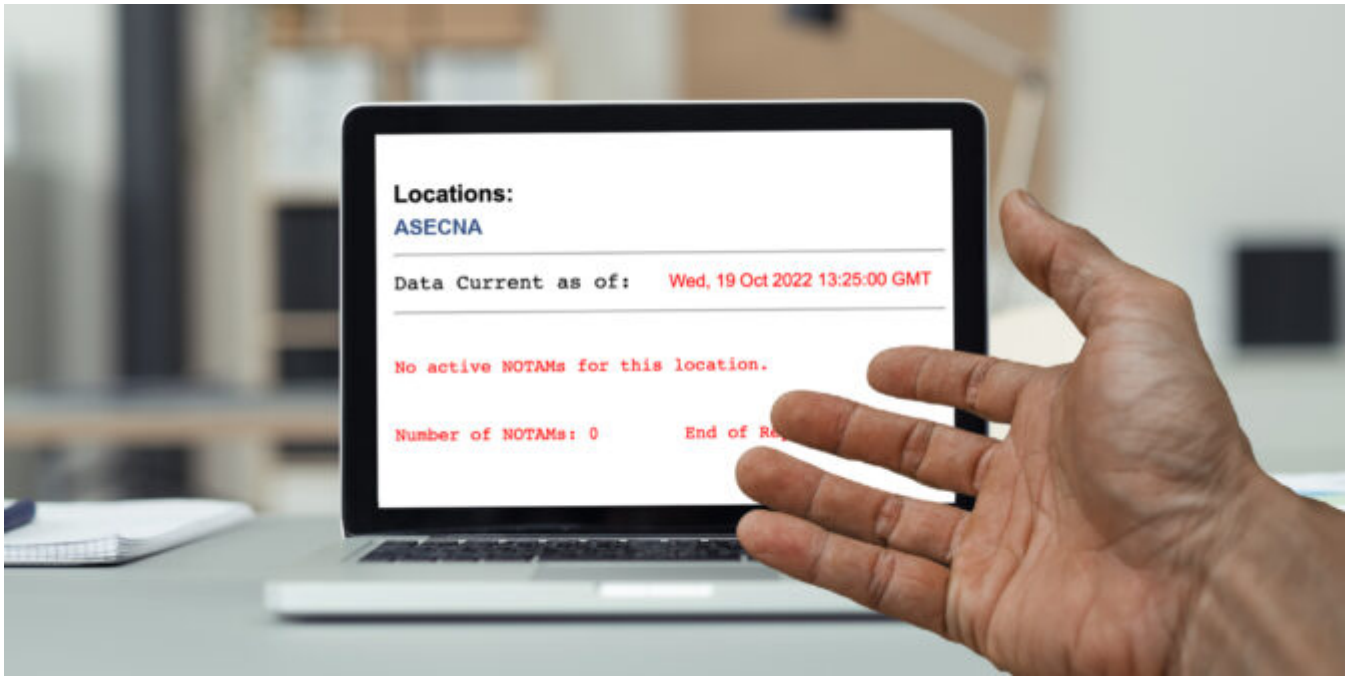
Where have Africa’s Notams gone?

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022



ASECNA have a secret treasure trove of AIP SUPs on all kinds of airport closures and other fairly essential info that **doesn’t seem to be getting published by Notam.**

Now, it might be because these are relatively *long* things and as you may recall, Notams shouldn’t really be **valid for longer than 3 months** because then it is less temporary and more, well, lengthy.

But there are still some in there that we really would expect to see as notams. Such as:

- **FOON/Franceville**, Gabon having potholes in its runway and so not allowing operations on runway 33 from Oct 4 to Dec 31.
- **GOSS/Saint Louis**, Senegal is closed to all traffic for works from Oct 5 to Dec 27.
- **DXXX/Lome**, Togo is having works until Dec 31 so folk should watch out for workers and their machinery during taxi.
- **GOGG/Ziguinchor**, Senegal is closed from Sep 19 to Feb 28 2023 because of security works.

And that’s just the obvious ones we spotted – **there are plenty more!** Here’s the list of ‘latest news’ list they publish:

Actualité / Latest news

- SUP NR 85/A/22FC - October 13, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "A"
- AIC NR 26/A/22FC - October 10, 2022 - ASECNA - Increase of en-route and lighting fees and harmonization of all aeronautical fees rate for ASECNA's community activities.
- SUP/AIRAC NR 84/A/22FC - October 10, 2022 - FKYS - YAOUNDE NSIMALEN (CAMEROON) - Update of the procedural sections
- AIC NR 33/A/22GO - October 10, 2022 - ASECNA - Increase of en-route and lighting fees and harmonization of all aeronautical fees rate for ASECNA's community activities.
- VALID NOTAM - GO - October 15, 2022 - DAKAR NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- SUP NR 83/A/22FC - October 04, 2022 - FCOD - OLLOMBO Denis SASSOU NGUESSO (CONGO) - Update of aeronautique data
- SUP NR 82/A/22FC - October 04, 2022 - FOON - FRANCEVILLE M'VENGUE (GABON) - Ruwway condition
- VALID NOTAM - FC - October 04, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- AMDT 10/2022 - October 05, 2022 - AMDT 10/22 - UPDATING BULLETIN
- SUP NR 110/A/22GO - October 05, 2022 - GOSS - SAINT LOUIS (SENEGAL) - Airport closure
- VALID NOTAM - FM - October 01, 2022 - ANTANANARIVO NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- AIC NR 15/A/22FM - September 21, 2022 - FMST - TOLIALY (MADAGACAR) - Exceptional authorization
- SUP NR 44/A/22FM - September 20, 2022 - FMMI - MADAGASCAR - ATM contingency plan applicable to Antananarivo FIR
- SUP NR 109/A/22GO - September 20, 2022 - DAKAR TERRESTRE, DAKAR OCEANIQUE, BAMAKO, OUAGADOUGOU, NIAMEY, ABIDJAN AND LOME - ESPACE ASECNA - ATS routes network in ASECNA airspaces under ACC
- SUP NR 108/A/22GO - September 20, 2022 - DXXX - LOME (TOGO) - Approach and runway lighting rehabilitation work
- SUP NR 107/A/22GO - September 20, 2022 - GOGG - ZIGUINCHOR (SENEGAL) - Closing of aeroport
- VALID NOTAM - GO - September 07, 2022 - DAKAR NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- SUP/AIRAC NR 106/A/22GO - September 07, 2022 - DFFD - OUAGADOUGOU (BURKINA FASO) - Mise en service des procédures de vol liée aux opérations de montées et de descentes continues
- AMDT 09/2022 - September 05, 2022 - AMDT 09/22 - NIL UPDATING BULLETIN
- SUP NR 105/A/22GO - September 03, 2022 - DAKAR TERRESTRE, DAKAR OCEANIQUE, BAMAKO, OUAGADOUGOU, NIAMEY, ABIDJAN AND LOME - ESPACE ASECNA - ATS routes network in ASECNA airspaces under ACC
- VALID NOTAM - FC - Septembre 01, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- VALID NOTAM - FM - September 01, 2022 - ANTANANARIVO NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- AIC NR 32/A/22GO - August 29, 2022 - DR - NIGER - Revised Health Guidelines for PCR Testing and Vaccination in the Context of COVID-19
- SUP NR 104/A/22GO - August 29, 2022 - DAKAR NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "A"
- SUP NR 103/A/22GO - August 25, 2022 - DBBP - PARAKOU (BENIN) - Closure of aerodrome
- SUP NR 102/A/22GO - August 19, 2022 - GA - MALI - Creation of a temporary prohibited area (TPA) and creation inside of two temporary regulated areas (TRA)
- SUP NR 13/B/22FM - August 18, 2022 - ANTANANARIVO NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "B"
- SUP NR 43/A/22FM - August 18, 2022 - ANTANANARIVO NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "A"
- SUP NR 15/B/22FC - August 18, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "B"
- SUP NR 81/A/22FC - August 18, 2022 - BRAZZAVILLE NOF - Checklist of valid AIP supplements "A"
- SUP NR 101/A/22GO - August 17, 2022 - GOGS - CAP SKIRRING (SENEGAL) - Update of aeronauticals data
- SUP NR 100/A/22GO - August 16, 2022 - GOGS - CAP SKIRRING (SENEGAL) - Update of aeronauticals data
- SUP NR 99/A/22GO - August 16, 2022 - GOGS - CAP SKIRRING (SENEGAL) - Update of aeronauticals data
- SUP NR 98/A/22GO - August 15, 2022 - GAGO - GAO/KOROGOUSSOU (MALI) - Activation of TMA and CTR
- VALID NOTAM - GO - August 13, 2022 - DAKAR NOF - Checklist of valid NOTAM
- SUP NR 97/A/22GO - August 13, 2022 - DXGN - NIAMTOUGOU (TOGO) - Glide path unserviceable
- SUP NR 96/A/22GO - August 13, 2022 - DXGN - NIAMTOUGOU (TOGO) - Localizer resumed normal operation service
- SUP/AIRAC NR 80/A/22FC - Août 11, 2022 - FKKD - DOUALA (CAMEROON) - TAREK - 5LNC name change
- SUP NR 14/B/22FC - August 11, 2022 - FGMY – MONGOMEYEN (EQUATORIAL GUINEA) - Unavailability of Navigation Aids
- SUP/AIRAC NR 42/A/22FM - August 11, 2022 - FMMT - TOAMASINA/AMBALAMANASY (MADAGASCAR) - Change of the NDB «MV» frequency

So the point really is, check this page if you are planning *Togo* into or over ASECNA countries because things that could impact your operation do not seem to be Notam-ed, and they could have a significant impact, particularly with regards **alternate and en-route aerodromes.**

And if you've *Benin* an ASECNA country or airspace and have experienced issues (with un-Notamed stuff or anything else) then **please drop us an email with the details** on news@ops.group so we can share the info around to other folk.

(Sorry for the puns. It's been nice Chad-ing).

ASECNA are raising their fees.

Specifically, their en-route fees another airport lighting fees.

AIC 33/A/22GO was issued Oct 10 and is effective from January 1 2023. 26/A/22FC came out at the same time (and says the same thing).

