, ferry flights without crew requiring screening, and transfer-only departures where passengers remain airside are expected to operate. Arrivals may still be possible, but airlines are advised to avoid overnight transits or pax needing re-screening.

For BizAv, the outlook is better. Local handlers report no expected disruption, as ATC will be operating normally throughout the strike.

Contact: hostess.belgium@execujet.com.

EBCI/Charleroi

The airport has confirmed a **full cancellation of both arrivals and departures on November 26 for airlines** due to strike-related staffing shortages:

A4385/25 - AD LTD DUE TO A NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL ACTION - FORCE MAJEURE, STAFFING LEVEL OF MANY OPR PARTNERS WILL BE SEVERELY IMPACTED. 100 PERCENT

REDUCTION FOR ARRIVING AND DEPARTING FLIGHTS IS REQUIRED. AIRLINES ARE REQUIRED TO CANCEL THEIR ARRIVING AND DEPARTING FLIGHTS IN THIS TIMEFRAME

All commercial flights will be cancelled for the day, but **BizAv should still be able to operate as ATC will be fully staffed**. Local handlers expect international BizAv movements to continue through the executive terminal.

Contact: general.aviation@charleroi-airport.com

US Shutdown Ends and FAA Lifts Flight Restrictions

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update Nov 17:

- The US shutdown is over and the FAA says it will end the emergency order at 0600 EST on Nov 17, which means the nationwide flight-reduction limits on the US NAS are being cancelled.
- That opens the door for airlines to get back to normal schedules. In fact, most of them had already started running full programs over the weekend because they expected the cuts to be cancelled. The system coped, but it will still need a bit of time to fully settle after weeks of strain.
- And the big news for BizAv: the Notams that shut out GA at the 12 major airports have now been cancelled, so access is open again.

Original story from Nov 11:

- **Congress passed a funding bill late on Nov 10 that's expected to end the shutdown once signed into law.**
- **The FAA hasn't lifted any of its traffic limits or BizAv bans yet, so everything below still applies until official guidance changes.**
- **ATC recovery won't be instant. Weeks of six-day schedules, long shifts, and financial strain have left facilities short-staffed. Even after the shutdown ends, it will take time for the FAA to rebuild staffing, lift flight-reduction orders, and restore normal capacity. Expect ongoing delays and flow programs in the meantime.**

ATC staffing shortages caused by the shutdown have already changed how the country's busiest airports are operating. Delays have surged, major metro areas are tightening up, and the FAA has put formal limits in place to keep traffic manageable. With the funding deal now in place, these measures should begin to unwind once staffing stabilizes – but for now, they remain fully in force.

These limits arrived in two steps:

Nov 7: An Emergency Order issued on Nov 7 **reduces airline traffic at 40 major airports** and gives the FAA the option to restrict BizAv flights when staffing becomes too thin.

Nov 10: A series of Notams went further, **temporarily banning most domestic BizAv flights at 12 of those same airports.** These Notams effectively strengthened the restriction powers created under the Emergency Order.

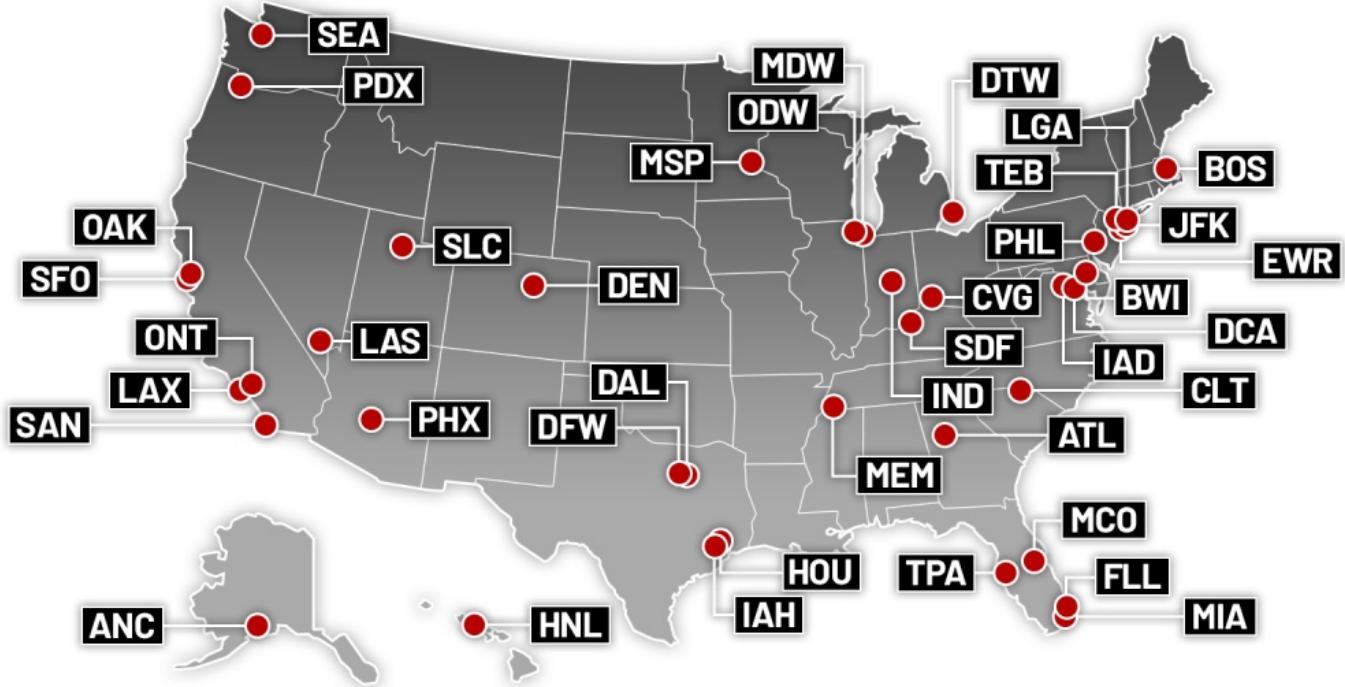
Confusing! Yes indeed. Finer details as follows...

The Nov 7 Emergency Order reducing airline flights at 40 airports

You can view this here.

This applies only to Part 121 airlines and to commuter or scheduled Part 135 carriers, (and for simplicity, let's just call these guys *airlines* for the rest of this article).

So, *airlines* must now reduce their scheduled domestic flights at 40 "High Impact Airports" during the daytime hours of 0600-2200 local. The reduction rises from 4% on Nov 7, to 10% by Nov 14.



On-demand Part 135 flights and private Part 91 flights are not part of the mandatory cuts (and again for simplicity, let's just call these guys *BizAv* for the rest of this article!)

The Order also gave the FAA the option to reduce BizAv activity at these airports if staffing levels drop further - which is what then happened with the Notam splurge on Nov 10! (see below for info on that)

The forty airports listed in the Emergency Order are:

- KANC/Anchorage
- KATL/Atlanta
- KBOS/Boston
- KBWI/Baltimore
- KCLT/Charlotte
- KCVG/Cincinnati
- KDAL/Dallas Love
- KDCA/Washington National
- KDEN/Denver
- KDFW/Dallas Fort Worth
- KDTW/Detroit
- KEWR/Newark
- KFLL/Fort Lauderdale
- KHNL/Honolulu
- KHOU/Houston Hobby
- KIAD/Washington Dulles

- KIAH/Houston Intercontinental
- KIND/Indianapolis
- KJFK/New York JFK
- KLAS/Las Vegas
- KLAX/Los Angeles
- KLGA/New York LaGuardia
- KMCO/Orlando
- KMDW/Chicago Midway
- KMEM/Memphis
- KMIA/Miami
- KMSP/Minneapolis St Paul
- KOAK/Oakland
- KONT/Ontario
- KORD/Chicago O'Hare
- KPDX/Portland
- KPHL/Philadelphia
- KPHX/Phoenix
- KSAN/San Diego
- KSDF/Louisville
- KSEA/Seattle Tacoma
- KSFO/San Francisco
- KSLC/Salt Lake City
- KTEB/Teterboro
- KTPA/Tampa

The Nov 10 BizAv restrictions at 12 major hubs

Three days later, the FAA issued a much stronger measure: **Notams at 12 major hubs that temporarily prohibit most BizAv flights** (ie. private Part 91 and on-demand Part 135). You can view the list of Notams [here](#).

These Notams apply only to airports already in the Emergency Order list, which shows they are a targeted escalation rather than a separate policy. Only based aircraft, emergency or public-service flights, or operations authorised by the ATCSCC may use these airports.

The twelve airports with these BizAv restrictions are:

- KORD/Chicago O'Hare
- KDFW/Dallas Fort Worth

- KDEN/Denver
- KBOS/Boston
- KIAH/Houston Intercontinental
- KATL/Atlanta
- KJFK/New York JFK
- KLAX/Los Angeles
- KEWR/Newark
- KPHX/Phoenix
- KDCA/Washington National
- KSEA/Seattle Tacoma

This means the FAA has used the BizAv-reduction authority provided in the Emergency Order and applied the most restrictive version of it at these 12 hubs. Instead of trimming activity, BizAv access has been mostly removed – for now.

The National Air Transportation Association (NATA) has since reported that the FAA told them these restrictions **only apply to domestic non-scheduled flights**. According to NATA, international Part 135 operations may still be approved with prior coordination through the FAA Command Center. This hasn't been formally confirmed, so treat it cautiously until the FAA issues official guidance.

Operational impact for BizAv

40 High Impact Airports: Although most BizAv flights are not part of the mandatory Airline reductions, they are still affected by the resulting compression. Expect more flow programs and occasional reroutes at the 40 High Impact Airports.

12 specific BizAv-restricted airports: Access is effectively unavailable for domestic flights unless you meet an exemption. NATA says international Part 135 operations may still be possible with prior coordination through the FAA Command Center, but this has not been formally confirmed. Surrounding satellite airports will likely absorb the displaced traffic, so expect parking shortages there too.

What happens next?

Now that funding's been approved, the shutdown should finally end – **but things won't bounce back right away**. The FAA still has to rebuild staffing, unwind the flight-reduction orders, and reopen the restricted airports.

It's a familiar story. During the 2018-19 shutdown, a single LaGuardia ground stop sparked nationwide delays and helped force a deal in Washington. This time, the same pattern has played out: rising ATC strain, mounting cancellations, and political pressure finally pushed Congress to act.

Expect a slow return to normal. **Delays, flow programs, and limited capacity will likely continue for weeks as the system stabilises**. We'll keep tracking Notams and any FAA updates to the Emergency Order as the situation evolves.

