

India puts a three-aircraft limit on permits

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India have made some changes to their rules for permit requests. The big one is that you can now only put **three aircraft registrations on a request: one primary and two alternates**.

Word on the street is that **some operators were putting their entire fleet on the application**, so they could use pretty much any aircraft if the planned one went tech. And it seems the DGCA wasn't too keen on that!

So for an operator with a fleet of 20 aircraft, that makes things a little more interesting. Pick the wrong three and you'll need to get the permit changed if you end up using another aircraft.

The new guidance was issued in an email from the DGCA on 19 August 2026, which went like this:

Guidelines for Processing of Flight Clearances

1. Flight clearance requests shall be submitted not more than 10 working days prior to the flight date, while also ensuring compliance with notice period requirements.
2. In the Type of Aircraft field, one alternate type may be mentioned in addition to the proposed type, if required.
3. In the Aircraft Registration field, two alternate registrations may be mentioned in addition to the proposed registration, if required.
4. The FCAs/Applicant shall thoroughly review the application and check all aircraft related documents and ensure their validity before submitting the application to DGCA.
5. Any application submitted with incomplete or incorrect information would be summarily rejected.
6. The consolidated data (signal & excel) for flight clearances to be issued on a given day shall be sent by 1130 Hrs IST at the latest.
7. Any fresh application for the next day's flight (i.e., non-PRC overflying) shall be positively submitted by the forenoon.
8. The applications shall be submitted and signed with the date (either in ink or via DSC—digital signature) by the Directors or authorized signatories only. The details of all authorized signatories shall be submitted to the DGCA in advance and updated regularly whenever there is any change.
9. All FCAs shall designate a senior person as a nodal officer for coordination with DGCA.
10. Any changes or revisions to flight clearances will only be considered under exceptional circumstances and shall be submitted along with appropriate justification and supporting documents (as applicable). Such requests shall be submitted well before the planned departure, taking into account the processing time involved.
11. All applications and communications shall be sent from email ids already registered with DGCA.
12. In the case of flights landing in India, the FCAs/Applicant shall monitor the progress of the aircraft until it departs the country. Any incident, accident, AOG, or any other significant event shall be reported to the DGCA.
13. The physical copies of all applications processed for a month shall be submitted to the O/o DAT by the 7th of the following month.

Lots of words there, friends. But the main things worth mentioning from that list:

- You can submit a permit request **no more than 10 working days before the flight**. So you can't get too far ahead of yourself.
- For changes to the permit, the DGCA say this will only be considered in **exceptional circumstances**. But local permit agents tell us that in reality this is not normally a problem, and as long as you get your change request in during DGCA working hours they can **get it changed within 6 hours**. Contact them at ops@srcaviation.com to do the needful.

But either way, if your aircraft goes tech, don't leave the permit change til the last minute!

One More Question

Here's something we asked, thinking we might've thought up a clever work-around:

*For an operator with more than 3 aircraft who doesn't know which aircraft will operate the flight, can they submit **multiple permit applications** (with up to 3 registrations on each) and obtain **multiple permit numbers**, then use whichever permit covers the aircraft actually operating?*

The answer: no.

So that was the end of that.

Standard Permit Rules

One other thing to note is this new thing about max-three-planes-on-permit-requests is for all for **non-scheduled/private** permit requests – not scheduled airline ones. The India AIP says that private/charter/bizav/non-sched flights all fall into the same bucket when it comes to permit requests – they basically all follow the same process.