- **En-route fees will increase by 5%**
- **Runway lighting fees will increase by 3%**

So, if you are an international flight this means the following:

- If you weight **less than 4 tonnes** you won't get charged.
- If you weigh **between 4 and 14 tonnes** you will be charged **220.76 Euro**

- If you weigh **more than 14 tonnes** then you will be charged **110.38 Euro**

But then there is the co-efficient bit, and then there are these two tables as well…

POIDS (en Tonnes) Weight (in tons)	TARIF NATIONAL (en €) National Rate (in €)	TARIF INTERNATIONAL (en €) International Rate (in €)
1 to 14 T	0,29	1,53
15 to 25 T	1,14	1,53
26 to 75 T	2,30	3,07
76 to 150 T	2,91	4,30
More than 150 T	2,75	4,03

POIDS (en Tonnes) Weight (in tons)	TARIF (en €) Rate (in €)
Less than or equal to 75 T	131,50
More than 75 T	166,57

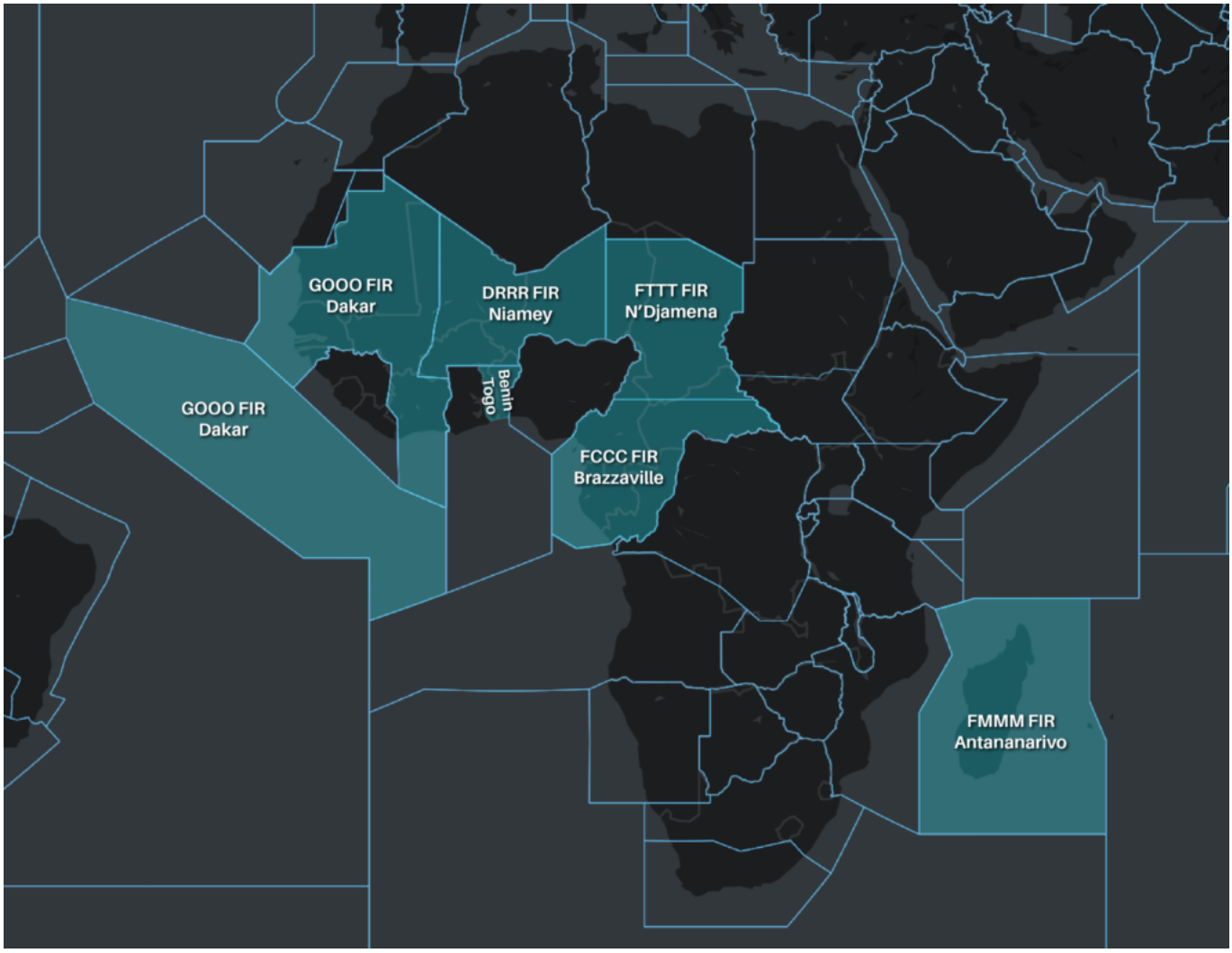
Again, here is the ASECNA AIC/AIP page so you can find any others to check them as well.

Wait… what is ASECNA?

ASECNA is the Agency for Security of Air Navigation in Africa and Madagascar. They look after Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritanie, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Madagascar.

Which in terms of FIRs, means the **FMMM/Antananarivo, FCCC/Brazzaville, DRRR/Niamey, FTTT/N'Djamena and GOOO/Dakar oceanic and terrestrial**.

That all looks a little like this:



The ASECNA FIRs.

What else has been happening here recently?

Well, if you missed it, then a big ATC strike in October 2022 caused some trouble because they started using **non-trained personnel to fill the ATC seats** – a very risky practice which we obviously don't like.

It hasn't been all bad news with them though. In June 2022 they also started implementing Free Route Airspace, and they have a pretty **decent ADS-B service** set up across the region.

Then there has been the fuel shortage woes. This isn't necessarily within ASECNA airspace, but impacts the entire region so worth a mention.

What about airspace safety?

Chad (the FTTT/N'Djamena FIR and FTTJ/N'Djamena international) saw land and air borders closures in 2021 following the death of their President and effectively a military rule brought in.

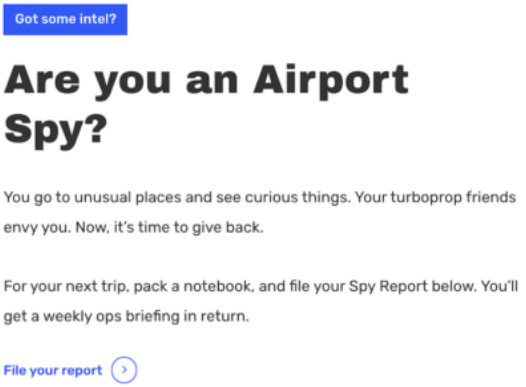
Mali had a military coup and reneged on agreements to hold elections, leading to sanctions from the rest of ECOWAS (their neighbours) which resulted in closures of land and air borders.

Flown in to any of these countries recently? Send us your report!

Please send us your Airport Spy reports so we can share the gotchas, the things to know, contacts to

contact and anything else useful.

What's Airport Spy? Well, you write a quick little postcard with "what happened" when you went to some airport somewhere. Then you, and others (that's the magic), can refer to your notes for future flights to the same place. Try it here if you haven't already.



Japan Reopens: Crew & Passenger Entry Rules Explained

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

Japan will reopen for individual tourist travel from October 11. Prior to this, travellers needed to be part of tourist groups, or heading there for business or study purposes. But from Oct 11 anyone can enter!

Passenger rules.

- Visa free entry has resumed for the 68 countries it previously applied to. Passengers from everywhere else will need a visa.
- Passengers will need either proof of vaccination (3 doses) or proof of negative test taken within 72 hours before departure.
- There's no testing on arrival and no quarantine, regardless of vaccination status. And there's no more checking of which blue/yellow/red countries you're coming from – that whole matrix has been scrapped.
- Passengers are still encouraged to use the MySOS app and register required docs, for fast track entry.

The full passenger rules can be found here.

Crew rules.

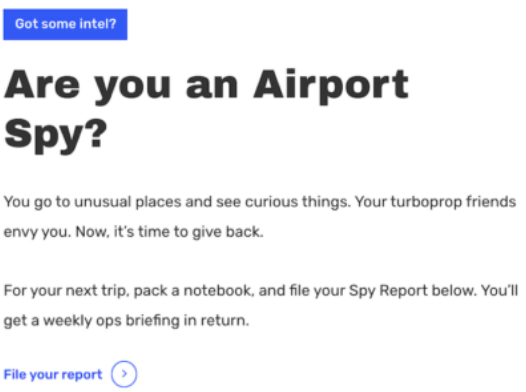
- Just like for pax, you need either proof of vaccination or proof of negative test taken within 72 hours before departure. If you can't provide either of these, they'll let you in but you'll have to quarantine in the hotel.
- If you have a passport from one of the 68 visa exempt countries, that's all you need. If not, you'll get issued a crew shore pass on arrival which allows you to stay in Japan for up to 7 days without holding a visa.
- Crew don't need to use the MySOS app. Instead, they should submit a "plan of stay" form on arrival.

The basic crew rules can be found here, which we fleshed out with help from local handling agent Aeroworks. Contact them at fltops@aeroworks.jp for further info.

Are you heading to Japan?

Let us know how it goes! Send us your Airport Spy reports so we can share the gotchas, the things to know, contacts to contact and anything else useful.

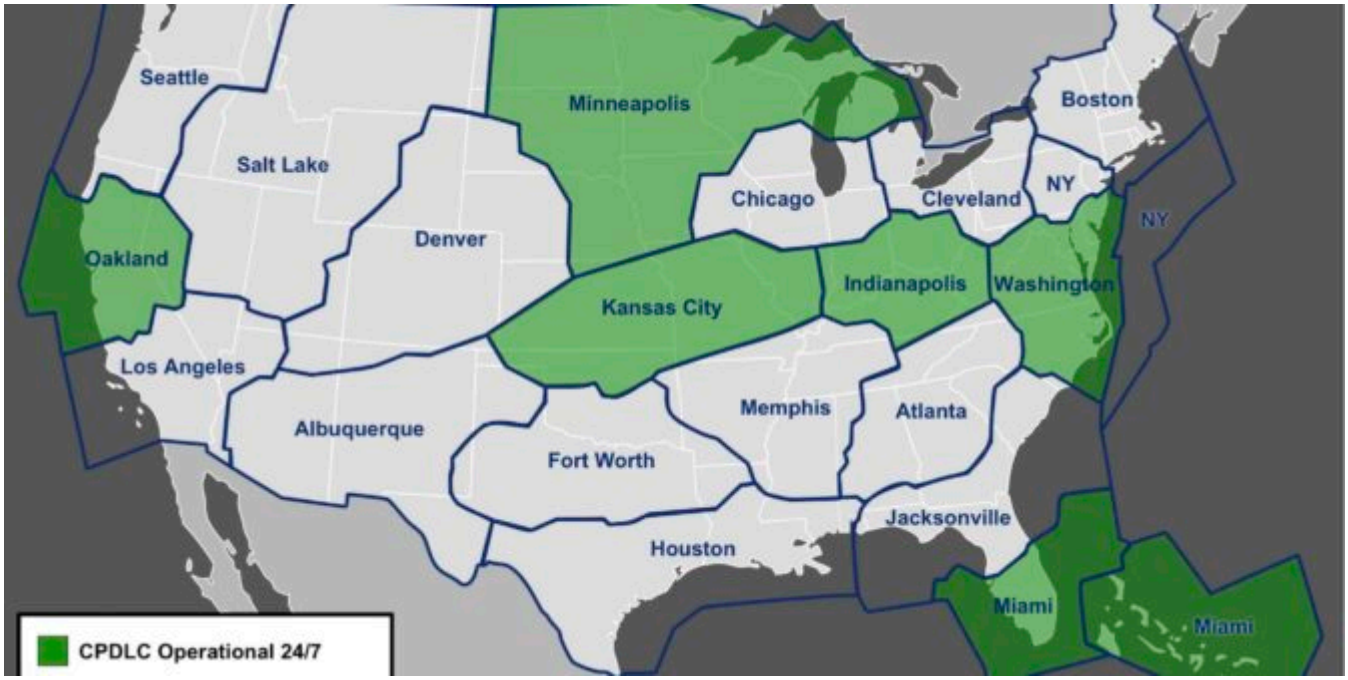
What's Airport Spy? Well, you write a quick little postcard with "what happened" when you went to some airport somewhere. Then you, and others (that's the magic), can refer to your notes for future flights to the same place. Try it here if you haven't already.



If you have any further knowledge or recent experience to share, please let us know!

What we know about the US CPDLC trial

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022



There is a CPDLC trial running in the US, but it isn't open for everyone...

General CPDLC stuff

CPDLC is basically a sort of 'text messaging' system that lets ATC contact you, and you contact them.

Combine it with ADS-C and you've got Datalink, which is mandated in a bunch of places like the NAT HLA, Europe and the UK above FL290 etc.

Some other useful info:

- Europe have a logon list. If you want an answer then register.
- **Europe use ATN**, everywhere else uses FANS. If you only have FANS then you can still call yourself 'CPDLC in Europe' if your original **certificate of registration is pre 2018.**
- Just to be clear, the **US requires FANS 1/A.**
- If your airplane is younger than 2014 then the system also needs a **message recording function.**
- **PBCS tracks** need a performance standard of RCP240 (ADS-C is RSP180).
- **AO56** is the LOA to get (or maybe A003).