Uzbekistan: new ICAO codes, new transition levels

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



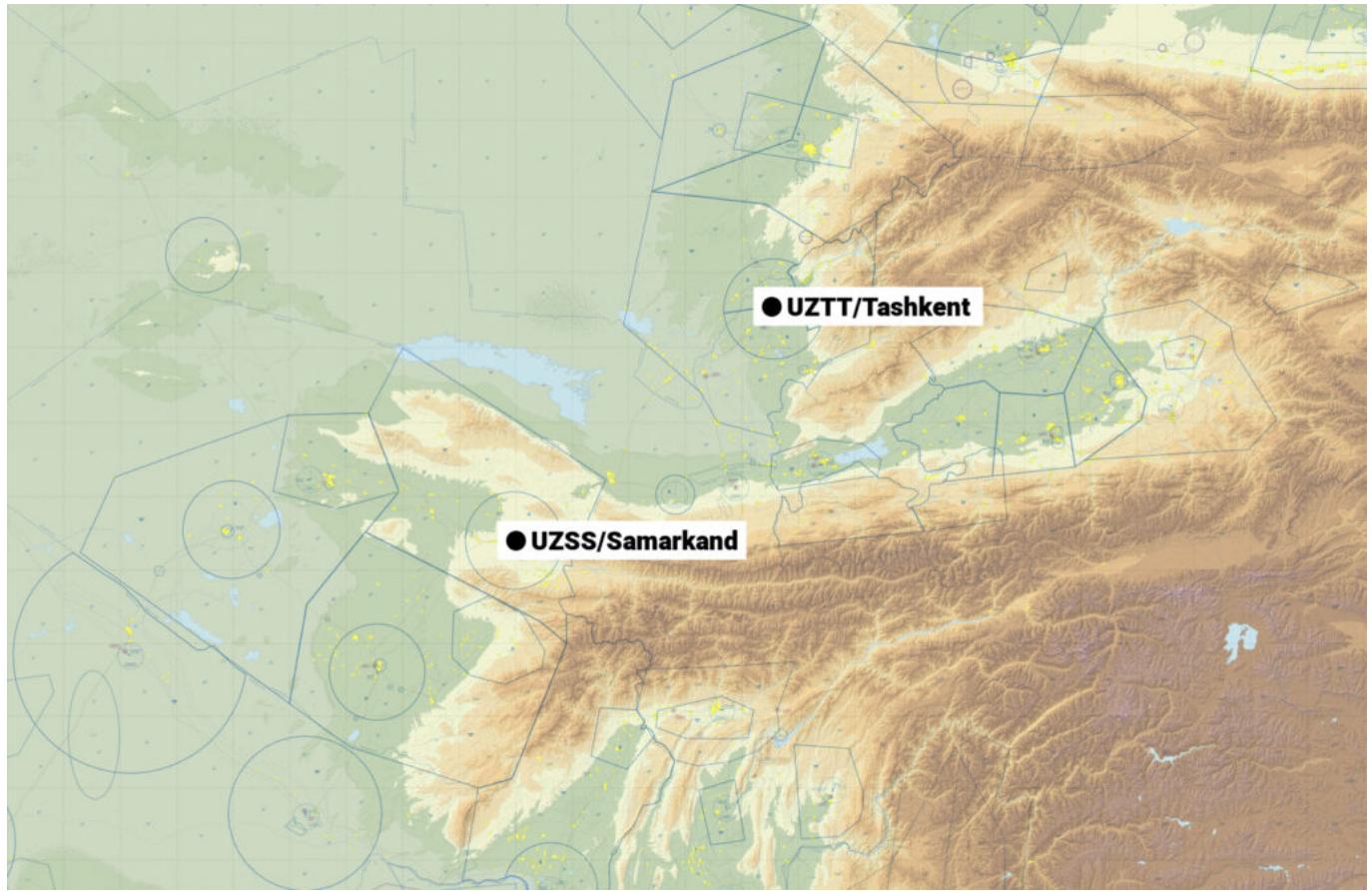
Some big changes came into effect in Uzbekistan on October 2. **The country has officially dropped its old “UT” ICAO prefix in favor of “UZ”.**

So the Tashkent FIR is now UZTR (was UTTR), and the Samarkand FIR is now UZSD (was UTSD). The same applies to all airports: Tashkent becomes UZTT, Samarkand is now UZSS, Bukhara is UZSB, and so on.

According to UzAeroNavigation, the national ANSP, this is part of a wider modernization effort - **giving Uzbekistan's airspace a clearer, more distinct identity** and moving away from the legacy Soviet-era “UT” codes.

At the same time, Uzbekistan has introduced a **unified transition altitude of 13,000 ft and transition level of FL150** (previously 6,000 ft / FL080), bringing it more in line with its Central Asian neighbors and hopefully making level changes at FIR boundaries a bit smoother.

The higher setting means crews will **stay on local pressure a bit longer when climbing out from airports like UZTT/Tashkent and UZSS/Samarkand**, which sit close to mountainous terrain - helping with altitude awareness until they're well clear.



Uzbekistan handles a steady stream of **east-west overflights linking Europe with China, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Japan**. These routes have become even more important since 2022, as many operators continue to avoid Russian airspace, routing instead through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan on their way to and from Asia.



One important heads-up: the new “UZ” ICAO addresses have been published, but they’re **not active for**

flight plan filing yet.

ENR 1.11-2
02 OCT 25

ADDRESSING OF FLIGHT PLAN MESSAGES

AIP
UZBEKISTAN

ACC РЦ	ADDRESS АДРЕС
1	2
TASHKENT FIR	UZTRZQZX
SAMARKAND FIR	UZSDZQZX

3.4 Aerodromes` ATS units (APP/TWR)

3.4 Органы ОВД аэродромов (APP/TWR)

APP/TWR APP/TWR	ADDRESS Адрес
1	2
TASHKENT TWR/APP	UZTTZTZX
ANDIJAN TWR	UZFAZTZX
FERGANA TWR	UZFFFTZX
NAMANGAN TWR/APP	UZFNNTZX
SAMARKAND TWR/APP	UZSSSTZX
TERMEZ TWR	UZSTTZX
KARSHI TWR	UZSKTZX
BUKHARA TWR/APP	UZSBTZX
URGENCH TWR/APP	UZNUUTZX
NUKUS TWR/APP	UZNNNTZX
NAVOI TWR	UZSAZTZX

For now, keep **using the old “UT” AFTN addresses for everything** — flight plans, messages, permits, and so on. For example, file to UTTRZQZX for the Tashkent FIR (not UZTRZQZX).

According to UZTR Notam D0922/25, the switch to the new addresses won't take effect until 29 Oct 2025, so stick with the old ones until then (or until further notice).

D0971/25 NOTAMN

Q) UZXX/QAFXX/IV/NBO/E/000/999

A) UZTR UZSD B) 2510020008 C) 2510292359

E) ALL OPERATIONAL REQUESTS AND CORRESPONDENCE(INCLUDING FLIGHT PLAN,
CHG,CNL,DEP/ARR,DLA,RQP/RQS,SLOT/CTOP,OVERFLIGHT PERMITS,NOTAM
REQUESTS,AIS/OPS QUERIES)SHALL BE ADDRESSED TO AFTN ADDRESSES WITH
PREFIX 'UT'(E.G.UTTTZDZX-ATFMU,UTTTYOYX-AIS/NOTAM).

EFFECTIVE 02 OCT 2025 00:01 UTC UNTIL 29 OCT 2025 23:59 UTC OR UNTIL
FURTHER NOTICE.

REF: AIRAC AMDT 05/25,EFFECTIVE DATE 02 OCT 2025.

Datalink in Europe: What Are The Rules?

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update - 29 Sep 2025

Eurocontrol has confirmed that from 4 Nov 2025, the IFPS (Integrated Initial Flight Plan Processing System) will **automatically reject any flight plans filed above FL285 unless CPDLC is filed correctly**.

IFPS is the central system that processes and validates all flight plans in European airspace. If your plan is filed incorrectly, it will be rejected, and **you won't be able to depart until the error is fixed**.

To avoid rejection:

- **If equipped:**
 - Field 10a: J1
 - Field 18: CODE/XXX (Mode S hex code)
- **If exempt from the mandate or CPDLC is unserviceable:**
 - Field 10a: Z
 - Field 18: DAT/CPDLCX

Important: Do not file both J1 and DAT/CPDLCX together, and do not leave both out. Either scenario will result in automatic rejection by the IFPS system.

Also important: You don't need to file either J1 nor CPDLCX if your requested level is below FL285.

Also also important: Eurocontrol has also advised separately that if CPDLC is unserviceable, you may continue to operate above FL285 for up to 10 days under MEL relief, provided the flight plan is filed correctly using DAT/CPDLCX. After this period, you must either fix the issue or operate below FL285.

Also also also important: On 4 Nov 2025, IFPS will be unavailable between 2100-0000 UTC for a system upgrade. The outage is expected to last about one hour, but up to two hours if a rollback is needed. During this time, no flight plans can be filed or validated, so submit plans in advance.

For the full Eurocontrol notes on this latest update, check [here](#).

Original Story - Key Points

- **There is a mandate for datalink EQUIPAGE for flights above FL285 throughout Europe. There are various different exemptions for this.**
- **This mandate only applies to aircraft with ATN datalink. If your aircraft only has FANS 1/A, you don't need to comply - but you also won't be able to get CPDLC across most of Europe.**
- **There are also some places where datalink LOGON is mandatory.**

Datalink in Europe can be bamboozling – multiple chunks of airspace, all in close proximity to each other, all with varying levels of operating capability when it comes to CPDLC. Plus there's a Logon List to consider. And a Datalink Mandate. And different considerations depending on what kind of datalink you've got onboard...

So here's a simple guide on how it all works, and what the rules are.

Explain it to me in three sentences

- You need ATN datalink for flights above FL285 in Europe (i.e. you need to have equipped aircraft and trained crews).
- If you don't have ATN datalink, but are exempt from the Mandate (as per one of the categories below), then you can still fly above FL285.
- If you don't have ATN datalink, but are not exempt from the Mandate, you can't fly above FL285.

Is there a Datalink Mandate in Europe?

Yes. The European Datalink Mandate is for **ATN datalink equipage for flights above FL285** throughout Europe. (Equipage – not necessarily for logon! More on that later...)

Is my aircraft exempt?

Quite possibly – many aircraft are exempt from the equipage mandate:

1. Aircraft with a certificate of airworthiness first issued before 1 January 1995.
2. Aircraft with a certificate of airworthiness first issued before 1 Jan 2018 and fitted prior to this date with FANS 1/A.
3. Aircraft with 19 seats or less and a MTOW of 45359 kg (100000 lbs) or less, with a first individual certificate of airworthiness issued before 5 Feb 2020.
4. Aircraft flying for testing, delivery or for maintenance purposes or with datalink temporarily inoperative (under MEL exemption).
5. Aircraft in this list (Annex I).
6. Aircraft in this list (Annex II) with a CofA issued before 5 Feb 2020.

You can find these rules and exemptions in this EU doc (updated in Sep 2023).

The Logon List

This is what you need to get registered on to get CPDLC service when flying in:

- **Switzerland**
- **Germany**
- **Maastricht UAC** (i.e. the upper airspace above FL245 over Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – one of Europe's busiest and most complex airspace areas.)
- **Poland**
- **France** (6 March 2025 for LFEE, LFMM, LFRR, LFBB / November 2025 for LFFF)



If you get your aircraft added to the Logon List, that means you'll be able to use CPDLC in these areas and will probably get better directs and faster climbs. However, if your avionics are **not eligible to be on the Logon List, ATC will not currently restrict you** to the flight levels below FL285.

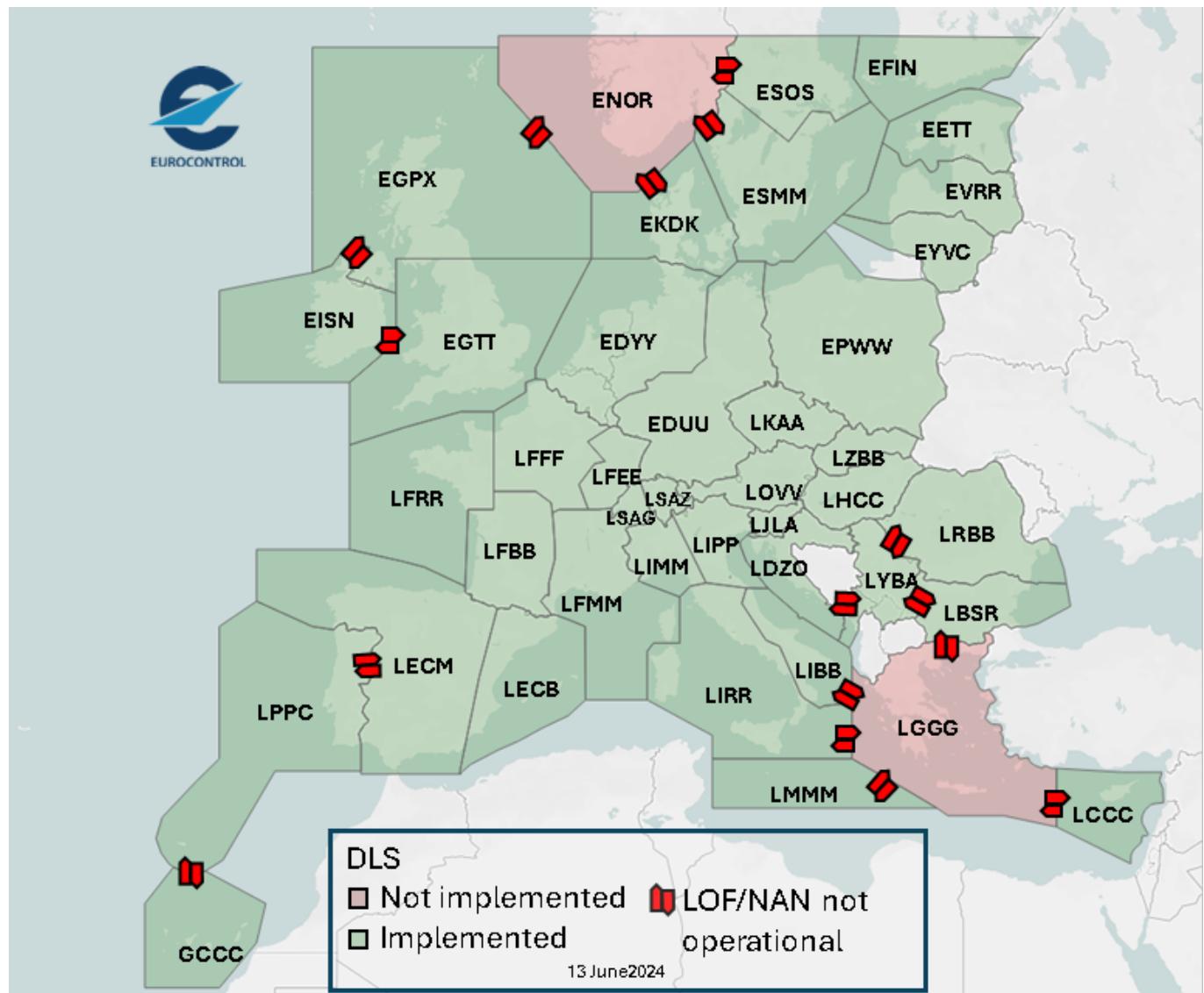
The Logon List is basically to ensure that aircraft with buggy avionics don't ruin the network for everyone else – including ATC.

