FAA NOTAM Change: It’s not all about the Missions

OPSGROUP Team
6 December, 2021

On December 2, the FAA introduced some amendments to NOTAMS. Amongst these revisions, was a change to the meaning of the acronym ‘NOTAM’ to create more inclusive terminology.

The acronym change has been stealing the limelight from the other revisions, so we thought we would take a look at what the other changes are, and what the **overall impact might be for you** when reading NOTAMS.

ICAO Standards

There have been various revisions to terminology used within NOTAMS, in order to bring the FAA issued ones more in line with that of ICAO.

Braking action will no longer be termed as “good”

Which is good, because ‘good’ doesn’t really mean an awful lot. What’s good for one aircraft might not be for the next. This is part of an update in **Change to Field Conditions (FICON)** reporting and a second change is that FICONs will not be issued for closed runways.

This is in line with the new Global Reporting Format for runways which ICAO brought into force in November 2021.

“Unserviceable” is being clarified

Where certain systems are not functional, **the impact** of this on the primary systems which they are a component of will be identified. For example, if the runway alignment lights are u/s a NOTAM stating this doesn’t give us much information on what the reduced condition of the full ALS is. **So NOTAMS will clarify this better.**

Housekeeping

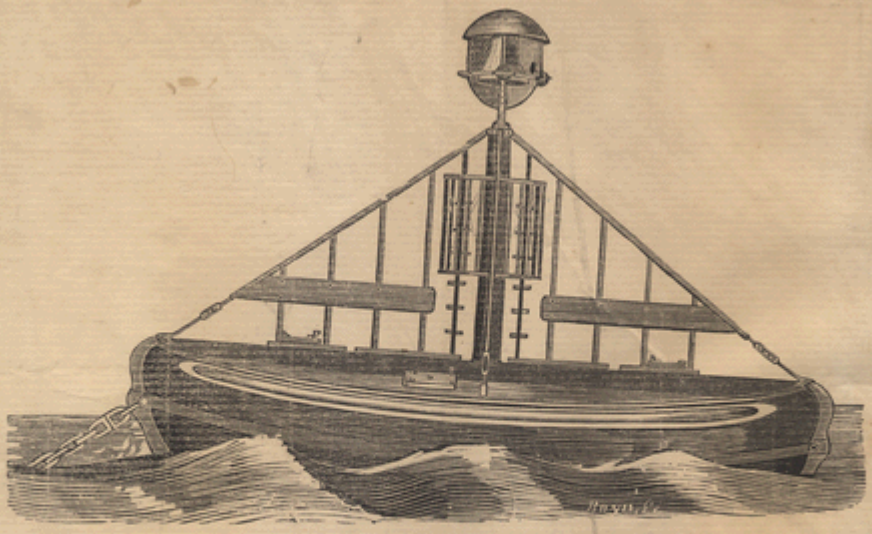
- **KLAS/Las Vegas'** (formerly known as) McCarran airport has had its name change added into the system. It is now known in NOTAMs as **Harry Reid.**
- **ASOS and AWOS** automated weather systems are now treated the same in NOTAMs. For info, AWOS is an automated weather observing system which provides continuous real time info and report and which can be fully configured while ASOS is an "all in one" Automated Surface Observing System which also provides continuous weather reports.

The Acronym

Because it is getting so much attention, we figured we would add a little perspective here on it.

A NOTAM is still a NOTAM. We've not heard anyone ever call it anything except that. But what it stands for has changed – rather than Notices to Airmen, it now stands for **Notices to Air Missions.**

A very quick history lesson on the NOTAM – they **first came into being in 1947** after the Convention on International Civil Aviation. There was even a special NOTAM meeting in 1949 which was when AIS really came into being. But NOTAMs themselves actually originated from the older **Notice to Mariner** system, set up for navigational safety in the seas. Later, SNOWTAMs came into being (1968) and then they branched out into ASHTAMs (1980s).



NOTICE TO MARINERS.

BELL BOAT,

JUST OUTSIDE THE BAR, ENTRANCE,

SAN FRANCISCO BAY, CALIFORNIA.

A Bell Boat has been placed just outside the Bar, in 15 fathoms at mean low water, in range with Fort Point and Alcatraz Island Light Houses. The bearings by *compass*, and distances in *nautical miles*, o prominent objects, are as follows:

South Farallone Island Light House,	S. W. by W. ½ W.	17 miles.
Point Reyes,	N. W. by W. ¾ W.	22¾ "
Duxbury Reef,	N. N. W. ¾ W.	8½ "
Point Bonita Light House,	N. E. ¼ N.	7¼ "
Fort Point Light House,	N. E. ¾ E.	9¼ "
Telegraph Station, Point Lobos,	N. E. by E. ½ E.	7½ "
Point Pedro,	S. E. ¼ E.	11¾ "

The course to enter the Bay is N. E. ½ E.

The Bar Buoy on the same range is removed.

The boat is 30 feet long, and painted red. The Bell of 500 pounds, is elevated 15 feet, and the day mark of 3½ by 4 feet, 8 feet above the water. The Bell is rung by the motion of the sea, and should be heard under ordinary circumstances from one to three miles.

Mariners are cautioned not to run into or damage this aid to navigation. The Fog Gun signal at Point Bonita is discontinued.

By order of the Light House Board.

HARTMAN BACHE,
Maj. Topog'l Eng's Br. Maj.

Office, 12th Light House District,
San Francisco, Cal., March 18, 1858.

VFM
6056
MC 47.415

Here is an old Notice to Mariner, or NOM if you prefer.

What I find interesting with the NOM is just how close this one (written in 1858) is to some of our modern day NOTAMs. All wordy and full of complex and confusing bearing to work out, similar to the Lat/Long ones we see nowadays.