We actually made A little Opsicle on CPDLC just the other day. It is quite a silly one, but here it is if you

want a look:

CPDLC in the US

The US has CPDLC in a bunch of places. It isn't really mandatory yet though. At least not the **domestic en-route CPDLC.** This is the bit they are running a trial for, and they're doing it with **L3Harris.**

The trial is actually, specifically, for the business and general aviation community. The likes of Boeing and Airbus (or rather their avionics configurations) have already been approved.

So, here is the FAA info on it. Or rather, this is the notice talking about **who can participate in the trial.** They released this because a bunch of folk were participating, but their avionics version or configuration wasn't good enough and it was messing up the results.

So how do you know if you've got what it takes?

All the systems are listed on the L3Harris site. If your aircraft type is missing from the Trial List (shown below), this means that operational acceptability hasn't been determined yet for that specific aircraft type. If that's you, you can fill in the form and email it to them at DCIT@L3Harris.com and they will check to see whether you have the spec to participate in the trial.

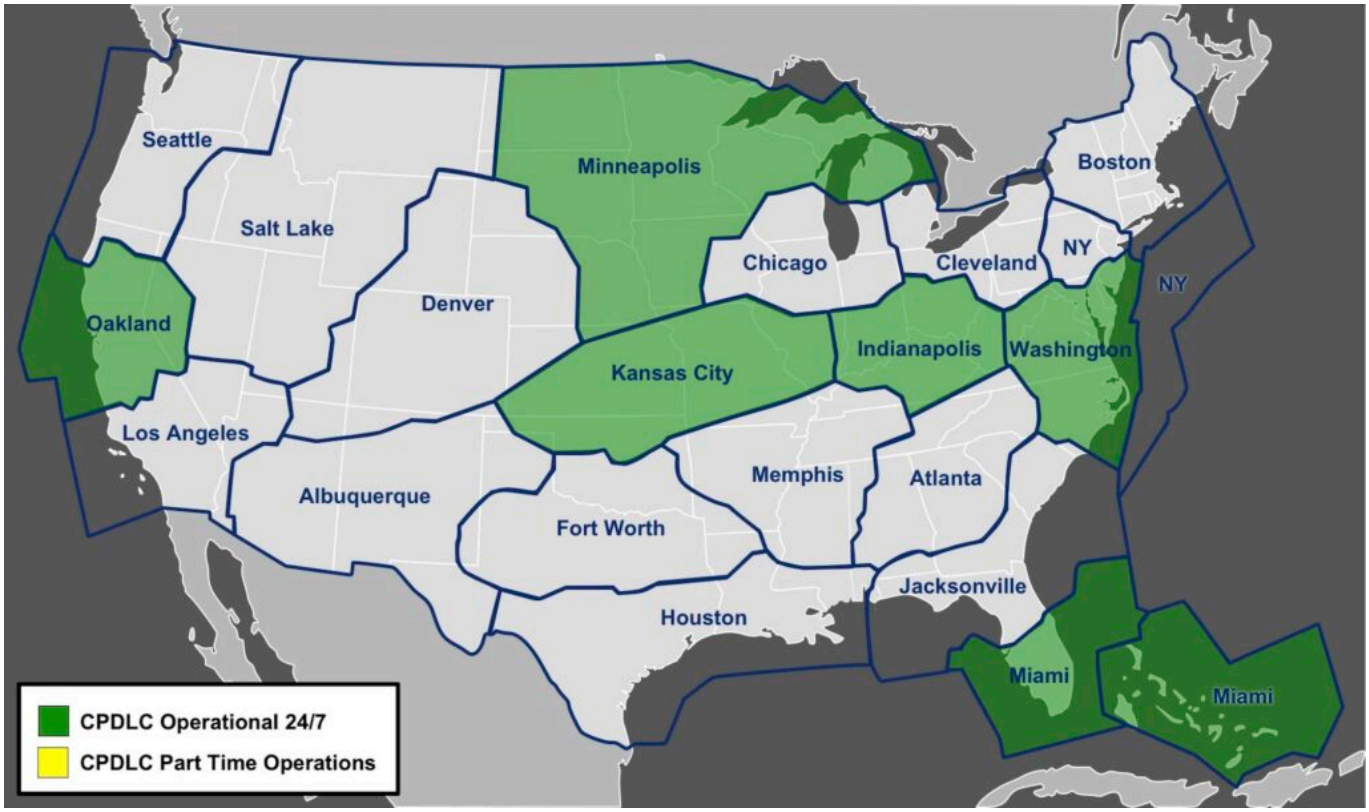
Aircraft	CMU/Equivalent for MF VDL Mode 2	VDR for MF VDL Mode 2	Minimum FMS version	Minimum FMS version (DCL Only)	FPL Filing (En Route)	
G280	RC RIU-4010/4100: DLCA-6000	RC VHF-4000E: 822-1872-390	RC ProLine Fusion 6200 V3.6 (or later)		RC PLF V3.6: 1FANSER	RC PLF V3.6.1: 1FANSE
G500 (GA5C) G600 (GA6C) G700 (GA7C) G800 (GA8C)	HW CMF 3.1	HW EPIC VDR: 7026201-813 (Mod X)	HW NG FMS 3.1		1FANSER	
	HW CMF 3.5		HW NG FMS 1 (Similar to Block 3)		1FANSER	
F900 (A,B,C,EX)	HW Mark II+ Core SW 998-6063-522 (or later)	HW EPIC VDR: 7026201-815 (Mod U)	RC Primus 2000 HW SPZ-8000		1FANSE	
Falcon 8X	HW CMF 3.0	HW EPIC VDR: 7026201-814 (Mod S)	HW EASY III		1FANSE	
Pilatus PC-24	HW CMF 3.2 (or later)	HW KTR-2280A	HW NG FMS 3.2 (or later)		1FANSER	
Global: 5000(GVFD), 5500, 6000, 6500, 7500	RC RIU-4010/4110: 822-1863-175/178/179/671/672	VHF-4000: CPN 822-1468-210 with SB-8 CPN 822-1468-290 CPN 822-1468-302 with SB-11 CPN 822-1468-303 CPN 822-1468-310 with SB-8 or SB-13 CPN 822-1468-390 VHF-4000E: CPN 822-1872-310 with SB-8 CPN 822-1872-390 VHF-4000F: CPN 822-2993-310 with SB-9 CPN 822-2993-390	RC ProLine Fusion V5.1.5 (or later) P/N 810-0163-1B0013 Global 7500 V2.0.2 (or later) P/N 810-0163-3B0001	RC ProLine Fusion: All available	1FANSER	
Challenger: 300, 350, 605, 650	RC RIU-4000: 822-1469-554/602/651/652 RC CMU-4000: 822-1739-601/603/704		RC ProLine 21 Advanced: P/N 946-2720-102/110/130 (or later)		1FANSER	
Embraer: Legacy 450/550 Praetor 500/600	RC RIU-4010: 822-1863-633-638		Embraer Avionics 6.x PLF 810-0163-1E0004 (6.X)	Embraer Avionics 5.x/6.x PLF 810-0163-1E0003 (5.X) 810-0163-1E0004 (6.X)	1FANSER	
Various (with Universal)	UniLink-800 SW SCN 31.3 (or later) with External VDR		SCN 1002.1 (or later)	UniLink-800 or 801 SW SCN 30.1 (or later) for DCL only with SCN 1000.5 (or later)	1FANSE	
	UniLink-801 SW SCN 31.3 (or later) with Internal VDR	Internal VDR with SCN 10.3 (or later)	SCN 1002.1 (or later)		1FANSE	
Various (with Garmin)	G3000/5000 V4.5.X, V4.8.X, V5.1.X, V6.2.X (or later)	GDR-66 (or later)	G3000/5000 V4.5.X, V4.8.X, V5.1.X, V6.2.X (or later)		1FANSE	
Not listed?	If your aircraft or configuration is not on this list, please contact your aircraft or equipment manufacturer					

Note: DCIT recommendations for aircraft operating with Data Communications. Individual operator configurations are subject to regulatory approval.

If your aircraft type (system) is not on it, then don't file as capable of en-route CPDLC and don't try and 'participate'.

For those of you who are on it...

Here is a map of current active CPDLC sites:



ZID/Indianapolis, ZKC/Kansas City, ZMP/Minneapolis, ZDC/Washington, ZOA/Oakland, and ZMA/Miami en-route control facilities are all up and running 24/7 now.

We've so far only found a table showing **61 airports** where **CPDLC DCL services** are currently available:

CPDLC DCL SERVICES AVAILABLE								
KABQ	KATL	KAUS	KBDL	KBNA	KBOS	KBUF	KBUR	KBWI
KCHS	KCLE	KCLT	KCMH	KDAL	KDCA	KDEN	KDFW	KDTW
KEWR	KFLL	KHOU	KHPN	KIAD	KIAH	KIND	KJFK	KLAS
KLAX	KLGA	KMCI	KMCO	KMDW	KMEM	KMIA	KMKE	KMSP
KMSY	KOAK	KONT	KORD	KPDX	KPHL	KPHX	KPIT	KRDU
KRNO	KRSW	KSAN	KSAT	KSDF	KSEA	KSFO	KSJC	KSLC
KSMF	KSNA	KSTL	KTEB	KTPA	KVNY	TJSJ		

U.S. DOMESTIC EN ROUTE CPDLC SERVICES CURRENTLY IN DEPLOYMENT

But we know this is a bit out of date. We've counted 65 airports currently operational including these:

- KJAX/Jacksonville
- KPBI/Palm Beach
- KCVG/Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky
- KADW/Joint Base Andrews

Some stuff on using it

OK, so if you **take-off from an airport that has CPDLC DCL** and which is **in an en-route CPDLC area** then KUSA (because they're who you'll basically be logged onto on the ground) is going to stay active and there is nothing else to do once airborne.

If you take-off logged onto KUSA and **only get into the en-route CPDLC bit later** then again, KUSA stays on and there's nothing more for you to do.

If you take-off logged onto KUSA and then are leaving all CPDLC airspace, it will **auto log off** when it needs to.

For all other scenarios, you probably need to **manually log on** when you reach the place where CPDLC is available.

KUSA is available on the ground in the lower 48 states, San Juan and Puerto Rico.

This info is all available here.

L3Harris are very active in all this and get in touch if they spot any irregularities with aircraft involved in the trial (nice to know they're out there, watching).