For more info, including details of **how to get your aircraft registered on the Logon List**, check Eurocontrol's dedicated page [here](#).

Important to note: **the Logon List only applies to aircraft with ATN datalink – not FANS 1/A**. So essentially, if your aircraft only has FANS 1/A, you don't need to register – but you also won't be able to get CPDLC across most of Europe (*more on that below...*)

Where can I get CPDLC in Europe?

As of June 2024, these places:



For more info about which FIRs provide datalink, and at what flight levels, check [here](#).

Is CPDLC logon mandatory?

The European Datalink Mandate is for CPDLC equipage, not for logon.

But yes, provided you've got ATN CPDLC, there are some places where logon is mandatory ↓

Here's a running list of the places we know where logon is mandatory, in chronological order of when they implemented the rule:

- **Maastricht UAC** [EDYY] above FL245 (source: Eurocontrol) and **Karlsruhe UAC** [EDUU] above FL285 (source: Germany AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Cyprus** [LCCC Nicosia] above FL285 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Hungary** [LHCC Budapest] above FL285 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Finland** [EFIN Helsinki] above FL095 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)

- **Denmark** (EKDK Copenhagen] above FL285 (source: AIC 5/23)
- **Sweden** [ESMM Malmo, ESOS Stockholm] above FL285 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Romania** [LRBB Bucharest] above FL285 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Serbia and Montenegro** [LYBA Belgrade] above FL205 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Czech Republic** [LKAA Prague] above FL195 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **France** [LFFF Paris, LFEE Reims, LFMM Marseille, LFBB Bordeaux, LFRR Brest] above FL195 (source: AIC 10/23 and AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Switzerland** [LSAG Geneva, LSAZ Zurich] above FL145 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Slovakia** [LZBB Bratislava] above FL285 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Croatia** [LDZO Zagreb] above FL285 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Bulgaria** [LBSR Sofia] above FL215 (source AIRAC AMDT 5/24)
- **Slovenia** [LJLA Ljubljana] above FL285 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Poland** [EPWW Warsaw] above FL285 (source: AIP GEN 3.4)
- **Spain & Canaries** - coming at some point soon!

Recent News: Some Logon and FPL Filing stuff to watch our for! ↓

From Nov 2025: Flight plans in Europe above FL285 without J1 or DAT/CPDLCX will be rejected. This was advised by Eurocontrol in their Feb 27 webinar on datalink guidance for aircraft operators (you can watch the replay [here](#)).

From Oct 2024: MUAC have started reporting to the relevant NSAs those aircraft which don't comply with the requirement to file either J1 or DAT/CPDLCX in the FPL if filed above FL285. We heard this issue is especially true for bizjets - around half of which are capable but don't log on.

From July 2024: Eurocontrol started checking correct flight plan filing regarding CPDLC. Flight plans indicating J1 capability, but missing CODE/XXX in Field 18 will be rejected.

From Feb 2024: After some issues with the new LYBA logon code for Serbia and Montenegro which you can read about [here](#)) Eurocontrol started asking operators to make sure their aircraft avionics ATN addressing database is up to date, to include all the right codes as per the latest version of ICAO EUR Doc 028.

So what do I put in my FPL?

Got ATN datalink? Put **J1** in field 10a of the flight plan. Also put **CODE/XXX** in Field 18 – instead of the XXX you need to put your Aircraft/Mode S address in hex (e.g. CODE/A519D9).

Exempt from the Mandate? Put **Z** in field 10a and **DAT/CPDLCX** in field 18 of the flight plan. If you don't, ATC won't know you're exempt, and you may struggle to fly above FL285! (And remember – you should either file J1 or DAT/CPDLCX, not the two together. Flight plans with this wrong filing will be rejected).

Only got FANS 1/A? Read the section below! ↓

My aircraft only has FANS 1/A. What do I do?

Assuming you qualify for the first exemption to the Datalink Mandate we mentioned at the top of this post (aircraft with a certificate of airworthiness first issued before 1 Jan 2018 and fitted prior to this date with FANS 1/A), you don't need to comply with the Datalink Mandate, but you also won't be able to get CPDLC across most of Europe - ATC will talk to you on the radio instead.

The only bits of airspace in Europe where you can still get CPDLC using FANS 1/A are:

- **EGTT/London, EGpx/Scottish, EISN/Shannon FIRs.** *But be aware that in EGTT there is no automatic logon transfer from FANS1/A to ATN - ie. if you're flying from EGTT to EDYY and you are connected via FANS1/A to EGTT then you will have to log on again with EDYY.*
- **GCCC/Canarias FIR.**
- **LRBB/Bucaresti FIR.**

Everywhere else in Europe is only capable of working with ATN datalink. Note that in **Maastricht Upper Airspace (MUAC)** they say that dual-stack aircraft must be reconfigured to logon via ATN, and aircraft with only FANS 1/A will continue to be supported by conventional VHF.

So if you've only got FANS 1/A, here's what you put on your FPL:

In field 10a:

Put **Z** and one of the following -

J5 - If using SATCOM (Inmarsat) for CPDLC

J7 - If using SATCOM (Iridium) for CPDLC

In field 18:

DAT/CPDLCX

Download the Europe Datalink Quick Reference PDF

One page PDF of pretty much everything you need to know. Just click here.

Download the Eurocontrol CPDLC guidance docs

Eurocontrol's Operational Focus Group has published some new Datalink guidance docs for pilots, effective March 2025. These include tips on when and how to log on, uplink message handling, and other good CPDLC practices. There are separate docs with specific guidance depending on whether you're using Jeppesen, Lido, or Navblue EFBs. Download the PDFs below.



ENHANCE EFFICIENCY WITH CPDLC – YOUR ROLE MATTERS!

Recommended Practices for CPDLC in Europe

ATM in Europe faces capacity limits, resulting in departure & en-route delays.

Datalink is a key short-term capacity enabler in Europe.

Reliable CPDLC usage significantly improves ATC capacity.

Your participation and commitment is key!

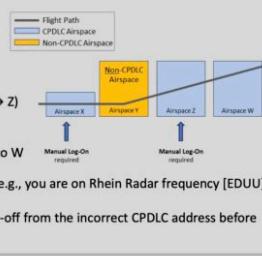
When to Log-On

- As soon as possible, considering your company's SOPs
- According to ICAO:
 - Prior to departure¹
 - At least 10 min prior to entering CPDLC airspace



When Is a Manual Log-On required?

- Upon entering the first CPDLC airspace (Airspace X, see image on the right)
- No automatic log-on handover occurs when passing through non-CPDLC Airspace (X → Y → Z)
- Therefore, a manual log-on is required upon entering Airspace Z
- Automatic log-on handover resumes from Z to W
- Note: An automatic log-on transfer may fail (e.g., you are on Rhein Radar frequency [EDUU], but CPDLC still shows Maastricht [EDY])
 - In this case, you need to manually log-off from the incorrect CPDLC address before logging on to the correct one



Uplink Message Handling

- Ensure closed loop understanding of CPDLC clearances.

- Execution of CPDLC clearances shall be done in accordance with your company's SOPs
 - e.g. waiting for the "Rcvd by ATC"/"Accepted" message may be required
- If ATC confirms a CPDLC clearance by voice, it may be due to a ground system alert generated by a missing CPDLC response message. This may be due to technical errors.
- ATC is monitoring the execution of your CPDLC clearance
- In general, any CPDLC clearance is valid until revoked or expired
- *Airbus only:* If the message is over 2 minutes old, confirm with ATC via voice before acting.
- *Newer aircraft (FANS-C) allow pilot responses even after ground timeout (120 seconds)*

Disclaimer: This document is for informational purposes only and does not replace official SOPs, OM-C and regulatory requirements. In case of discrepancies, the applicable SOPs, OM-C and regulations take precedence. Pilots are responsible for ensuring compliance with all relevant procedures.

Jeppesen – download PDF.

Lido – download PDF.

Navblue – download PDF.

Any more questions?

This EASA Q&A site is a good place to try.

Failing that, send us an email at news@ops.group, and we'll do our best to get it answered for you!

Shanwick Delays OCR Until Post-Summer 2026

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Big update on Shanwick's plans: they've now confirmed that **the move to the new Oceanic Clearance Removal (OCR) system won't happen until sometime after summer 2026**. That's a fairly significant shift, as earlier expectations were that it might roll out by the end of summer 2025.

Why the delay?

Over in Gander, when OCR went live last December, **things got messy**. Controller workload spiked as crews struggled with the new procedures — there were lots of extra radio calls, some confusion over routing, and even a few close calls that controllers had to step in and prevent. More on that here.

Shanwick has pointed to a **mix of factors behind the delay** — including their own operational complexities and the issues Gander has been dealing with since their rollout. Taking more time now gives them a chance to refine the process and avoid similar issues when they do eventually make the switch.

So, let's have a **nice clear set of steps to follow** — depending on whether you headed east or west over the NAT...

Going eastbound via Gander

1. Send your RCL 60-90 mins before the OEP via ACARS (it's for ATC planning only, no clearance will be issued!)
2. *May 5 - Dec 31, 2025: Note that any route changes before oceanic entry will be given by VHF voice when in Gander airspace. Moncton and Montreal will continue to issue CPDLC UM79 route amendments.*
3. Don't request an Oceanic Clearance — there isn't one here anymore.
4. Maintain your domestic cleared level unless ATC assigns a different one.
5. Once in Oceanic airspace, expect further changes via CPDLC or HF.

If Gander isn't issuing Oceanic Clearances anymore, why send an RCL? This may very well be the crux of the mass pilot confusion experienced so far. The answer: the RCL is now just a planning tool — you're not asking for permission, only notifying them, because they still need your exact routing and timing to safely manage traffic. You continue to fly your last assigned domestic route and level unless ATC

gives you a change. The confusion comes from the wording: no Oceanic Clearance is issued, but notification is still required.

Going westbound via Shanwick

1. Send your RCL or make a voice clearance request 90-30 mins before the OEP.
2. You'll receive your Oceanic Clearance by ACARS or voice.
3. Fly the Oceanic Clearance.

Also note that if entering Shanwick from another Oceanic area, no clearance is needed from Shanwick.

We *think* we got all that right. If not, let us know please! news@ops.group.

And if you're still confused about OCR, check this post.

NAT Forecast: No more RCLs?

There's also an interesting twist that could change how flights work across the NAT in the longer term. We're hearing talk that some North Atlantic ANSPs are looking at **removing the RCL process completely** at some point in the future.

That would be a huge change, **bringing oceanic ops much closer to domestic ones**. No more sending RCL messages ahead of the Oceanic Entry Point, no more extra steps — you'd just fly your filed plan unless ATC issues a change.

But this is still very much in the idea stage. It would need to go through ICAO groups and international working groups to figure out all the technical and procedural details, and there are plenty of hurdles to clear before it could actually happen.

For now, it's just something to keep an eye on, as Shanwick and other ANSPs continue to refine how oceanic traffic is managed.

New APIS Rules for Mexico

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update: 24 Sep

We've heard from OPSGROUP member reports that some operators and handlers in Mexico are seeing lots of different interpretations of this new rule, and the way it's applied can vary from one airport to another (sometimes even between officials at the same airport!). This article is simply based on the official rules as published by the authorities.

Our advice is this: always comply with the published requirements (as outlined below). APIS manifests go to Immigration HQ in Mexico City, so stick to the official standard. If an airport asks for less, that's fine — but still meet the full rules.