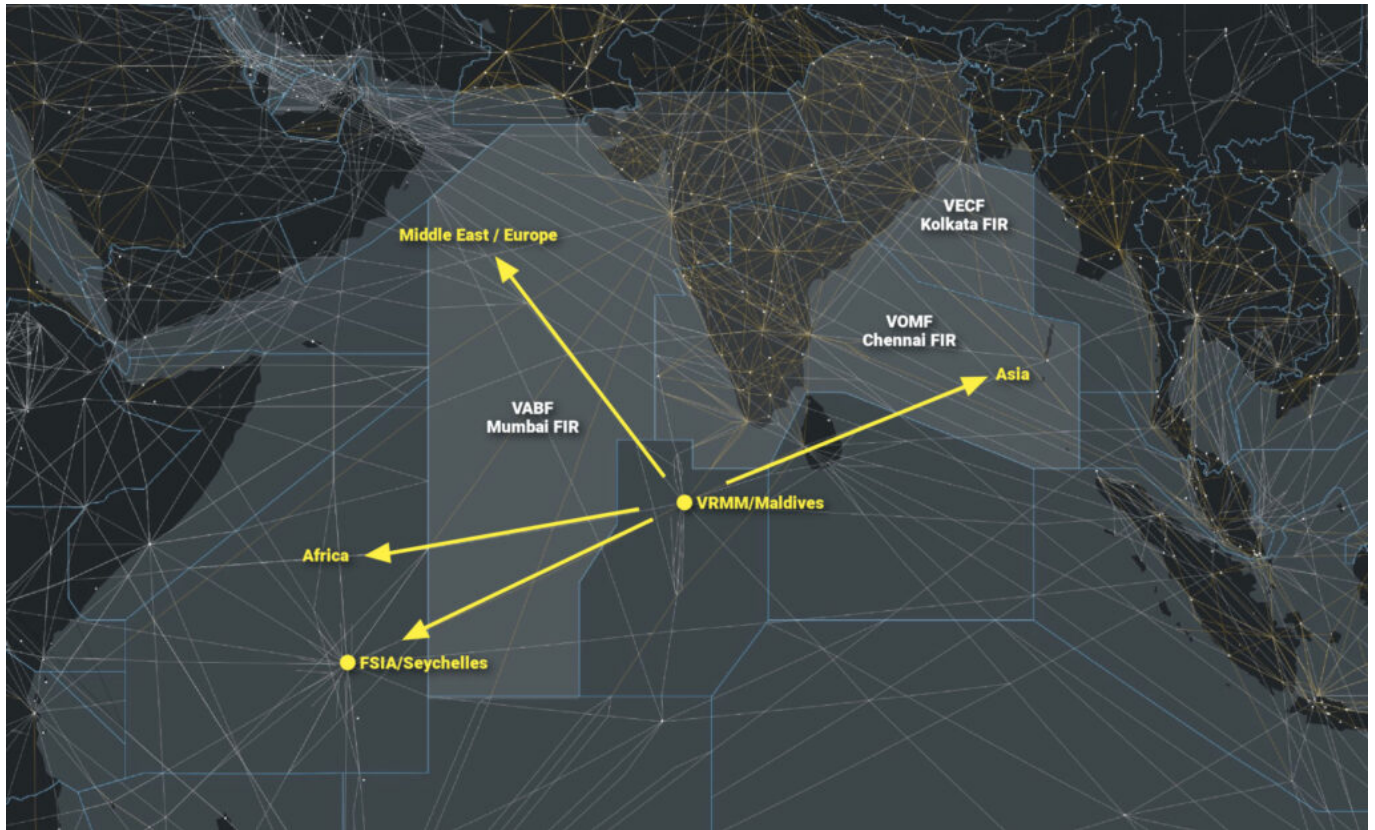
Expect **24hrs lead time for overwater flights** and **3 working days for flights crossing Indian landmass**.

And on that point...

Overwater Flights

You don't need a permit if you're not overflying India's landmass. Kinda interesting, but not actually very useful for most overflights between the Middle east and Asia as all the airways cross the land.

But worth knowing if you're maybe planning a flight to the likes of **VRMM/Male** in the Maldives! (Can't think of anywhere else where this no-permit-required-for-oceanic-flights would actually be useful, can you?)



The Pakistan Gotcha

Not really a gotcha, because no one has a plane registered in India or Pakistan. And if you do, you'll know this already.

But here it is anyway. India and Pakistan have had reciprocal airspace bans in place since the 2025 conflict, and they're still being extended – so **Indian reg aircraft still can't use Pakistan airspace, and vice versa.**