Handing over the 'info baton'

So far, all this has been snatched from a bunch of very handy guides that L3Harris publish, so here are the links to those for further info:

- The main L3Harris page on the FAA DataComm stuff
- The CPDLC Pilot Handbook, by L3Harris
- The FAA page on DataComm stuff (not just for this trial, but anywhere they use it)

And if you are an operator in the US with questions about this, then speak to these folk – DCIT@L3Harris.com

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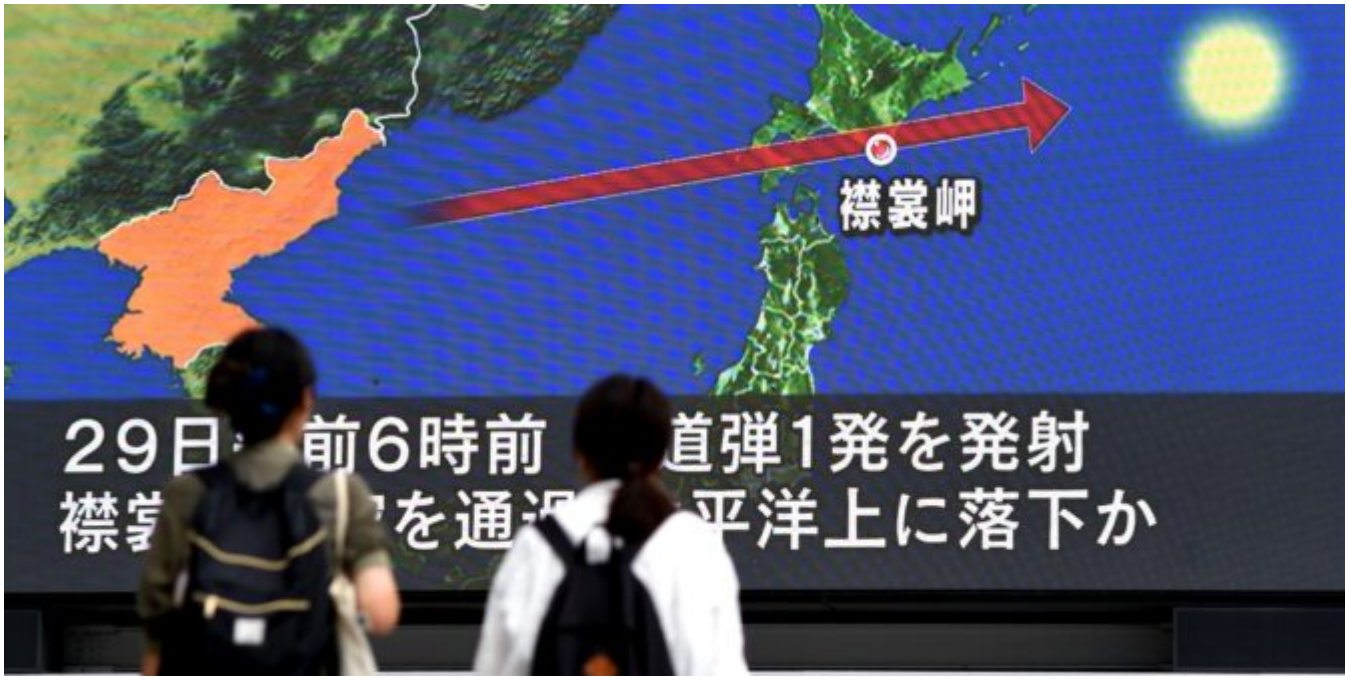
North Korea Missile Threat

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022



North Korea regularly launch projectiles without announcement. These have minimal impact on international flight operations since they fall short of the major airways.

However, this past week has seen five projectiles launched from Pyongyang, and the most recent – a ballistic missile – did pose a very significant threat due to a path which carried it directly over Japan.

Several governments have issued statements regarding the latest launch, and previous launches.

Where did the missile go?

On October 4, Pyongyang launched a suspected ballistic missile over Japan. The path took the missile **directly over Hokkaido island**, prompting Japan to issue alerts to their citizens. It subsequently fell into the Pacific Ocean.

The 2800 mile path is depicted below. The missile reached an altitude of around 1000km.

Previous launches.

This is the **fifth launch in the last week.** The launches often coincide with joint US, South Korean and Japanese military drills, or political meetings. There have been a spate of them throughout 2022, with the last reported in August.

In 2018, five launches were carried out over 10 days after a US aircraft carrier made a port call in South Korea.

This is the **first launch since 2017** which has seen a projectile incur on Japanese airspace.

How high is the Threat Level?

Following talks with the US in early 2018, **North Korea agreed with ICAO that it would provide adequate warning** of all *"activity hazardous to aviation"* within its airspace. However, in May 2019 North Korea resumed launching missiles into the Sea of Japan, without providing any warning by Notam.

The ZKKP/Pyongyang FIR is rarely utilised for overflights by foreign aircraft, and the missiles are usually launched into the Sea of Japan, causing little damage or disruption and falling outside the Japanese

EEZ. However, there is an ongoing threat to aircraft operating in the ZKKP/Pyongyang FIR due to **unannounced launches and risk from falling debris.**

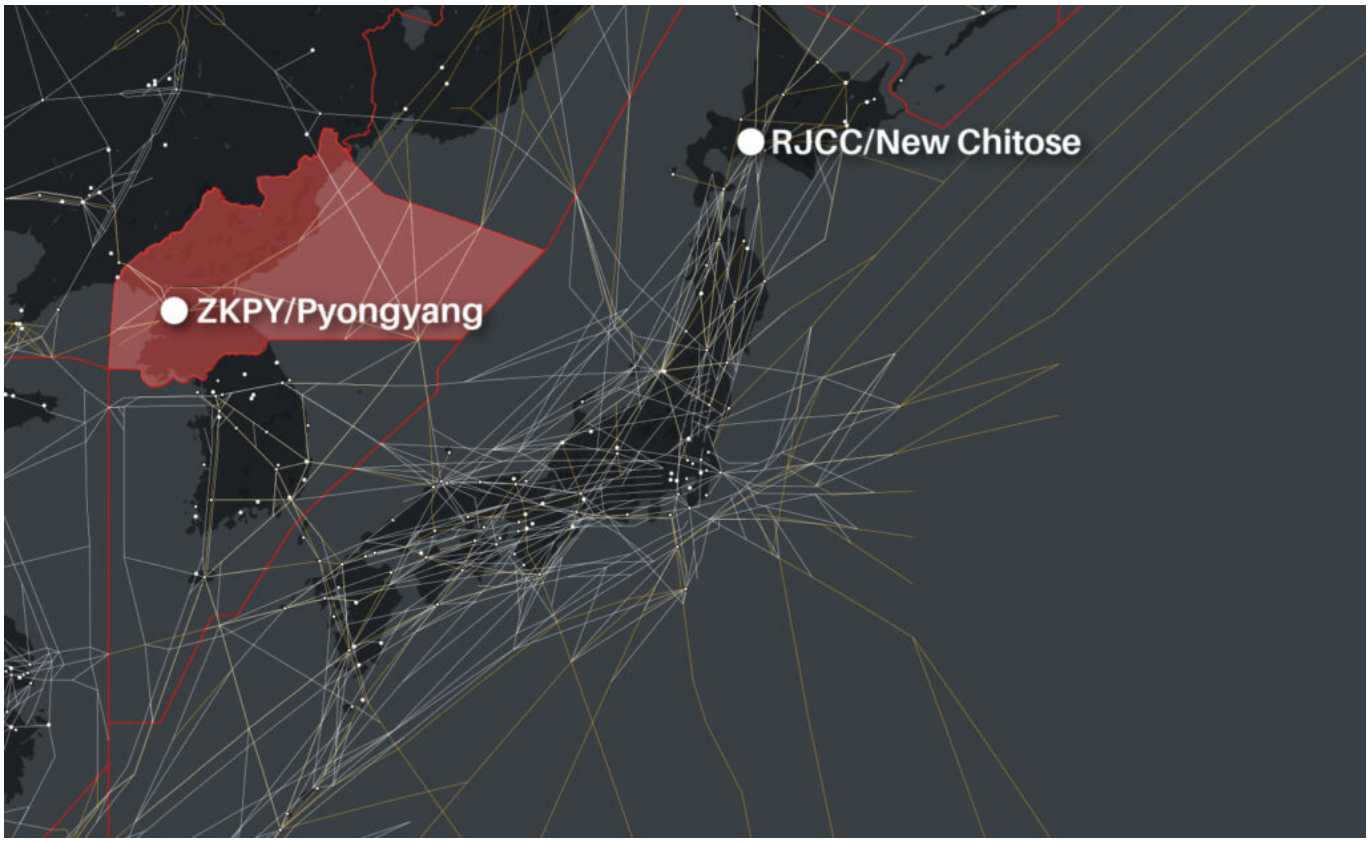
North Korea has multiple airspace warnings from several major authorities. **The threat level has not changed.**

A full list of the **current major cautions and warnings** regarding the airspace, and a **full briefing on North Korea** can be found on Safeairspace.net

Japan threat levels.

Launches towards or over Japan pose a much more significant threat, because the path towards the sea and the debris fall area are crossing or within sections of airspace used by civilian flights.

North Korea is suspected of attempting to show how their range could impact US military bases in Guam and is not directly targeting Japan, or threatening the airspace. **The missiles fall well beyond the airways**, however, with the launches being unannounced and potentially growing in frequency, a higher risk level and caution should be taken with operating in the region.



What on earth is a Medicane?

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

Hurricane season in the Med is not something you hear said often. But it is a thing, sort of.

So today we thought we'd take a look at 'Medicanes' and try to answer two things with this post. Firstly, what is a Medicane and secondly, surely there is a better name for it?

What is it?

A Medicane is a 'tropical like' cyclone that forms in the Mediterranean.

Now don't worry, the Med isn't getting storms the size of the Atlantic ones, or Pacific ones for that matter. But they are getting **ones which are bigger than seen in previous years**, and this does mean additional safety considerations and threats you might not be too aware of.

For example, this area has a lot of aircraft operating in it, and high density traffic and weather avoidance often don't go well together.

Where do they generally form?

They are seen most often developing in the watery area **bounded by the coasts of Spain, France, Corsica and Algeria.** They also form occasionally in the area between the gulf of Sidra up to the Ionian Sea.

They can occur year round, but tend to be most **common between September and January.**

How big and bad are they?

They are only **seen about 1-2 times a year** actually so nothing like the frequency of the Atlantic hurricanes.

They tend to only have a **radius of between 70-200km**, and last about 3 days. A small proportion have achieved Category 1 hurricane level winds, but this is rare.

All in all they lack the size, intensity and duration of their bigger counterparts in other regions of the world. **But don't dismiss them just yet**, because they can still pack a punch and they are growing more frequent.

We mentioned the region they form in.

This is important because Europe is, at the best of times, some busy airspace to deal with. Throw an unexpected storm into the mix and things can get particularly messy.

Move them over airports and you get some **serious delays and disruption.**

Should we do anything?

Knowing they are there and planning routes that don't take your poor airplane and crew through them is probably the best idea.

Deviations to avoid mean more fuel burn and effort for ATC, and like we said the airspace can be busy in this area, so planning or **asking for this early is important.**

Don't underestimate how disruptive these can be, and monitor their development. A good spot to monitor is the Medicane watch centre **twitter page.**

And let your crew know about these so they can be on the look out on SigWx charts, (or just in the skies).

Now let's talk about the name.

A **Medi**terranean Hurri**cane.** Yep, I don't like it.

Surely *'mediclone'* would have been more amusing? We're guessing it sounds too, well, sci-fi – conjuring up images of evil doctors creating monsterish clones.

Medicane sounds like a boring zimmer frame manufacturer though so we would like to officially suggest a renaming, and offer these options:

- **A Mediterror** *(A combination of mediterranean and terror)*
- **A Hurrorterranean** *(a mix of hurricane, horror and mediterranean)*
- **An Ouragan** (*'hurricane' but in French because the French always seem a little put out that French isn't used more in aviation lingo, and that sounds a bit Ogreish)*
- **A Stormy Mcstormface** *(I'm British and our public vote naming system remains the best)*

Anyway, not important really.