Original Story: 17 Sep

Watch out for revised APIS requirements in Mexico starting from 17 Sep 2025. A new two-step submission process will apply to all private and charter flights:

1. **First submission** – within two hours before departure, for both inbound and outbound flights.
2. **Second submission** – a confirmation of pax on board, sent after doors close and before takeoff.

There's been some word on the street that the second submission only applies to commercial flights, not private ones. However, the published rule in the federal register makes no such distinction — it clearly applies to **all international flights, both commercial and private**.

That said, in practice, some airports may be handling private flights a bit differently, which could explain why operators are hearing mixed messages. But while enforcement may vary locally, the official requirement remains **two submissions for everyone**.

For more info on this new rule, including the details on fines for getting it wrong, check [here](#).

Submitting Mexican APIS

There are three ways to do it:

- **Option 1 - ARINC:** According to Mexican Immigration APIS regulations, ARINC is the only authorized vendor for submitting manifests. You can set up an account directly and submit through their portal.
- **Option 2 - Email:** You can email a completed Excel spreadsheet to apisinm@inami.gob.mx. The most recent official guidance we've located on how to complete the Excel file can be found [here](#).
- **Option 3 - Third Party:** Some service providers can handle the process for you. Depending on the provider, they may submit directly via their ARINC account or by emailing the Excel file on your behalf.

Beware the Email Option!

Whether you send the email yourself, or a third party does it for you — watch out.

This email option is limited to **four trips to/from Mexico per year**. Beyond that, you'll need to use ARINC (either directly or a through a third-party service). Some operators have reported receiving emails from Mexican Immigration confirming this four-trip cap.

Another important difference: **when you submit through a dedicated ARINC portal, you get an immediate response** — either confirming that your Excel file was successfully uploaded or flagging errors that need to be corrected and re-submitted.

With the public email address, your message simply gets forwarded to ARINC's system, but no response is sent back. This means you won't know if your submission was accepted, rejected, or never received — **essentially, you're transmitting blind, which increases the risk of things going wrong!**

A Brief History of Mexican APIS Headaches

Nov 2012: Mexico introduced the APIS requirement, and for years a simple Excel file emailed to Immigration was enough for compliance. This worked smoothly until a new government ended that option, requiring all operators to use the ARINC template and portal instead. Since then, enforcement has tightened and compliance has been more strictly monitored.

Oct 2023: Mexican Immigration began sending circulars to international airports, reminding officers about APIS rules and instructing them to warn private operators to comply or face penalties. More circulars followed through May 2024, with increasing emphasis on enforcement. Immigration also confirmed they can monitor APIS submissions on the ARINC server to check for accuracy and timeliness.

Feb 2024: By February, fines were being issued to private operators. Some were due to manifests submitted through third-party apps that never showed up on the ARINC server, while others involved manifests sent via the central email address but not received in the system. This created confusion, and at some airports, officers started asking operators to email copies of their Excel spreadsheets directly — raising concerns about sensitive passenger data being shared through insecure channels. *Mexican Immigration headquarters later clarified that this extra step isn't necessary if you've submitted correctly using ARINC, direct email, or a third-party service.*

Mexico Ops: Other Recent Updates

Check below for more info on Mexico ops:

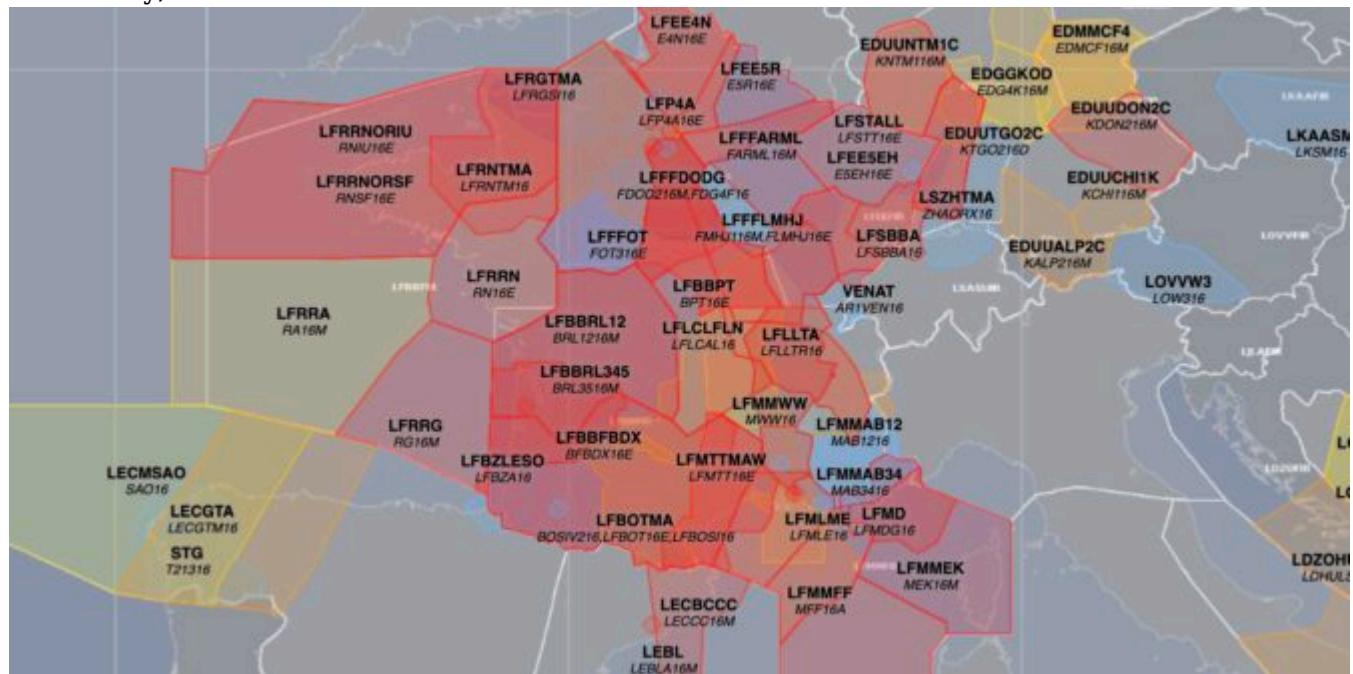
- **June 2024:** New guidelines for landing permits are causing confusion for both private and commercial flights.

- **Jan 2024:** Recent changes to the permit procedures in Mexico are causing stress and delays.
- **June 2023:** A look at some of the long-standing challenges affecting General Aviation ops to Mexico.

Thanks to Rick Gardner of CST Flight Services for this article. CST Flight Services provides a wide range of international trip support services in Mexico and beyond. You can contact them for more info at: customersvc@cstflightservices.com

French ATC Strike: Sep 18

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update 17 Sep 2025

- France's main ATC union SNCTA has called off its Sep 18 strike, but other unions are still striking.
- The strike will run 0400z Sep 18 to 0600z Sep 19 (per LFFF Notam F1302/25).
- Morning will be worst affected, especially LFMM/Marseille ACC east sectors, with delays expected to improve later in the day. LFFF/Paris ACC will see some regulations, but no major network-wide disruption expected there.
- LFSB/Basel will have very limited capacity. LFBL/Limoges will be closed all day. LFBE/Bergerac and LFTW/Nimes may partially close depending on staffing levels.
- Eurocontrol has disabled certain route restrictions and opened additional routings to help manage traffic flow, including via Italy for LFMN/Nice departures and arrivals, and special routings over DTTC/Tunis and DAAA/Algeria FIRs. Check Eurocontrol's Mitigation Plan for more info.

- The next planned French ATC strike is Oct 7-10, expected to cause major disruption.

How to survive a French ATC strike

Each French ATC strike is different, but there are some things that are pretty much the same every time. **Here is what you need to know, in order to survive!**

What happens?

There's a normal pattern to French ATC strikes – controllers who are unhappy about a range of issues (mainly salaries and labour reforms) announce they plan to go on strike, Eurocontrol puts a plan in place to mitigate the disruption as best as possible, and airlines start cancelling flights – sometimes voluntarily, other times under the instruction to reduce their schedules.

So let's break that down a bit...

How do strikes get announced?

Often on the Notams, to start with. And the Notams that get published prior to these strikes are often fairly similar, and tend to be a bit vague. That's because they never know exactly how many staff will go on strike until the day itself, when they look around the control room and count the number of empty seats.

Then what happens?

Eurocontrol tell us about the Notams – in the “Network Headline News” section at the top of the NOP website.

Then they start figuring out **what they think the impact will be**. They normally host a teleconference or two, where a bunch of their ATC personnel jump on a call with airlines and other interested parties to discuss what they think will happen.

Then they publish a **“Mitigation Plan”**. This tells you:

- Their best guess of how bad the strike is going to be
- What to expect for flights to France
- How best to avoid French airspace.

The big day arrives... it's strike time!

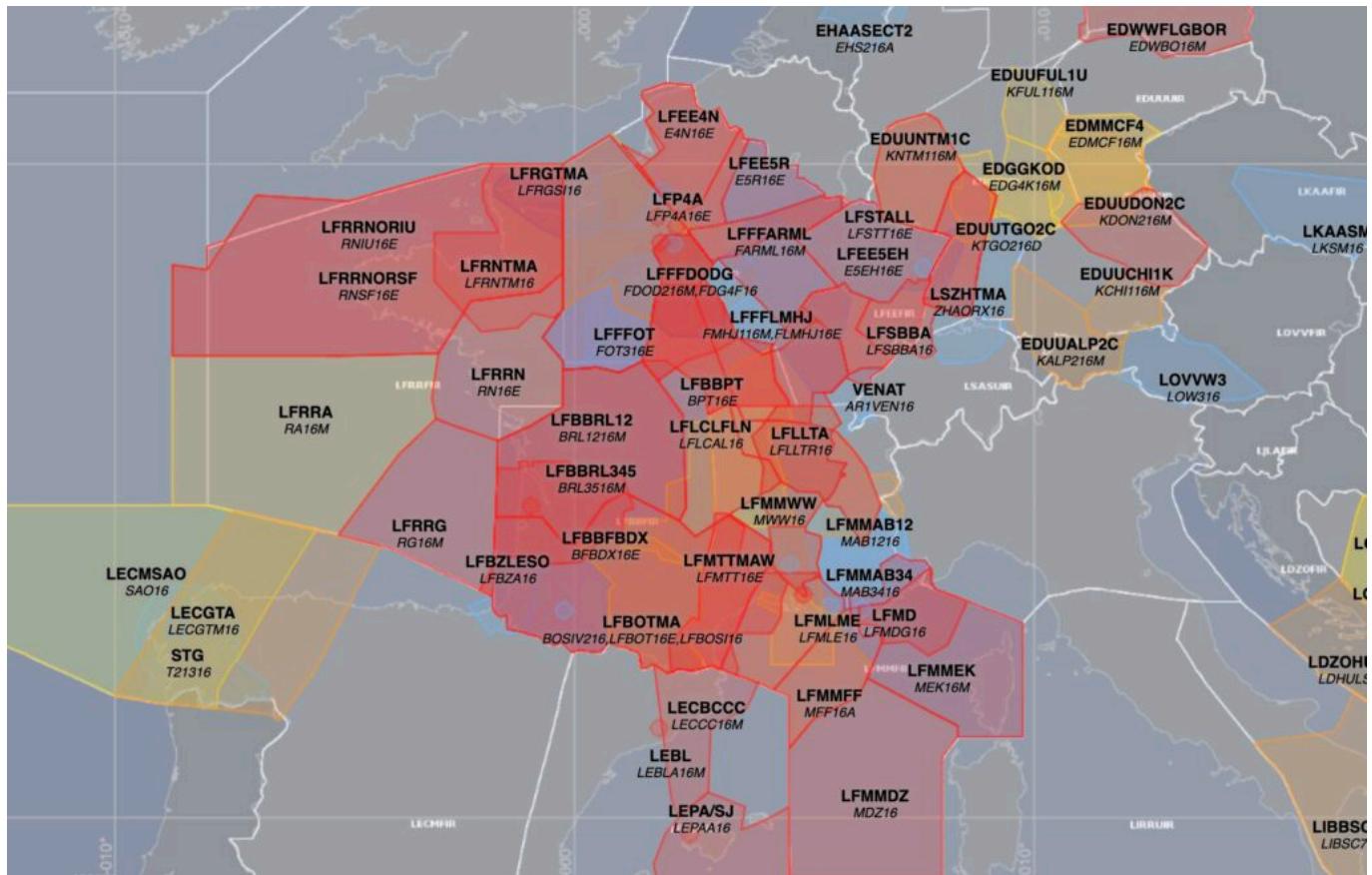
Smaller airports – These tend to have the harshest restrictions applied, often with periods where no ATS services are provided at all.