Anyway, why the change in terminology? Well, because ‘Airmen’ is not very inclusive of any other gender. Now, a lot of folk feel this change is unnecessary and we aren’t going to weigh in on either side. All we have to say on the matter is:

- If you **don’t** think it is necessary – it doesn’t actually impact anything. Keep calling them NOTAMS like you always did.
- If you **do** think it’s necessary – hopefully this is a step towards everyone feeling that aviation is inclusive.

If you are looking for further discussion on the FAA’s move to gender neutral language then you can find a link here to the FAA ‘Medium’ page where the discuss this.

JO 7930.2S CHG 2

Who is Jo? Actually, it is the official FAA notice of change which you can find here.

Here are the full list of changes pages:

Notices to Air Missions (NOTAM)

Explanation of Changes

Effective: December 2, 2021

a. 1–1–1. PURPOSE
1–1–9. RELATED PUBLICATIONS
1–2–1. PURPOSE
1–3–1. AIR TRAFFIC ORGANIZATION (ATO)
1–3–3. FLIGHT STANDARDS SERVICE
1–3–8. RESPONSIBILITY HIERARCHY
1–4–6. DEFINITIONS
2–1–3. PUBLICATION CRITERIA
2–1–5. CHART/PUBLICATION ERRORS OR OMISSIONS
2–1–6. FORWARDING DATA
2–1–7. ADDRESSING CORRESPONDENCE
2–1–8. NFDC ORGANIZATION
2–1–9. THE NATIONAL FLIGHT DATA DIGEST (NFDD)
3–1–1. NOTAM RESPONSIBILITIES
3–1–3. MILITARY NOTAMS
3–1–4. PERMANENT (PERM) NOTAM PROCESS
3–2–3. NOTAM LOG
3–2–4. PASSING NOTAM DATA BY PART–TIME FSS FACILITIES
3–3–1. USE OF CONTRACTIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS
3–3–6. TAXIWAY IDENTIFICATION
3–3–7. APRON IDENTIFICATION
4–1–1. NATIONAL NOTAM OFFICE RELATIONSHIPS
4–2–1. NOTAM COMPOSITION
4–3–3. CANCELING PUBLISHED NOTAM DATA
5–1–3. MOVEMENT AREA INFORMATION
5–1–4. FIELD CONDITIONS (FICON) REPORTING
5–2–1. LIGHTING AIDS
5–2–2. OBSTACLES
5–3–3. UNPROGRAMMED EXTENDED SHUTDOWNS
5–3–4. NAVAID MAINTENANCE SHUTDOWNS
5–3–5. UNMONITORED NAVAIDS
5–3–6. INSTRUMENT LANDING SYSTEM STATUS
5–3–7. NAVAID CONDITIONS
5–3–8. SATELLITE BASED SYSTEMS
5–4–3. COMMUNICATION OUTLET CONDITIONS
5–5–1. GENERAL
5–5–2. CHANGES TO PUBLISHED SERVICES
5–5–3. HOURS OF OPERATION
5–5–4. WEATHER AND WEATHER REPORTING EQUIPMENT
5–5–6. RADAR SERVICES
6–1–1. AIRSPACE NOTAM FORMAT
6–1–3. AIRSPACE AND ALTITUDE RESERVATIONS
7–1–4. HIGH BAROMETRIC PRESSURE WARNING
7–1–6. AIR DEFENSE EMERGENCY

The list of changes, some very minor

7–1–9. FDC NOTAM LIST
7–1–10. RETRIEVING FDC NOTAMS
8–1–2. INTERNATIONAL NOTAM DATA FORMAT
APPENDIX A. EXAMPLES
APPENDIX D. MISCELLANEOUS FUNCTIONS
APPENDIX E. COMPUTER FUNCTIONS
APPENDIX F. RADIOSONDE/UNMANNED FREE BALLOON FLIGHTS

The following changes are made to align the order with current NOTAM policies/processes and to ensure compliance with ICAO standards and contractions. These changes include modifying the acronym NOTAM from Notice to Airmen to the more applicable term Notice to Air Missions. Changes to Field Conditions (FICON) Reporting have been made regarding updated requirements for Runway Condition Codes (RwyCCs) NOTAMs, added verbiage that FICON must not be issued for a closed runway, and added verbiage stating RwyCCs are reported based on direction of assessment allowing for only one set of RwyCCs per runway. This change removes breaking action report of "good" as NOTAM criteria. This change also removes the reference to the 28–day publication cycle for International and Domestic Notices. Changes to permanent NOTAM procedures have been included. Added verbiage to allow for Simplified, Short ALS with Runway Alignment Lights temporarily changed as NOTAM criteria. Previously, unserviceable was the only option which did not accurately describe the reduced condition of the ALS. Changes also include updated United States NOTAM Office (USNOF) roles and responsibilities. This change sets the same NOTAM criteria for both Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) and Federal Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) regardless of who maintains them. This change also updates and makes editorial changes to publications related to this order.

b. 2–1–4. DOMESTIC NOTICES AND INTERNATIONAL NOTICES

This change removes the reference to the 28–day publication cycle in the paragraph concerning International Notices and Domestic Notices to reflect the transition to on–demand publication of these notices, effective May 20, 2021.

c. Editorial Changes

Las Vegas McCarran International was changed to Las Vegas Harry Reid International in Appendix A.

d. Entire Publication

Additional editorial/format changes were made where necessary. Revision bars were not used because of the insignificant nature of these changes.

The text on the 'alignment' to ICAO which covers most of the big changes.

The Impact?

Well, not a tremendous amount overall. The acronyms is worth knowing about to avoid confusion should you ever see it written in full, while the move to more ICAO standard terminology will hopefully bring a little more clarity and standardisation to NOTAMs for any international operators.