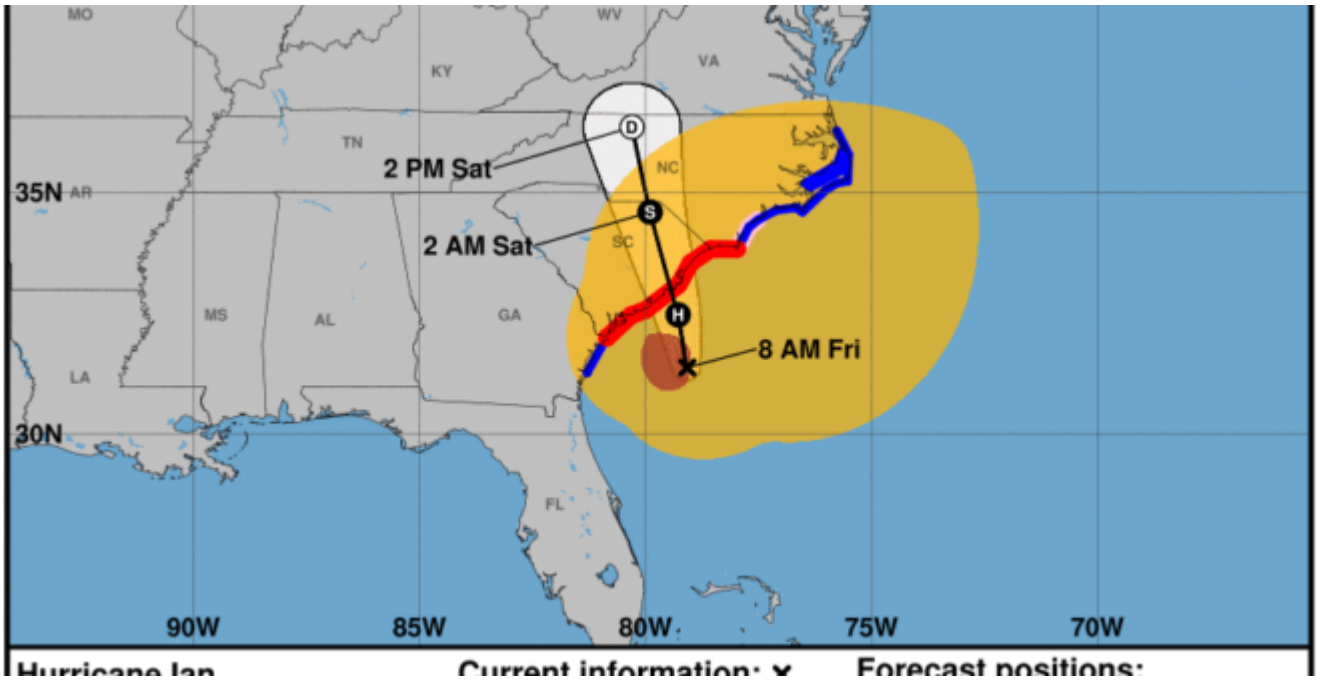
Want some more (proper) info?

If you want more info on this weird weather phenomenon then check out this very informative EASA post (which is where we took 90% of the info here).

Check out this info on a mighty Medicane which 'hit' Greece in 2020.

Hurricane Ian: Florida Airport Closures – Sep 30 1200z

David Mumford
12 October, 2022

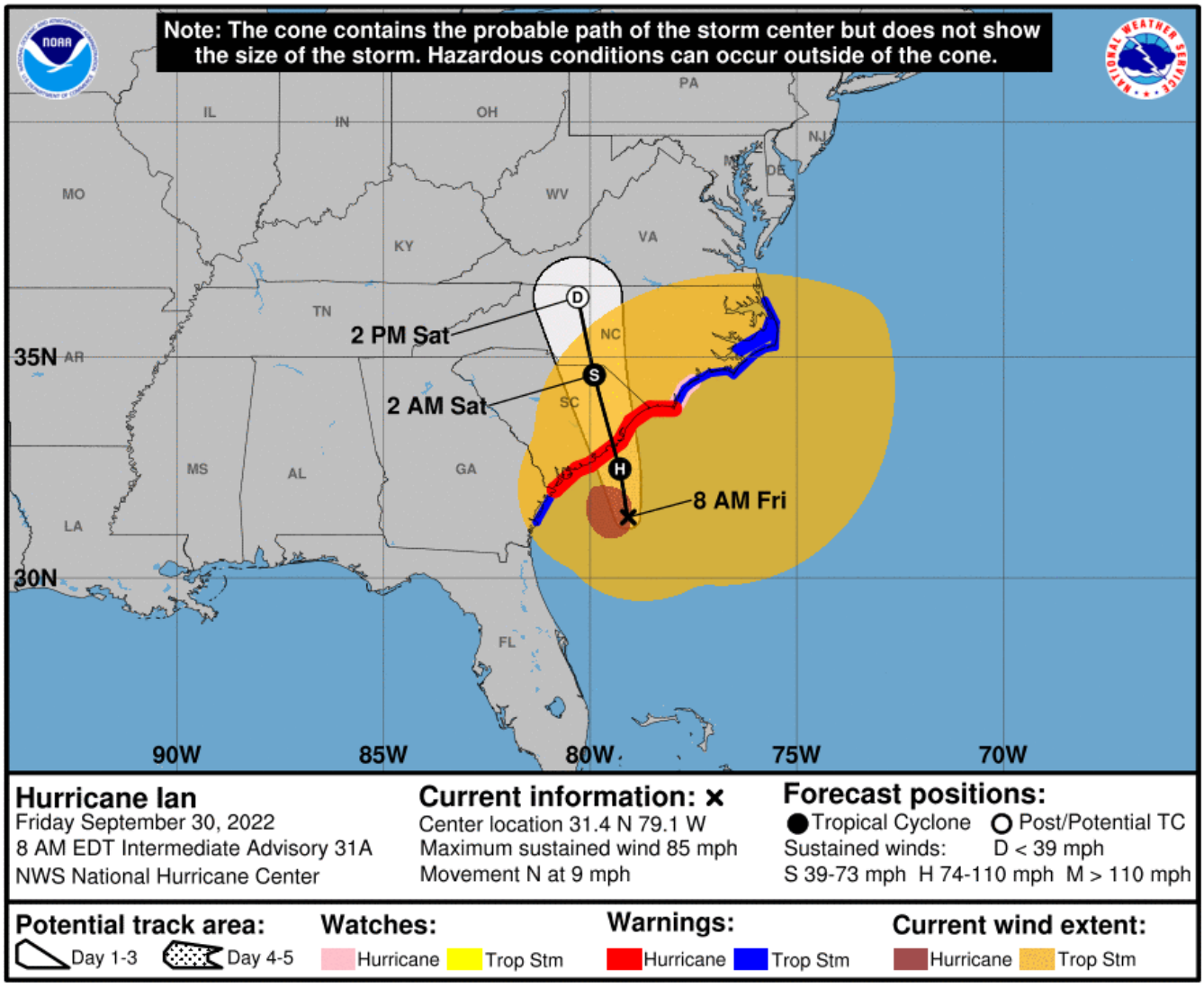


Tropical Storm Ian, which impacted Florida as a hurricane on Wednesday, is gaining new strength as it approaches South Carolina today. Forecasts say landfall could take place this afternoon.

The entire coast of South Carolina is under a hurricane warning. Once it makes landfall, Ian is expected to weaken back to a tropical storm as it makes its way across the southeastern US.

Meanwhile, Florida is still assessing the mass of damage from Ian, mostly from flooding.

National Hurricane Center's Advisory, issued 1200z Sep 30:



At 800 AM EDT (1200 UTC), the center of Hurricane Ian was located near latitude 31.4 North, longitude 79.1 West. Ian is moving toward the north near 9 mph (15 km/h). This general motion with an increase in forward speed is expected this morning, followed by a turn toward the north-northwest by tonight. On the forecast track, the center of Ian will approach and reach the coast of South Carolina today, and then move farther inland across eastern South Carolina and central North Carolina tonight and Saturday.

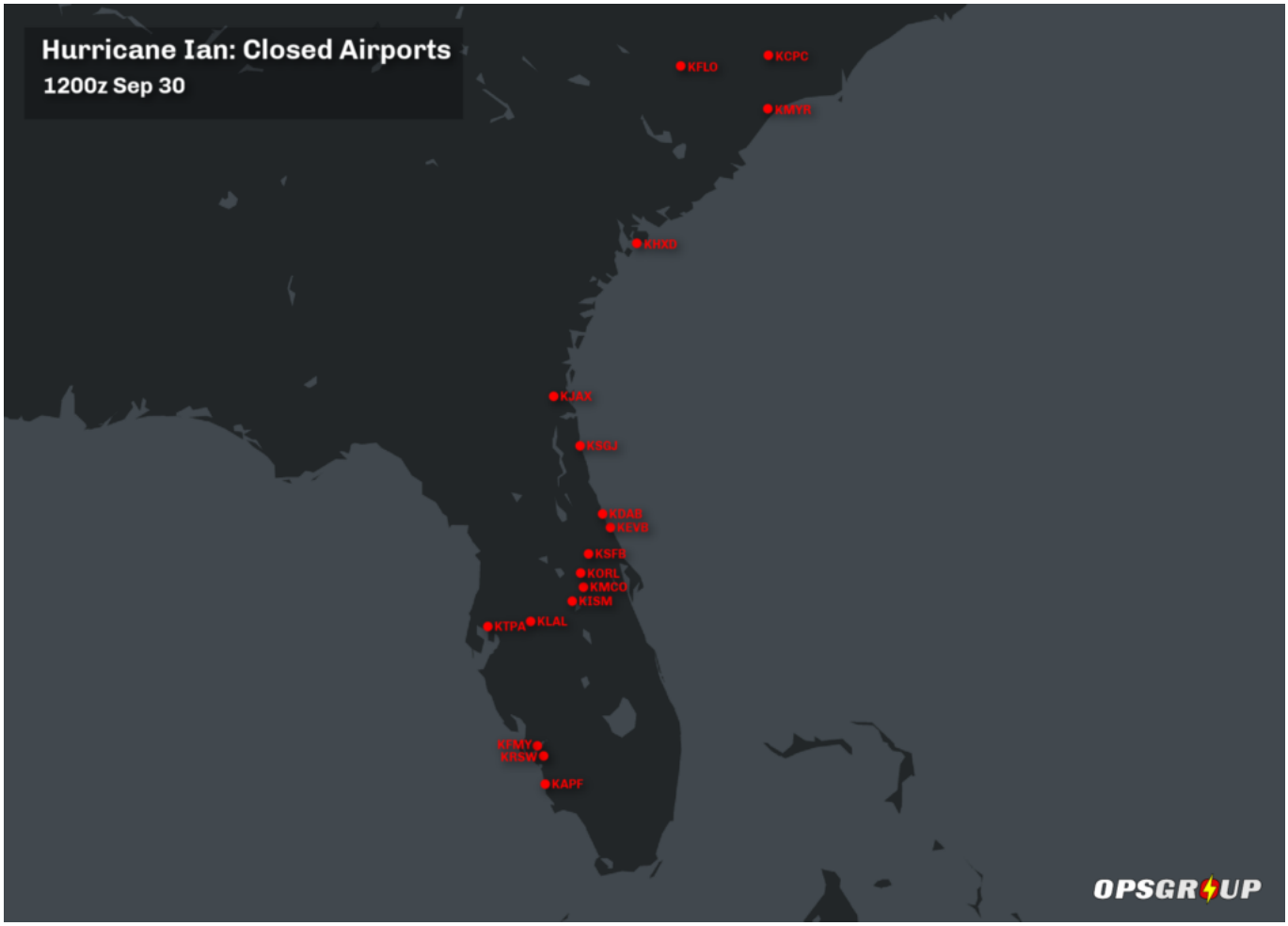
Maximum sustained winds remain near 85 mph (140 km/h) with higher gusts. Little change in strength is expected before Ian reaches the coast later today. Rapid weakening is expected after landfall, and Ian is forecast to become an extratropical low over North Carolina tonight or on Saturday. The low is then expected to dissipate by Saturday night.

Hurricane-force winds extend outward up to 70 miles (110 km) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 485 miles (780 km). A sustained wind of 40 mph (65 km/h) and a gust to 58 mph (93 km/h) were recently reported at a WeatherFlow station on Fort Sumter Range Front Light in South Carolina.

The estimated minimum central pressure is 984 mb (29.06 inches).