Bigger airports – During the really big strikes, the larger airports can get hit pretty hard too, and when Notams start getting published saying “MINIMUM SERVICE”, that's when you know that things are getting serious – as that basically means that only 50% of FPLs are being accepted (the absolute minimum allowed under French law, regardless of whether or not a strike is taking place).

Impact – The airlines will often be told to cut their schedules at the big airports. For the rest of us, **expect delays if flying to airports in France as well as for French overflights** – because unlike most other countries in Europe, when French ATC goes on strike, there's no special exemption for overflights!

French ATC strikes may also impact French overseas territories – so keep an eye on the Notams at

the likes of NTAA/Tahiti, SOCA/Cayenne, TFFF/Martinique, TFFR/Pointe a Pitre, FMEE/La Réunion, and FMCZ/Mayotte airports as well as those in France.



Where to look for live updates?

For real-time updates of any airspace issues once the strike has started, keep an eye on the **"Tactical Update"** section of the NOP, as well as this **French ATC webpage**: <https://cdm.dsna.fr/>

For smaller airports, best **check the Notams directly**, as they might get forgotten about in the deluge of information that gets published and endlessly updated for the other larger airports.

Routing around French airspace

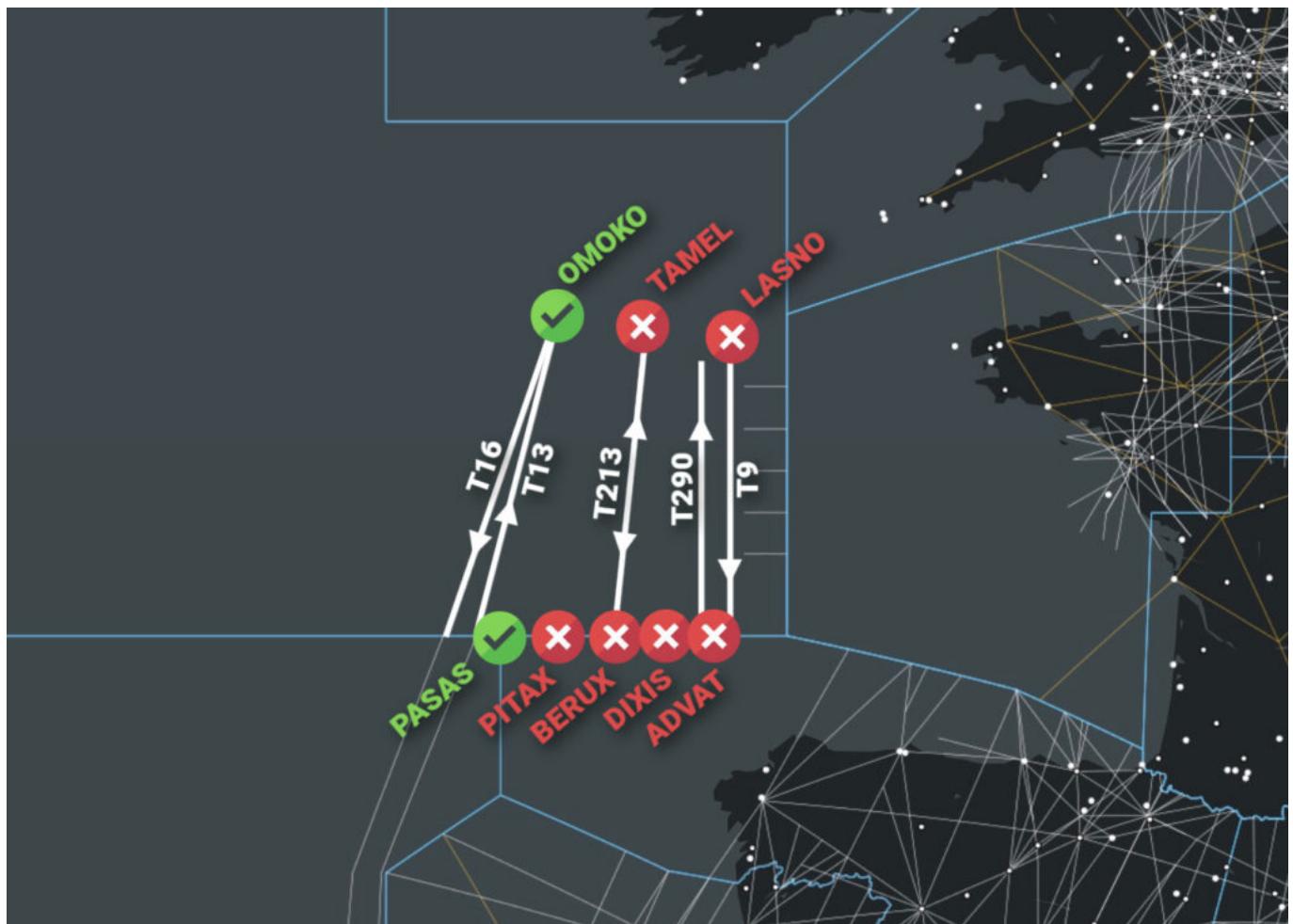
The Mitigation Plan should be your first port of call here. Make sure you're checking the latest version. It will tell you what to do!

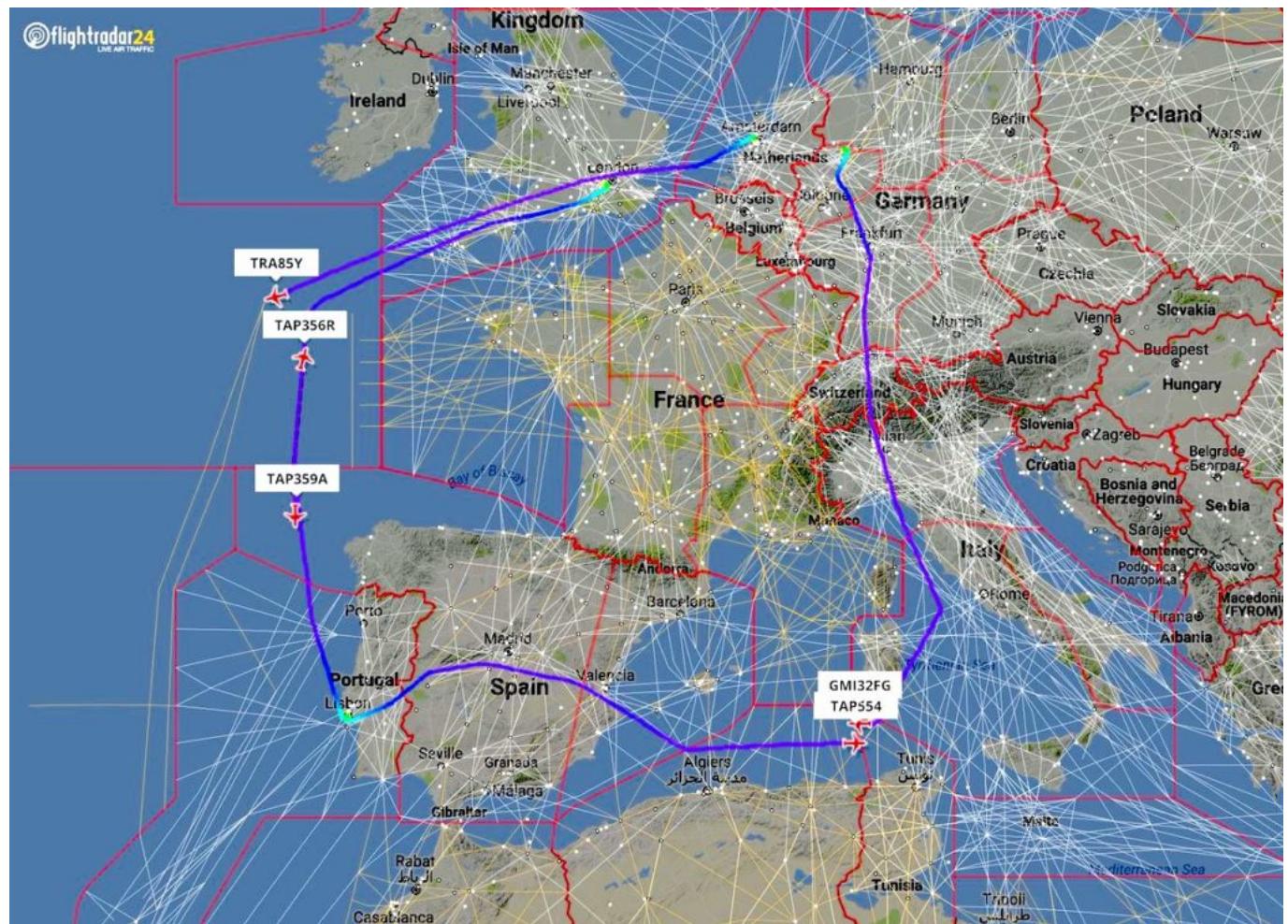
Here's what it normally says, every time:

- **Tango Routes** are subject to higher than normal demand when strikes are on. Flights intending to route to/from Canaries, Madeira and mainland Portuguese and Spanish destinations via the Shanwick Oceanic Control Area (OCA) are usually requested to flight plan via published routes T9, T213 or T16. During the strike period, ATC normally won't let you cross from one Tango Route to another.
- **Tunisia** allow overflights without the need for an overflight permit.
- **Algeria** allow scheduled commercial flights to overfly its airspace without a permit, but all other flights must have one.
- For routes through Tunisia/Algeria, check the Mitigation Plan for the permitted routings. And

make sure to add the right AFTN codes on flight plans! That means as well as filing your FPL to the normal Eurocontrol addresses, you must also include those for Algeria (DAAAZQZX) and Tunisia (DTTCZQZX and DTTCZRZX) – and make sure these are included for any subsequent DLA messages as well.

- **Shanwick** always publish something on the NOP telling us what entry points to use for NAT crossings. For westbound NAT crossings heading over the central Atlantic (rather than the NAT Tracks up north), they normally want us to file via OMOKO (or west of) or PASAS in order to best avoid all the extra traffic on the Tango routes. If you're entering the Shanwick OCA, you must have HF radio. And for oceanic clearance during the strike, you need to make sure you request your oceanic clearance 40 minutes before entry to the ocean.





New Rule for Qatar Overflights

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update - Sep 10:

Not directly related to this article, but thought we'd mention it here for the next few days just FYI!

Ops Alert - Sep 10: So far the Israeli airstrike in Qatar on Sep 9 has not triggered major disruptions in adjacent FIRs. There are no new airspace restrictions to report, and OTHH/Doha is operating normally. Flight tracking indicates that major airlines are still overflying Qatari airspace. Despite this, continue to monitor the situation closely. The diplomatic response to this event is still unfolding - sudden airspace closures are possible if the situation escalates.

Original story - Sep 9:

The Doha FIR might be small geographically, but it's strategically important. A huge chunk of regional traffic passes through here, especially flights heading between the UAE and Europe that want to avoid Iranian airspace.

And now there's a new rule: if you're flying in the northern portion of the OTDF/Doha FIR, you need to submit a flight notification if you plan to use certain offshore routes.

3.6 APPLICATION FOR OVERFLYING TRAFFIC

3.6.1 If an operator intends to perform a non-scheduled flight for the purpose of transit across (overfly) territory of the State of Qatar, it is necessary to obtain prior overflying permission from the QCAA at least forty-eight (48) hours before the intended flight takes place.

3.6.2 Such applications or requests shall be submitted through the online web portal available at the official website: <https://caa.gov.qa/en/non-scheduled-flights-service>. All applications/requests must include the following information:

- a. Name of the operator
- b. Flight number/callsign
- c. Purpose of flight
- d. Nature of cargo
- e. ATS route with entry/exit points of Doha FIR, flight level and timings in UTC
- f. Billing details including the contact address and the relevant email address.

3.6.3 Operator shall follow the requirements of flight plan as prescribed in [ENR 1.10](#) and [ENR 1.11](#). Operator shall ensure that operator name is included under "OPR/" in item 18 of ATC Flight Plan.

← 3.6.4 If an operator intends to conduct a non-scheduled flight for the purpose of transiting (overflying) the Doha FIR (outside the territory of the State of Qatar), the operator must submit the flight details to the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) prior to flight operations. This should be done through the online web portal using the "Flight Notification" service available on the official website: <https://caa.gov.qa/en/non-scheduled-flights-service>. Upon submission, the QCAA will acknowledge receipt of the flight details.

← 3.6.5 Such operator shall follow the flight plan requirement as mentioned at GEN 1.2 [subsection 3.6.3](#).

