New APIS Rules for Mexico

David Mumford
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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