Airport Closures

Several airports across the region have closed for the passage of the storm. Here are the ones we know about as of 1200z on Sep 30:



And here are the Notams that carry the announcements of the closures:

KAPF
09/097 – AD AP CLSD EXC 2HR PPR 239-564-1692. 30 SEP 12:00 2022 UNTIL 03 OCT 23:00 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 22:04 2022
09/096 – AD AP CLSD DLY SS-SR. 30 SEP 23:00 2022 UNTIL 04 OCT 12:00 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 21:56 2022

KRSW
09/112 (A0845/22) – AD AP CLSD EXC HUM 30MIN PPR 239-590-4460. 29 SEP 13:18 2022 UNTIL 07 OCT 16:00 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 13:19 2022

KFMY
09/075 (A0470/22) – SVC TWR CLSD MNT CTAF 119.0. 29 SEP 17:08 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 11:00 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 17:08 2022
09/073 (A0466/22) – RWY 05/23 CLSD EXC HUM. 29 SEP 14:23 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 16:00 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 14:23 2022

KTPA
09/275 (A3155/22) – AD AP CLSD EXC EMERG ACFT AND CARGO. 29 SEP 23:01 2022 UNTIL 30 SEP 14:00 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 16:19 2022

Plans on reopening at 10am on Sep 30: https://twitter.com/FlyTPA

KLAL
09/063 – APRON TERMINAL RAMP CLSD EXC EMERG ACFT AND SAR. 29 SEP 18:15 2022 UNTIL 07 OCT 21:00 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 18:15 2022

KISM
09/041 (A0346/22) – AD AP CLSD EXC PPR 407-518-2537. 29 SEP 17:52 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 10:59 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 17:52 2022
More info: https://twitter.com/flyKissimmee

KMCO
09/200 (A2653/22) – AD AP CLSD EXC EMERG ACFT AND MIL OPS 2HR PPR 407-825-2036. 30 SEP 00:12 2022 UNTIL 30 SEP 14:00 2022. CREATED: 30 SEP 00:12 2022

KORL
09/040 (A2617/22) – ORL AD AP CLSD EXC EMERG ACFT AND MIL OPS 2HR PPR 407-825-1681. 28 SEP 14:30 2022 UNTIL 30 SEP 16:00 2022. CREATED: 27 SEP 19:43 2022
Although they say they will be reopening at 12pm on Sep 30: https://twitter.com/mco

KSFB
09/044 (A0904/22) – AD AP CLSD EXC SAR 1HR PPR 407-247-1212. 28 SEP 05:00 2022 UNTIL 30 SEP 21:00 2022. CREATED: 27 SEP 19:54 2022
More info: https://twitter.com/sfb_airport

KEVB
09/014 – AD AP NOT ATTENDED. 28 SEP 14:21 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 16:00 2022. CREATED: 28 SEP 14:21 2022
09/013 – AD AP SFC COND NOT REP. 28 SEP 14:20 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 16:00 2022. CREATED: 28 SEP 14:20 2022
09/012 – SVC TWR CLSD MNT CTAF 119.675. 28 SEP 14:00 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 11:00 2022. CREATED: 28 SEP 13:39 2022

KDAB
09/166 (A1752/22) – AD AP CLSD EXC FOR MIL AND EMERG ACFT 1HR PPR 386-547-0298. 28 SEP 16:35 2022 UNTIL 05 OCT 22:00 2022. CREATED: 28 SEP 15:22 2022

KSGJ
09/019 – AD AP CLSD EXC EMERG ACFT. 28 SEP 21:30 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 16:00 2022. CREATED: 28 SEP 21:30 2022

KJAX
09/058 (A0987/22) – SVC TWR CLSD TWR 118.3 NOW CTAF CLASS C VFR OPS NOT PERMITTED EXC MEDEVAC AND LAW ENFORCEMENT CTC JACKSONVILLE ARTCC FOR CLASS C ARR COM ON 124.67, FOR CLR DELIVERY AT 904.845.1592. 29 SEP 00:42 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 00:42 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 00:42 2022
Although they say they will be reopening at 12pm on Sep 30: https://twitter.com/JAXairport

KHXD
09/032 (A0615/22) – AD AP CLSD. 29 SEP 19:08 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 14:00 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 19:08 2022

KMYR
09/033 (A0448/22) – SVC TWR CLSD CLASS C SER NOT AVBL CTC JACKSONVILLE ATCSCC ON 134.37. 29 SEP 23:15 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 12:30 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 22:05 2022

KFLO
09/023 – SVC TWR CLSD TWR 125.1 NOW CTAF. 30 SEP 02:00 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 10:30 2022. CREATED: 29 SEP 23:51 2022

KCPC
09/003 – AD AP CLSD. 30 SEP 05:00 2022 UNTIL 01 OCT 12:00 2022. CREATED: 30 SEP 00:35 2022

More info

- **Cyclocane** have a tracker page for the Hurricane here, which includes tracking map and source info from the National Hurricane Center.
- **The FAA** have a page on airport closures here.
- **The NBAA** have a page on the Hurricane here, which includes airport closures, equipment shutdowns, and route info.

If you have any additional info to add, please email us at news@ops.group

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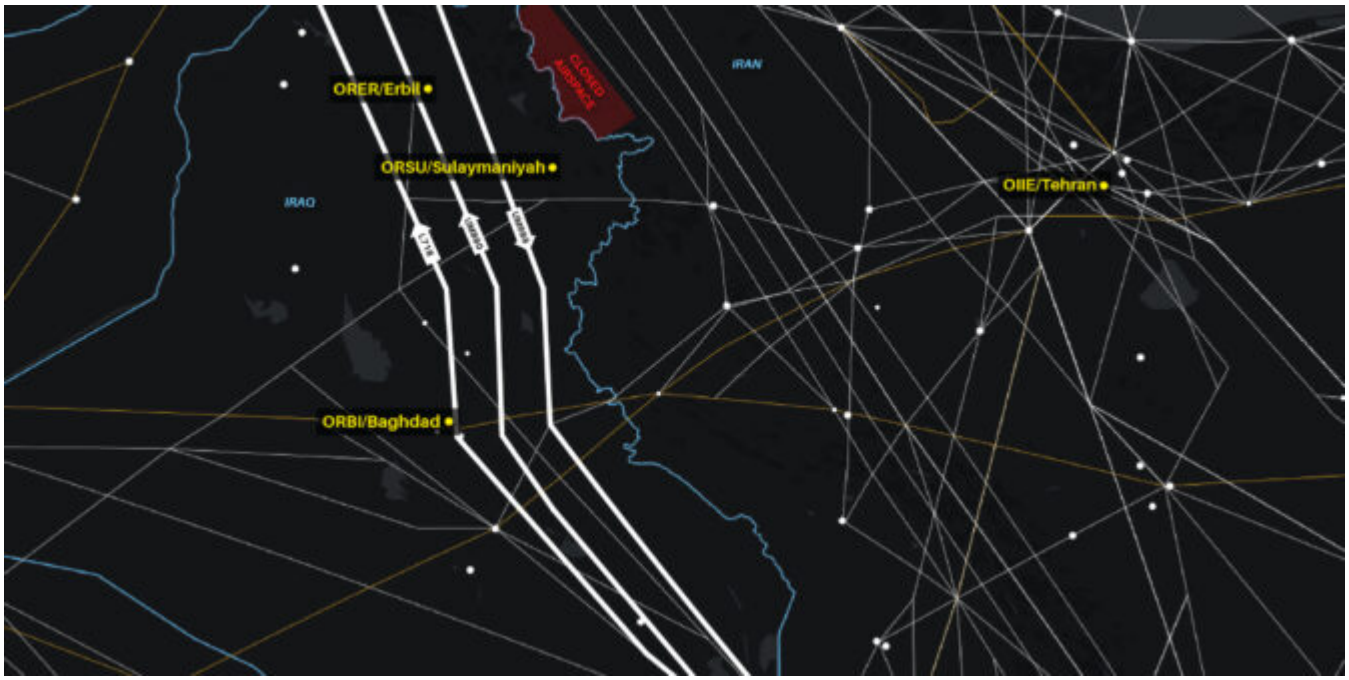
Iraq Airspace Risk For Overflights

David Mumford
12 October, 2022



International operators overflying Iraq should take note of recent events impacting airspace risk in the region.

Iran have closed a section of airspace in the north of the country along the border with Iraq, and are potentially using the area to launch **missile and drone attacks at targets near ORER/Erbil airport, in close proximity to heavily flown international air routes.**

Iranian attacks

Iran are warning their own operators against flying in Iraqi airspace, and especially at Erbil airport, which came under direct fire from Iranian surface-to-surface ballistic missiles in Feb 2021 and again in March 2022. Iran launched further attacks this week on an area 35 miles east of Erbil, reportedly targeting a Kurdish opposition group in the region – an armed opposition force that is banned in Iran.

Here is the warning issued by Iran:

OIIX A2959/22 - AIRSPACE SAFETY AND SECURITY WARNING ISSUED BY IRAN CAA IN RESPONSE TO THE HAZARDOUS SITUATION WITHIN THE TERRITORY AND
AIRSPACE OF BAGHDAD FIR (ORBB),
IRANIAN REGISTERED AIR OPERATORS ARE ADVISED TO TAKE
ALL POTENTIAL RISKS INTO ACCOUNT IN RISK ASSESSMENT AND FLT
PLANNING DECISIONS WHEN OPERATING AT AIRPORTS WHICH ARE LOCATED
WITHIN BAGHDAD FIR (ORBB) ESPECIALLY ERBIL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
(ORER), DUE TO THE RISK POSED BY
MILITANT ACTIVITY AND LIMITED RISK MITIGATION CAPABILITIES IN IRAQ. 28 SEP 17:35
2022 UNTIL 05 OCT 18:30 2022 ESTIMATED. CREATED: 28 SEP 17:43 2022

Iraq airspace risk

Several countries warn against overflights of both Iran and Iraq. The US FAA bans N-reg aircraft from the OIIX/Tehran FIR, and says that overflights of the ORBB/Baghdad FIR must be at FL320 or above – and just last week they extended these rules to 2024.

But the Iranian attacks in northern Iraq raise questions and concerns about overflights of Iraq. Airways UM688 (southbound) and UM860 (northbound) through Iraq are popular routes for international flights between Europe and the Middle East. **Is it really safe to fly these routes now, even above FL320?**

It's worth digging into the US FAA guidance on Iraq a bit deeper to get a clearer picture of exactly what the risk is here. SFAR 77 has the info, and this is (some of) what it says:

- *Iranian-aligned militia groups (IAMGs) have access to UAS and anti-aircraft capable weapons systems which present inadvertent risks to the safety of U.S. civil aviation operations in the ORBB/Baghdad FIR at altitudes below FL320 and at potentially targeted airports.*
- *IAMGs likely lack the ability to conduct effective target identification and airspace de-confliction, increasing the risk of an accidental shoot down of a civil aircraft due to misidentification or misperception.*
- *In addition, the FAA remains concerned about cross-border military activity. Both Iran and Turkey have previously conducted various no-notice, cross-border operations striking targets in northern Iraq using a variety of weapons, including short-range ballistic missiles, rockets, and weaponized UAS. In a recent example, on March 12, 2022, up to twelve Fateh-110 surface-to-surface ballistic missiles launched from western Iran and impacted near the construction site of the new U.S. consulate in Erbil, Iraq, and Erbil International airport (ORER). While this attack did not pose a direct threat to the airport, the missile trajectories possibly presented an inadvertent risk to aircraft in flight that might have been operating at low altitude in the vicinity of Erbil International airport (ORER) during the time of the attack.*
- *In general, unannounced third-party cross-border operations in the Baghdad FIR (ORBB)*

present a low altitude safety-of-flight risk for aircraft flying in the vicinity of the targeted location(s) and for aircraft on the ground at airports co-located with, or in close proximity to, the intended targets. These activities also pose an airspace de-confliction challenge.

Should I avoid overflying Iraq?

For most Europe-Middle East flights, **the route through Saudi-Egypt is a safer option than Iraq.**

Even routing through Iran is probably a safer bet at the moment (although we don't advise that either!). We received a report from an OPSGROUP member this week who routed through Iran:

"I would estimate our flights through Iran vs Iraq are taking (approximately) 10-15 mins longer, but at significantly less risk. We only consider airports that are served by either Emirates or FlyDubai as suitable for diversion, but only as a last resort, such as OIIE, OISS and OIFM. The company we use for support and handling if such diversions are required is Hadid. They are excellent for sorting any problems/permits in the Middle East."