These routes don't require permission to fly – that hasn't changed – but you do now **need to tell Qatar CAA in advance that you're going to be there**. The notification is submitted through the QCAA's online portal, the same place you'd normally go for overflight permits.

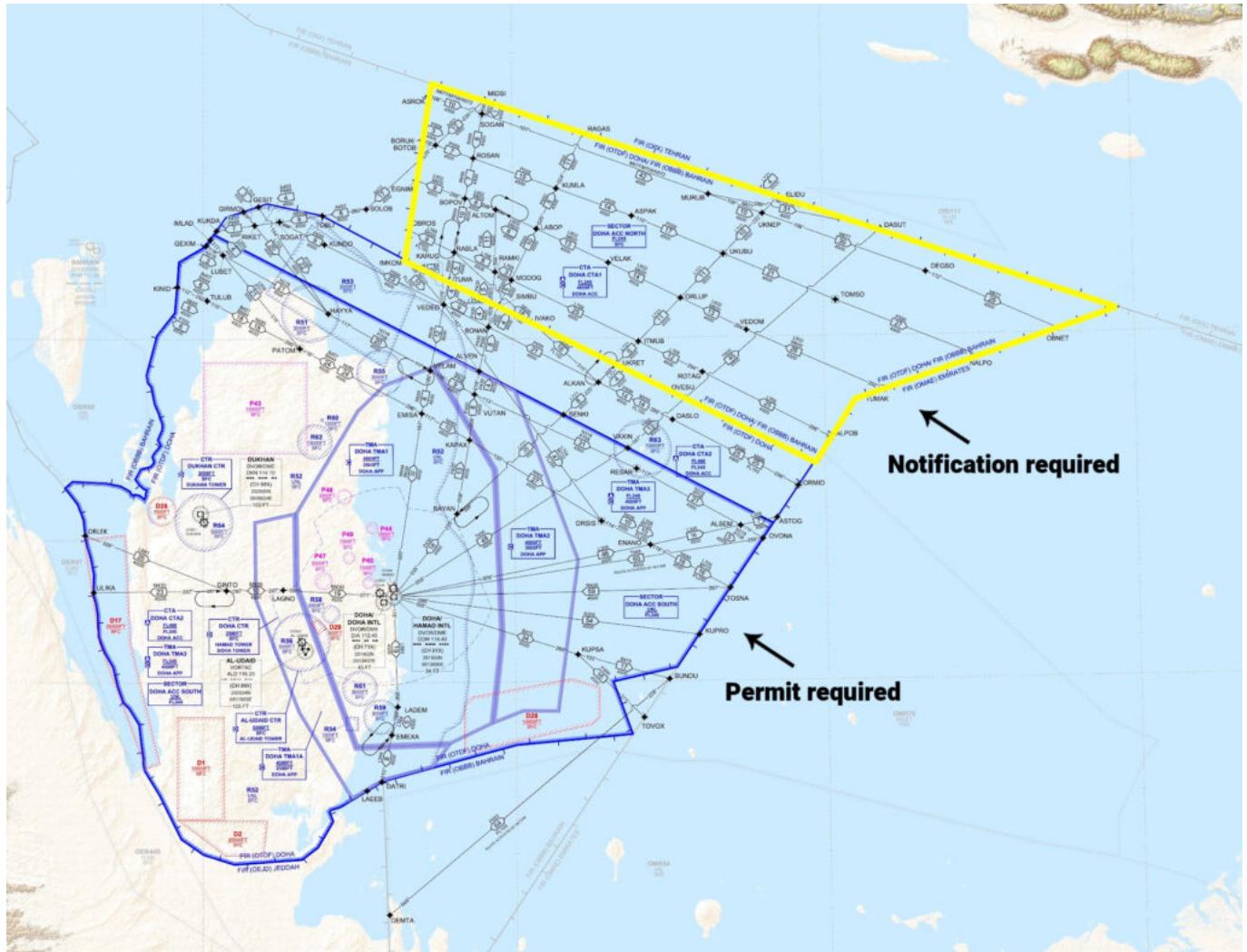
The new rule came in on 4 Sep 2025, and applies to all "non-scheduled" operators (includes charter flights, private operators, ad-hoc flights – basically everything other than airline flights).

The affected routes

The rule applies specifically to these routes:

- **M677/M708** (ASROK/OBNET)
- **P559/L704** (BORUK/NALPO)
- **L602/T557/M600** (TUMAK/EGNIM)
- **L768/M556** (ALPOB/OBROS)

These are the offshore routes running north of Qatar, in international waters.



Why the new rule?

First, a quick refresher on who controls what inside the Doha FIR:

- **The southern part of the OTDF/Doha FIR:** Qatar controls everything, from SFC-UNL.
- **The northern part of the OTDF/Doha FIR:** This part covers international waters, not Qatari territory. Operationally, ATC responsibility here still switches at FL245 — Qatar handles traffic below this level, and Bahrain handles traffic above it.

The rule is simple

- **Flying in the southern part of the OTDF/Doha FIR:** Standard overflight permit required — no changes.
- **Flying in the northern part of the OTDF/Doha FIR:** Submit a flight notification via the QCAA portal.

This flight notification isn't a permit and doesn't need approval, it simply lets Qatar know who's flying there in case you dip into their controlled airspace unexpectedly.

Notifications are submitted through the same QCAA portal used for permits. Bahrain continues to provide ATC in the northern area, and you don't need a Bahrain permit unless you're a weird non-ICAO, military, or

state flight.

Cuba Ops Guide: Why Most Private Jets Can't Go

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Key Points

- **Private flights:** Technically banned. US BIS requires a license for any US-built aircraft (or aircraft with more than 10% US parts), regardless of where it's registered or where it's flying from — and those applications for private flights are almost always denied.
- **Commercial flights:** If there's any US link to the flight (a US person, company, someone physically in the US, or a USD payment), then OFAC rules apply — meaning the trip must fit into one of 12 allowed categories. You'll also need to use the BIS AVS license exception (max stay in Cuba 7 days), apply to DOT for route/frequency approval (if you're a US operator). If you're heading from Cuba to the US you'll need to land at a CBP-designated southern airport of entry.
- **Overflights:** Fine, but pay NAV fees or risk being blocked. US operators must use a third-party vendor to arrange both the overflight permit and payment of fees.
- **Landings:** Relatively straightforward on the Cuba side of things: Cuban permit (3 days), local handler/sponsor, e-visa on arrival.
- **Insurance:** Many policies exclude Cuba. US underwriters may not honour claims unless you've confirmed the trip in advance.

Thinking of flying to Cuba?

Here's the part most operators miss — and honestly, we missed it too until we dug into the rules. Almost every modern bizjet in the world is either US-built or contains enough US technology (>10%) to fall under US export law. And under those rules, private flights to Cuba are technically banned. It doesn't matter where the aircraft is registered, who owns it, or where it's flying from — if it's US-origin, the US government decides whether it can go. And for private flights, the answer is almost always "no."

This guide explains why, who the US "gatekeepers" are, and what you need to clear if you want to operate to Cuba. We've split it into two parts - Legal Stuff and Operational Stuff - so you can see both the law and the logistics.

Legal Stuff

Are you even legally allowed to fly to Cuba? For most operators, the answer isn't obvious — because three US agencies can have a say. Two of them are the real gatekeepers:

BIS (Bureau of Industry and Security): Decides whether your aircraft can go, under US export control law.

OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control): Regulates the people and the money — who's onboard, who's paying, and whether the trip fits into one of 12 legal travel categories.

The third one only matters if you're a US airline or charter operator:

DOT (Department of Transportation): Controls which routes and how many flights US carriers can operate to Cuba. Foreign operators can ignore this.

So let's take a look at these in a bit more detail...

Gatekeeper #1: BIS (US Bureau of Industry and Security)

BIS is why almost no private bizjets can legally fly to Cuba.

Under US export law, any aircraft that's **US-built** or contains **more than 10% US parts** is treated as a US-origin item. Flying such an aircraft to Cuba — from anywhere in the world — counts as an export or reexport under the EAR rules.

It doesn't matter where the aircraft is registered, who owns it, or who's onboard — BIS only cares about the aircraft's **origin and content**.

Here's what that means in practice:

- **Private flights:** Need a BIS license, and BIS applies a policy of denial. In other words, your application will almost never be approved.
- **Commercial flights (airline or charter):** Can operate under the AVS license exception. You don't apply for a license each time, but you must self-certify that the flight meets the AVS conditions:
 - The aircraft remains under your control (can't be handed to a Cuban entity).

- Stay capped at 7 days.
- Records must be kept to prove compliance.

What BIS told us: Even we weren't sure at first — so we asked them directly: what about a US-built, foreign-registered jet flying privately to Cuba from outside the US? Their answer: it's still treated as an export/reexport. Unless AVS (commercial) applies, a license is required — and private-flight licenses are almost never approved.

Gatekeeper #2: OFAC (US Office of Foreign Assets Control)

If BIS decides whether the *aircraft* can go, OFAC decides whether the *people and money* are allowed. And like BIS, OFAC's reach is global — if there's a US link, it doesn't matter where the flight starts or where the aircraft is registered.

What triggers OFAC: Any one of these is enough to put the entire flight under OFAC rules:

- A US person (citizen, resident, company, or anyone physically in the US) is involved, or
- The transaction touches the US financial system (eg. a USD payment).

Example: A French-registered Falcon flying Paris-Havana still needs OFAC compliance if a single US passenger is onboard or the payment is in USD.

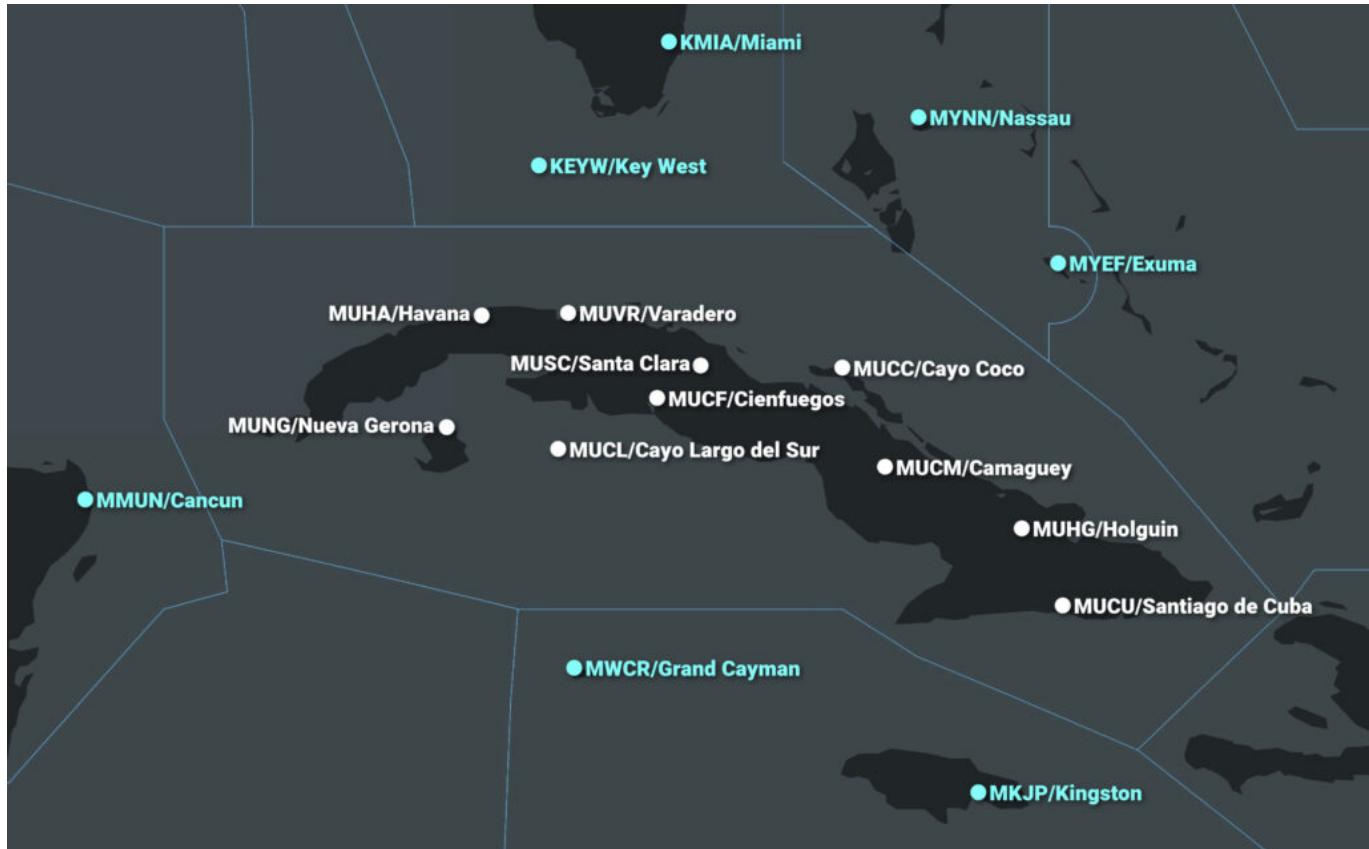
What's allowed: Tourism is banned. Instead, OFAC only permits travel under 12 specific categories (family visits, journalism, education, humanitarian work, etc).