Here's the Iraq risk, as we see it:

- Potential of **intentional targeting** by terrorist organisations who possess portable anti-aircraft weaponry.
- Civil aircraft may be **misidentified** by the air defence systems of both local and foreign military who are active in the country.
- Iraq is politically unstable, and **security and safety on the ground** is unpredictable and likely to be high risk.
- The US have pulled their troops out and so there is **little protection at the major airports.**
- ORBI/Baghdad and ORER/Erbil airports are **common target for rocket attacks.** Militia and terrorist groups are active in these areas.

Want a full briefing?

Just click here. Safeairspace.net is our conflict zone and risk database run by OPSGROUP. We continually assess the risk to operators the world over. It presents that information in a way that will always be simple, clear, and free. You can also add your email to our new fortnightly airspace risk briefing that contains only what you need to know, delivered every second Monday.

Ops to Taiwan? You'll have to avoid China

David Mumford
12 October, 2022

- Can I fly between China and Taiwan?
- If I make a stop in Hong Kong, is that ok?
- What about overflights?
- Can I overfly China to get to Taiwan?

There's a **boring answer** to these questions, and there's a **fun answer**.

The Fun Answer

OPSGROUP members have all the fun – you guys get to play the game. We tested it out and managed to find the 'cheat mode', so we left the screen open for you. You can download this (along with all the other Opsicles we've made) via your Dashboard here.

The Boring Answer

You can't fly between China and Taiwan in a foreign-registered aircraft.

The Chinese authorities are reluctant to provide any kind of official document stating any of this – we haven't been able to find any precise wording anywhere in their AIP which states these restrictions.

To test the theory, we applied to the Chinese authorities for a landing permit for a direct flight from Taiwan to China. After we applied, we received an immediate call from CAAC emphasising that they **will not deal with such applications** for foreign registered aircraft. They advised they will not process this application and **verbally rejected it.**

The Chinese authorities circulate an official document to Chinese handling agents about this issue, which sets out the rules quite clearly. For some reason, they don't like these to be distributed outside of China… so naturally, we got our hands on a translated copy:

Take off from	Tech stop at	Overfly	Tech stop at	Destination	Allowed?
Taiwan		Mainland China		Third countries	**No**
Taiwan	Third countries	Mainland China		Third countries	**Yes**
Taiwan		Sanya FIR		Third countries	**Yes**
Taiwan	Third countries	Sanya FIR		Third countries	**Yes**
Taiwan				Mainland China	**No**
Mainland China				Taiwan	**No**
Mainland China		Taiwan		Third countries	**No**
Third countries		Mainland China		Taiwan	**No**
Third countries		Mainland China	Third countries	Taiwan	**Yes**
Third countries		Sanya FIR		Taiwan	**Yes**

So, to summarize:

- **Foreign-registered aircraft are prohibited from operating direct between China and Taiwan.**
- **You've got to make a tech stop somewhere between the two countries – most choose to do so in either VHHH/Hong Kong or VMMC/Macau.**
- **Importantly, the same rules apply for China overflights – if you're flying to Taiwan from any third country, you can't overfly China. China allow some airline flights to Taiwan to overfly China, then the Hong Kong FIR. But they don't allow non-sched and private flights to do this.**
- **Only Chinese and Taiwanese registered aircraft are able to operate direct between China and Taiwan.**

There's one more scenario that is apparently also not allowed:

You can't overfly both China and Taiwan and then land in a third country. For example: you're departing from RPLL/Manilla in the Philippines, then overflying Taiwan (RCAA FIR), then overflying China (ZSHA FIR), and then landing in a third country like RKSI/Seoul in South Korea – according to the Chinese authorities, **this is not allowed**, and they won't issue an overflight permit!

Further reading:

- For some general **top tips on ops to China**, check here.
- Make sure you know about the **hidden permit costs** of operating to China here.
- Read about the latest goings on in the **South China Sea** here.
- OPSGROUP members can download a **Himalayan Routing Guide** here.

Japanese Prime Minster Funeral: Tokyo Restrictions

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

Japan is hosting a state funeral for former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on September 27.

While airport operations should not be disrupted to the extent London airports have been for Queen Elizabeth's funeral (a noise thing), you can expect some disruptions (a capacity thing).

The Funeral

The funeral will take place on **September 27th, in Tokyo.**

Around 190 foreign dignitaries are expected to attend and **RJTT/Haneda** will likely be accommodating the majority of flights coming in for it.

Ground disruption

Activists are planning to hold protests in the city on the same day, and will most likely gather at major public spaces.

This probably won't include airports given the higher levels of security, and more restricted access at them. Security across the city will be increased though, with additional check points in place, and police monitoring.

Ground transport delays are therefore likely, and access across the city is probably going to be reduced.

Airport Disruptions

There are **no planned restrictions for scheduled commercial flights** into RJTT/Haneda or RJAA/Narita, in fact the Japanese CAB (Civil Aviation Bureau) are yet to release any specific restrictions.

However, previous ceremonies have resulted in restrictions, and **restrictions which particularly impact General/Business Aviation** so here's what we think might happen:

- Loads of visiting dignitaries means loads of visiting aircrafts which means loads less parking and handling capacity for other aircraft.
- From Sep 24-29, no non-commercial or general aviation will be accommodated at

RJTT/Haneda unless approved though diplomatic channels.

- It is a big event which is already generating good and bad reactions in Japan, so security is going to be higher, which means some airspace restrictions may be put into place. You can definitely expect something like a 25nm radius around the Imperial Palace as a prohibited area.
- More restrictions at the already busy RJAA/Narita. Mostly night ones (2300-0559 local type things).

Other options

Narita and Haneda aren't your only two airports. You have a few more worth looking at.

And remember Japan has an **amazing high speed train** so it's easy to get from airport to airport.

RJCC/Sapporo New Chitose Two 3000m runways, all equipped with ILS approaches (CAT II/III on the southerly direction runways). But, it has construction going on, so a lot of *stuff* is unserviceable. Check notams and temporary charts before heading in here.

RJBB/Kansai Two 4000m runways, CAT II equipped, and all they have amusing "human" names for a lot of their arrivals and departures. Another one with works on though so look out.

RJGG/Nagoya Chubu A 3500m runway, CAT II/III equipped.

RJSS/Sendai 3000m runway, CAT I both ends.

These all have restrictions on overnight parking with **priority given to VIP flights.**

What about the Covid entry rules?

Ah yes, we almost forgot! Japan's Covid-related entry rules are **different for passengers and crew.**

For passengers: you can check the (fairly straightforward) info on entry rules on the official website here.

For crew: technically, the rules are written here, but with some extra info supplied from local agents, here's the lowdown:

- To avoid hotel quarantine, crew who have been in a 'blue' listed country within the past 14 days need to be either vaccinated (3 doses) or get a PCR test issued within 72hrs of departure. Crew who have been in 'yellow' countries must be vaccinated – they don't have the option of a PCR test. You can see the list of yellow countries here.
- Crew don't need to complete the form at the MySOS site, and they don't need to get a visa in advance – they get issued a shore pass on arrival.

If you need the help of a local handling agent in Japan, we recommend you get in touch with Aeroworks at fltops@aeroworks.jp

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Queen Elizabeth II Funeral: Restrictions in London

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

The Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will take place on September 19th, from 0900-1900z. There are likely to be significant restrictions in and around London on the day.

September 19 will also become a new Bank Holiday, and a greater than usual number of closures of businesses can be expected on the day.

Here's what we currently know as of **September 14:**

(All times in Zulu… we think)

All London Airports

Have a read of our post on London Airport options, and general top tips.

All the airports will operate at a **reduced capacity**. Except a similar thing to what you see on public holidays.

- A **two hour ground limit** is likely at most airports
- **No helicopters** will be allowed (except probably a lot of police helicopters over London, look out for them)

Demand is already building so get your requests in soon if you need to operate in. Important folk from about 120 countries are likely to be attend and guess where they'll all be flying into…

Security is going to be significantly higher as well.

EGLL/London Heathrow

The issue is **noise levels**, and trying to manage it alongside where the procession will be taking place, which is why they have something called ***"Operation London Bridge".*** The main 'quiet time' will likely be from 1350-1440z.

At the moment, a full stop on operations has not been suggested. However, there is probably going to be significant reductions in operations. So, here's the current plan:

Westerlies are expected to be in use, and if they are then the plan is this:

- **0900-1230** Stop on all **arrivals**, but departures will still operate
- **1050-1105** Stop on **all arrivals and departures** during the National two minutes silence. This will be managed tactically (so you'll probably just hold a little longer)
- **1230-1400** Stop on **all arrivals and all departures**
- **1400-1900** Stop on all **departures**, arrivals will still operate
- **1900** Operations will begin to return to normal

If Easterlies are in use then it gets a bit more complicated.

- Departures will be stopped in the morning
- Arrivals will be stopped in the afternoon
- But no departures means **no space on the ground**, which means a further reduction in the morning for arrivals as well.

The CAA has confirmed that any cancellations due to all this will be **alleviated**, so make sure you reference *'London Bridge'* when making your request.

Filing EGLL as an alternate on this date is probably not advisable as they are unlikely to be able to accept you (except on an Emergency). In fact, the AIP says not to.

EGKK/Gatwick

Gatwick has **some closures** from Sep 14-16:

- **15 Sep Whole airport closed** 0355-0415z
- **16 Sep Whole airport closed** 0250-0405z
- **17 Sep Open but no arrivals or departures** 0225-0420z
- **18 Sep Open but no arrivals or departures** 0310-0425z

So basically **tiny night closures**. Notams A6976/22, A6977/22, A7020/22 and A7021/22 are the ones to check. We haven't seen anything specific for the 19th.

Signature Handling is also going to be temporarily handed over to the Foreign Commonwealth and Development office so expect slower responses to slot requests and monitor for more restrictions by notam.

EGKB/Biggin Hill

We've not see any restrictions on Sep 19th, but there is a **flypast on the 17th** so it will be closed 1650-1700z (Notam C5209/22)

EGLC/London City

If the westerly **Runway 27** is in use then arrivals will be impacted less, but departures that continue west may be an issue. Early turns and significant extra routing might be required.

If it is the easterly **Runway 09** in use its more difficult again because northerly arrivals and the approach are over the City. There are likely to be restrictions here as well in that case.

EGGW/Luton

- Closed on Sep 18th from 1845-1915 (Notam A6988/22)
- Closed on Sep 19th for 2 hours… but we're not sure the time yet
- Also closed 0000-0530 17-18 for annual maintenance (Notam A6554/22)

EGSS/Stansted

Stansted is expected to be **handling the majority of traffic** coming in for the funeral. Currently, slots are taking longer to get approved because the FCDO is sorting this.

Parking is already filling up fast too so if you need it, book it soon.