How you comply: If your purpose clearly fits one of the 12 categories, you don't apply in advance. You operate under a *general license* — but you must keep records proving the trip qualified. If the trip doesn't fit a general license, you need a *specific license*. These are rarely granted outside humanitarian or official cases and can take months to obtain.

In short: Any US link brings OFAC into play, anywhere in the world — and if your purpose isn't one of the 12 categories, you're not going.

Gatekeeper #3: DOT (US Department of Transportation)

DOT controls which *routes* US airlines and charter operators are allowed to fly — and *how many flights* can operate.



In 2020 they banned all US charter flights to Cuba except MUHA/Havana, but that ban was lifted in 2022. Today, US airlines and charter operators can apply for service to multiple Cuban airports, but only within the limits set by DOT. They decide both the destinations and the number of flights allowed.

DOT rules **do not apply to foreign operators**.

Gatekeeper #4: FAA (US Federal Aviation Administration)

Maybe surprisingly, for Cuba ops, the FAA isn't in the gatekeeper role! The FAA's focus is *safety and air navigation*, not sanctions or export rules.

If BIS and OFAC say a flight is ok, the FAA won't block it just because the destination is Cuba.

The FAA issues airspace warnings for some countries, but not for Cuba — there are **no FAA restrictions on flights** heading here.

Operational Stuff

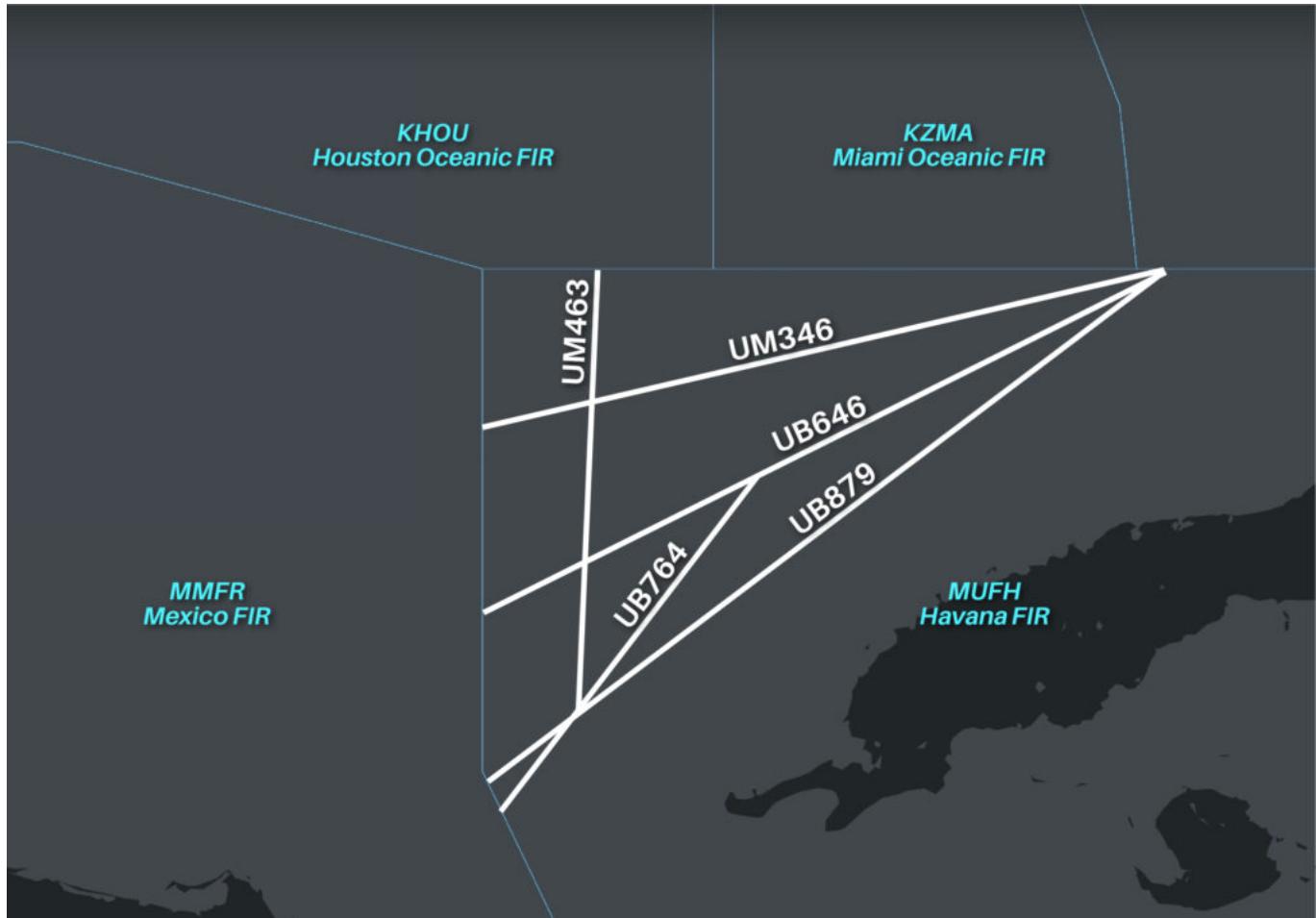
Goodness, wasn't that tedious! Now for the slightly more interesting operational stuff to watch out for.

Cuba Overflights

If your route passes through the MUFH/Havana FIR and enters Cuba's inner ADIZ or overflies the island itself, you will need to **get an overflight permit and pay the associated fees**.

For non-US operators, the process is straightforward – set up a customer number with the Cuban authorities and apply directly, often with same-day turnaround if submitted during business hours. US operators will generally need to use an approved permit vendor.

There are several overwater routes in the northwest corner of Cuban airspace where a **permit is not required**:



However, these still incur **NAV fees**, and if you don't pay them it can result in your aircraft tail number being blocked from Cuban airspace in the future. NAV fees must be paid to ECNA in Euros, and unpaid fees can build up quietly until you are **denied entry on a later flight**.

For more info on Cuba overflights and how to sort all this out, check our briefing [here](#).

Cuba Landings

Getting approval on the Cuba side of things is usually very straightforward – secure the landing permit, arrange handling, and off you go.

US BIS 7-day limit: Remember, under the US BIS rules, US-built aircraft operating under the AVS exception are only allowed to stay in Cuba for a max of 7 consecutive days.

Landing permit: All flights to Cuba need a landing permit, regardless of the aircraft's registry or departure point. The Cuban CAA requires at least 3 working days' notice to process the request.

Handling: You must have a local ground handler in Cuba. The CAA won't issue a permit without proof of handling support. In the past we've worked with the handling agent **C2C Travel** in Cuba, who were extremely helpful with arranging all services. Contact fabrice@c2ctravel.com.

Local receiving party ("sponsor"): Permits are only granted if you list a local contact or business sponsor in Cuba. If you don't have one, your handler may be able to provide this.

Visas: Pax and crew get an e-visa on arrival with the help of a handling agent. Everyone has to fill a form online before arrival at this site.

Insurance: Watch out here, as many aviation policies exclude Cuba entirely, leaving flights there

uninsured. Even if covered, US underwriting or reinsurance can block payouts due to sanctions. Confirm Cuba is included and sanctions-proof — and get written confirmation from your broker.

Cuba-US Flights

Commercial operators can **depart for Cuba from any US customs-designated airport**.

But on the return leg from Cuba, US CBP requires you to **land at the first designated US airport of entry** that is nearest to your point of crossing the US border or coastline (*in some cases, there's some flexibility here where you don't actually have to land at the "first" airport — check our briefing for more info.*)

If you want to land at a different airport instead, you will need a Border Overflight Exemption in advance.

The current list of approved southern airports of entry is published by CBP and includes key gateways in Florida, Texas, and other southern states:

Location	Name
Beaumont, Tex	Jefferson County Airport.
Brownsville, Tex ..	Brownsville International Airport.
Calexico, Calif	Calexico International Airport.
Corpus Christi, Tex.	Corpus Christi International Airport.
Del Rio, Tex	Del Rio International Airport.
Douglas, Ariz	Bisbee-Douglas International Airport.
Douglas, Ariz	Douglas Municipal Airport.
Eagle Pass, Tex ..	Eagle Pass Municipal Airport.
El Paso, Tex	El Paso International Airport.
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport.
Fort Lauderdale, Fla.	Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.
Fort Pierce, Fla	St. Lucie County Airport.
Houston, Tex	William P. Hobby Airport.
Key West, Fla	Key West International Airport.
Laredo, Tex	Laredo International Airport.
McAllen, Tex	Miller International Airport.
Miami, Fla	Miami International Airport.
Miami, Fla	Opa-Locka Airport.
Miami, Fla	Tamiami Airport.
Midland, TX	Midland International Airport.
New Orleans, La ..	New Orleans International Airport (Moissant Field).
New Orleans, La ..	New Orleans Lakefront Airport.
Nogales, Ariz	Nogales International Airport.
Presidio, Tex	Presidio-Lely International Airport.
San Antonio Tex ..	San Antonio International Airport.
San Diego, Calif ..	Brown Field.
Santa Teresa, N. Mex.	Santa Teresa Airport.
Tampa, Fla	Tampa International Airport.
Tucson, Ariz	Tucson International Airport.
West Palm Beach, Fla.	Palm Beach International Airport.
Wilmington, NC	New Hanover County Airport
Yuma, Ariz	Yuma International Airport.

This rule applies to **both US and foreign-registered aircraft** arriving from Cuba, and CBP will enforce it strictly, so plan your routing and arrival airport accordingly.

Been to Cuba?

Please let us know! You can also reach us directly on news@ops.group, or file an Airport Spy report.

OPSGROUP members can access the **full Airport Spy database** via the members dashboard [here](#).



[Got some intel?](#)

Are you an Airport Spy?

You go to unusual places and see curious things. Your turboprop friends envy you. Now, it's time to give back.

For your next trip, pack a notebook, and file your Spy Report below. You'll get a weekly ops briefing in return.

[File your report >](#)

US Border Overflight Exemptions: A How-to Guide

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Update Aug 2025: BOEs Move to eAPIS (No More Email Applications)

Until now, getting a Border Overflight Exemption (BOE) was an email game. You'd draft up a message to

CBP with your operator details, compliance statement, and a few other bits depending on whether it was a new application, renewal, or name change.

That's now changed. **CBP has shifted BOE applications and renewals into the eAPIS web portal.** Instead of emailing back and forth, you log in with your usual eAPIS credentials and hit the new "Border Overflight Exemption" link under the manifest options.

CBP says they'll process these within 30 days or less (same as before). Commercial operators still need to add carrier bond info and confirm customs fees are current, but otherwise it's a much smoother process. If you use a handler or third-party provider, they'll continue doing it for you behind the scenes.

New to BOEs? If you're arriving from the south, CBP normally requires your first landing to be at the nearest southern airport of entry. A Border Overflight Exemption lets you bypass that rule and fly straight to the airport you actually want to reach. [More info here.](#)

Original Story Sep 2024: BOE Guide

Back in the days when you had to email your BOE requests to CBP and everything was way more painful, we lovingly prepared a 1-page quick-ref cribsheet showing what to do.

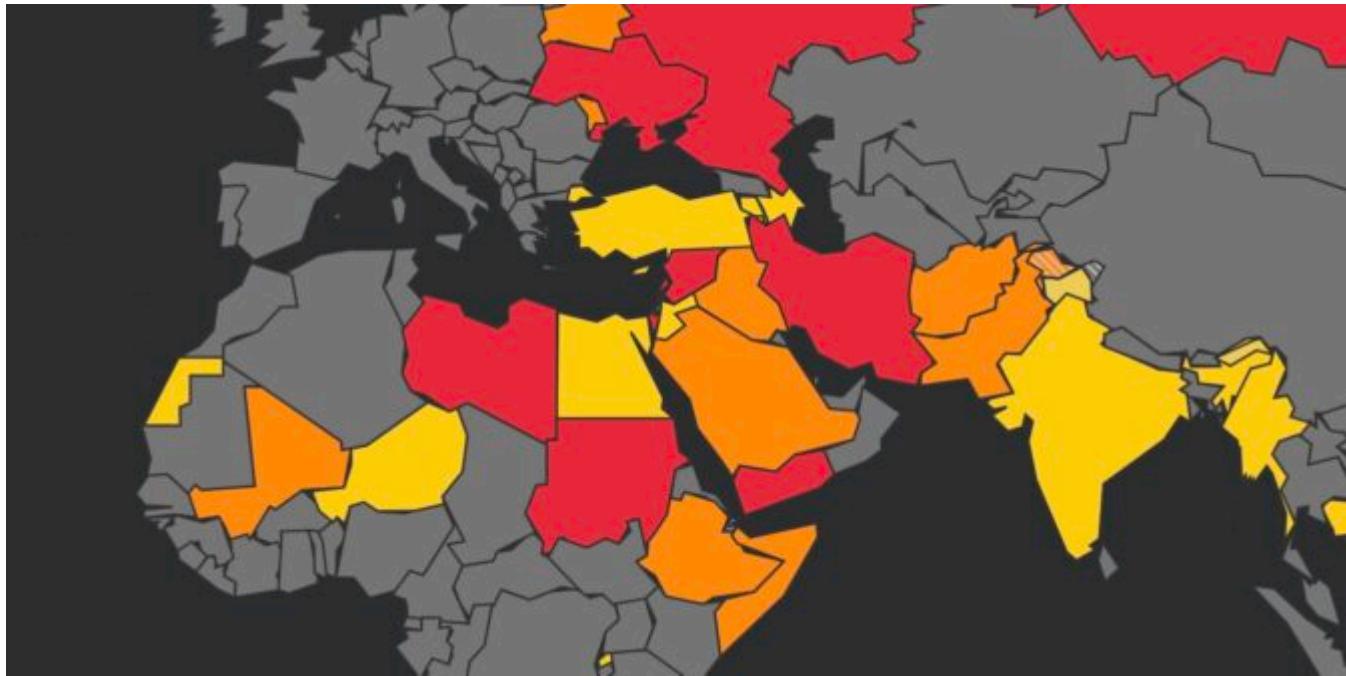


But with the Aug 2025 switch to doing all your BOEing via the eAPIS website, **that guide is now defunct!** We hereby forever consign it to the great FOD bin of history!



EASA Removes CZIBs: Middle East Risk Gets Harder to Read

David Mumford
9 February, 2026



Earlier this year, **EASA withdrew its CZIBs** (Conflict Zone Information Bulletins) for Israel and Iran, citing de-escalation. At the time, we wrote that the move seemed premature.



Then in June, the region saw one of its worst escalations in decades, with Israel and Iran trading missile strikes, the US and Gulf states scrambling to protect airbases, and most of the Middle East airspace system grinding to a halt.

EASA responded by **reissuing updated CZIBs** advising operators to stay well clear of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon. They also flagged the risk of spillover into parts of Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Now, just weeks after that guidance, those CZIBs have been **withdrawn again**. And once again, they've been **replaced by vague and inaccessible “Information Notes”** — only available to EU-based commercial operators, civil aviation authorities, and EU agencies. Everyone else (mainly biz jets and non-EU carriers) is locked out.

Air Operations

Conflict Zones Advisories

Conflict Zone Information Bulletins (CZIBs):

An advisory issued for airspace identified as high risk by the Integrated EU Aviation Security Risk Assessment Group (IRAG), or in other cases where there is a need to make information public.

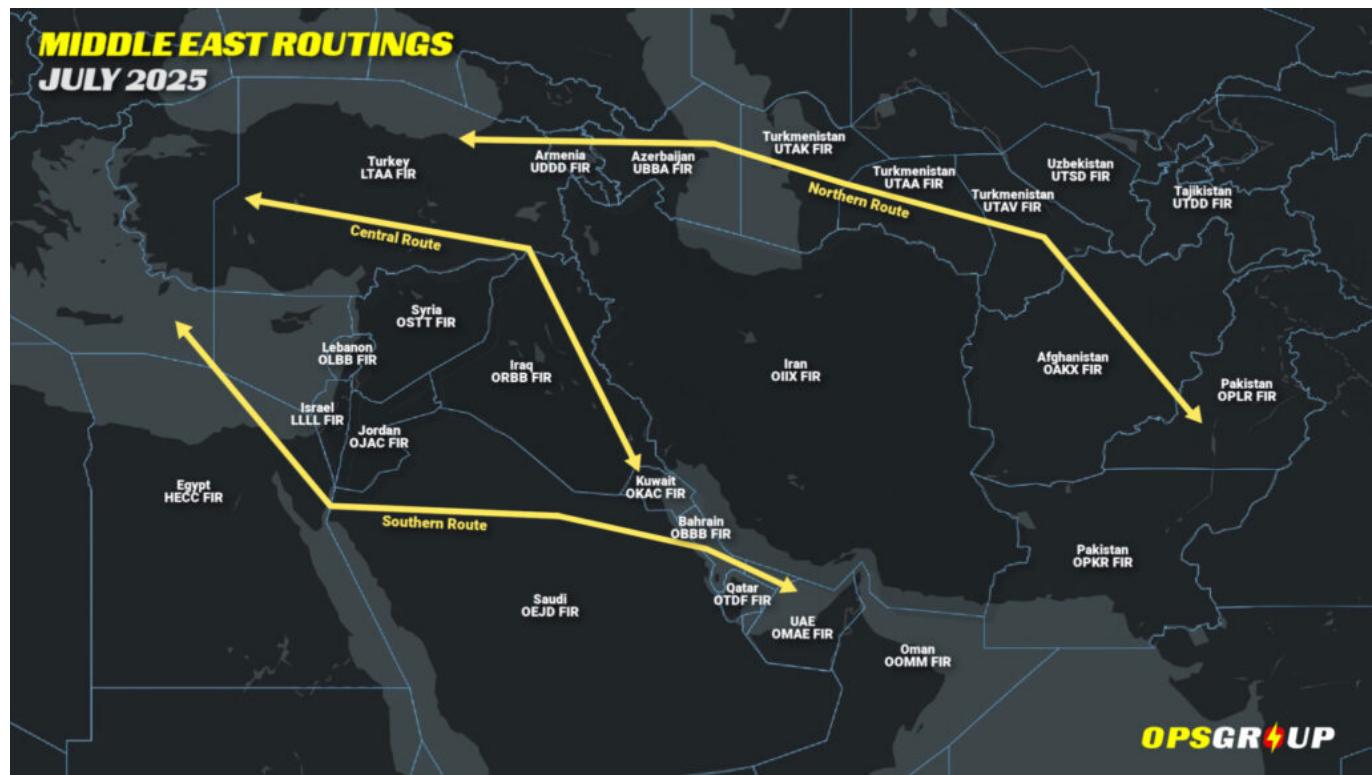
Information Notes (INs):

An advisory issued for airspace identified as medium risk by the IRAG, addressed to EASA Member States and their air operators on a need-to-know basis. Information Notes are published on the European Information Sharing and Cooperation Platform on Conflict Zones and are made available to EASA National Aviation Authorities.

Dangerous Goods

What's changed?

To recap: Following a ceasefire in early July, most FIRs across the region reopened. Iran reopened its OIIX/Tehran FIR in stages — first the east, then limited use of the west, and finally full ops. Israel began accepting traffic to LLBG/Tel Aviv on specific routings. Iraq reopened its airspace. Syria and Lebanon reopened too, albeit amid some brief re-closures. OPSGROUP members can access a full briefing here.



But the risks haven't vanished. Most carriers are still avoiding direct routings over Iran. GPS spoofing remains widespread. FIRs across the region are fragile — especially the corridor between Israel and Iran, which could close again at short notice if the conflict resumes.

The CZIBs are gone, again.

EASA's logic for removing them now appears to mirror their reasoning back in January — improving conditions, a reduction in active hostilities, and a belief that risk has subsided enough to no longer warrant a public advisory.

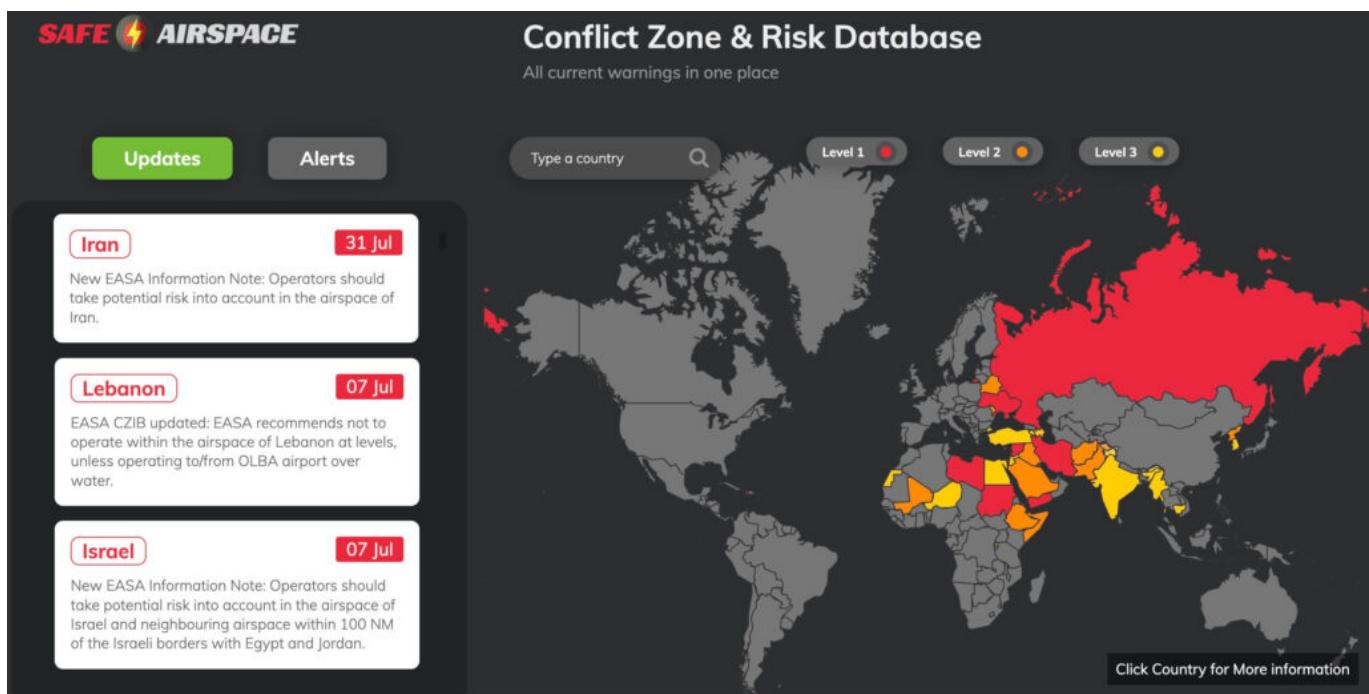
But here's the key problem: the new “Information Notes” replacing CZIBs are not public. Unless you're part of the inner circle of EU-based airlines or national regulators, you don't get to see them. And the publicly accessible version doesn't contain any detailed analysis, routing recommendations, or clarity on thresholds for escalation.

CZIBs were never binding, but they were visible — offering a common European position on conflict zone risk. The shift to restricted-access notes marks a change in how EASA communicates that risk.

A continuing need for caution

The removal of CZIBs shouldn't be interpreted as an all-clear. The ceasefire between Israel and Iran remains fragile. Regional tensions persist. GPS interference continues to impact operations across the eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. Routes through Athens and Nicosia FIRs remain congested as many operators still choose to avoid overflights of Iran and Israel altogether.

EASA's risk assessments will of course evolve as the situation does — but for operators outside the EU system, the reduced visibility makes it **more important than ever to consult a variety of sources:** state-level airspace warnings, Notams, real-time airspace activity, and third-party guidance.



We maintain a full database of state issued airspace warnings at SafeAirspace.net, freely accessible to everyone.

The bottom line

While EASA's decision to withdraw its CZIBs reflects improved conditions in parts of the region, the underlying risks remain dynamic. Operators should continue to treat Middle East operations with care — especially in and around Iran and Israel — and stay alert to changes that could result in rapid airspace restrictions or closures.

In short: just because EASA has stopped talking about it doesn't mean the threat has gone away.