- **Night Restrictions** are still in place between 0520-2220z daily
- **Only emergency diversions** will be accepted on Sep 19th due parking and ground capacity limits

EGMC/Southend

- Closed 0530-1300z on the 19th (we haven't seen a notam for this yet)
- The airport is **'strictly PPR'** until the 22nd (Notam P0144/22)

EGTK/Oxford

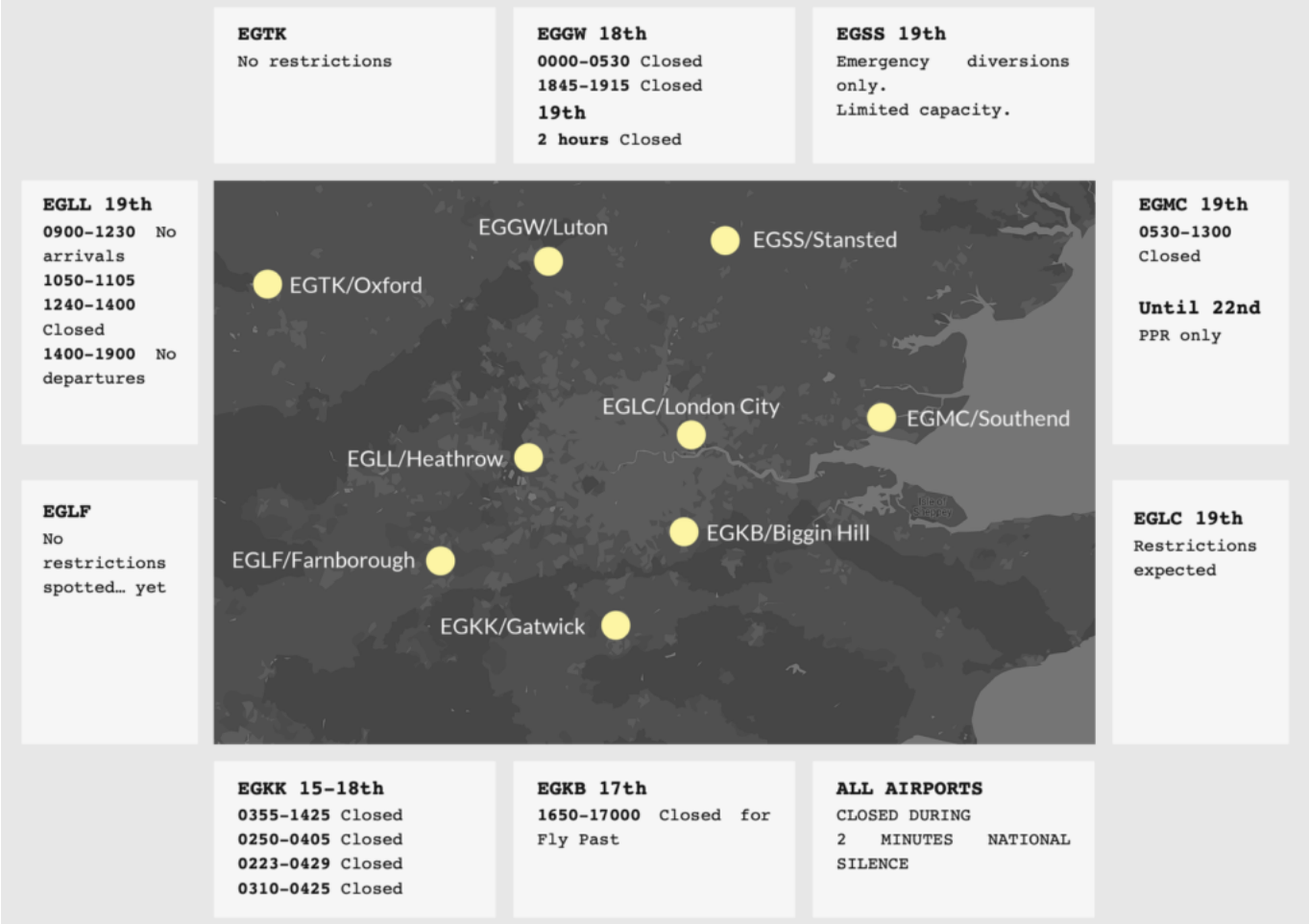
(Because it's not really London) they aren't expecting any restrictions or capacity problems.

EGLF/Farnborough

We haven't spotted any restrictions for here. The FBO says **'normal weekend/public holiday** restrictions'.

EGWU/Northolt

RAF Northolt has a full civilian ban in place between 1215- 1300z and an arrivals embargo between 1710-1810z on the 19th. The airport itself will operate 1100-1800z



Other UK Airports

The operational stop during the 2 minutes silence can be expected at airports across the UK.

Other bits of the World

The UK Monarch is Head of State for 14 Commonwealth countries, and has ties with another 44 or so. So a fair few countries may turn Sep 19 into a Public Holiday.

- **Bermuda** Sep 19th
- **New Zealand** One off Memorial Day Sep 26th
- **Australia** Public Holiday Sep 22nd
- **Canada** Sep 19th
- **British overseas territories** Sep 19th

Notams

Notams will be published confirming the planned restrictions. However, **the situation may change short notice** due a change in wind direction.

If a departure cancellation is required, it is likely the arrival will be as well (and vice versa, although that's rather obvious). They **won't be accepting rescheduling of flights** until they have a better idea of capacity levels, how quickly it will return to normal, and how many stands they have available.

The Toronto Slot Machine

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

CYYZ/Toronto Pearson has construction works planned this Fall *(that's autumn for European folk)*, which is going to mean some slot restrictions. Here's the info on it.

What are they doing?

They have been **rehabilitating one of the runways – 06L/24R** – since April 2022. The overhaul will give it another 30 or so years of life.

So far they've sort of done one third of it, and are finishing up the mid section, so just have the end bit to go – but this is **the longest section to complete.**

After this they'll be whacking in a lot of LED lights and also working on new bay areas.

You can read all about it here.

What does it mean for traffic?

This is actually their second busiest runway which means fairly big disruption. Normally Toronto runs a **dual or triple runway configuration** when it gets busy, but since they can't do that, they've been maximising the efficiency of the other two where they can.

With the biggest bit of the construction coming up, they have put some **slot restrictions** in place to manage the traffic, **effective Aug 2.**

This will mainly impact Business and General Aviation flights.

- First up, there are **limited slots between 15:00 and 19:59** local time, each day

- This applies to **arriving and departing** aircraft
- BizAv/GenAv flights looking to operate between **06:30 to 12:29 must file a reservation** with the Airport Reservation Office Online Coordination System (ARO OCS)

Good news though – any **unallocated capacity** (with an hour to go) will be available for BizAv/GenAv flights. So you might be able to sneak in last minute (although we wouldn't recommend depending on it).

ARO OCS?

Find all the info on that here, and if you're not already registered then do it because it **takes 7 days.**

Actually that link takes you directly to Toronto's site on it and there is a bunch of handy info there like who is exempted, how to do it, forms etc.

The Directive.

The official stuff on it can be read here. It says what we said, but you can also find some handy contact info in there too, in case you have any questions on it all.

NAT Ops: Atlantic Thunder 22

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

Remember that big NAT military exercise a couple of years ago? And then the one that happened last year (Formidable Shield) around May time?

Well, now Atlantic Thunder is happening, which means once again **large parts of North Atlantic airspace will be closed to all flights** for several hours at a time.

Not quite as big as Formidable Shield though, but still big enough to have a conference about it.

The Conference.

They are holding one so you can find out exactly what the deal is.

Join it by visiting the Eurocontrol NOP page and find the link there under *'latest news'*. They have one before each of the days where the most impact is expected, so the first takes place on **September 6th at 14:30 UTC** (and then on the 8th and the 10th).

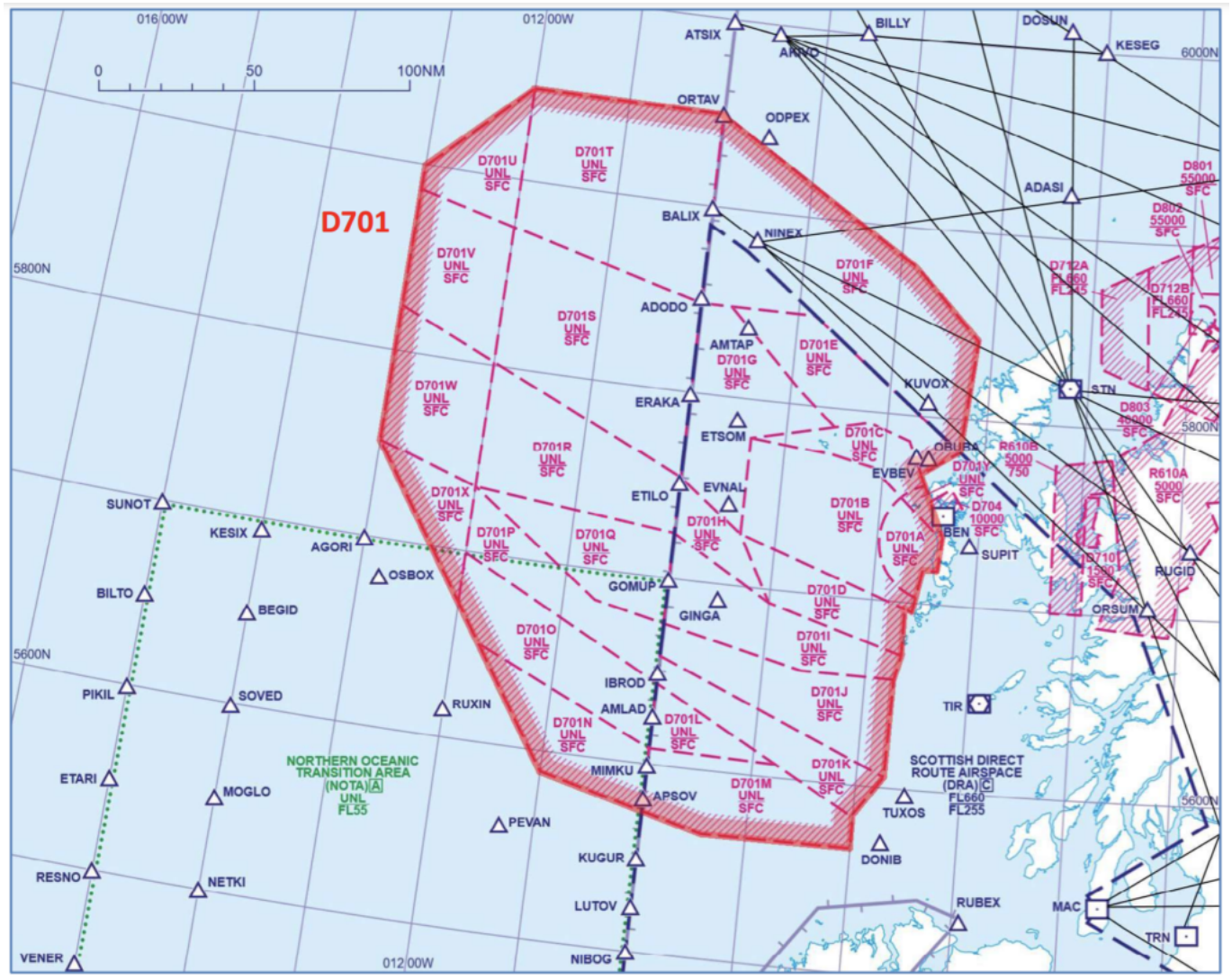
The Event itself.

Atlantic Thunder will take place from September 1-12, but **the main exercise takes place on the Sep 7** (or Sep 9 or 11 if it doesn't go ahead on Sep 7).

The official PDF issued by Shanwick is available here, and has lots of lists of everything closed and when...

We prefer pictures though.

So first up, danger area **EGD701** –



This area is tricksy because as you can see, it is made up of loads of smaller bits that can be activated at different times (and to different levels). They affect a bunch of the routes out of the NAT HLA, and potentially both the **EGGX/Shanwick and EGPX/Scottish FIRs.**

Initially it will be closed 1-6, and then on the 12th as well. The timings are annoying. Sometimes it is

FL200, sometimes it is FL270, but then bits of it, **between 1400-2359, are shut to FL UNL.**

Like we said, *tricksy.*

But then…

But then there is **Configuration 2** which involves the closure of **EDG701 and also EGTHUN1 and EGTHUN2**, which is a bigger area looking like this –

Of course, they only publish the exact timings and configurations 24 hours in advance so you're going to have to keep your eyes out for Notams and info on those.

Routing around the closed airspace.

Aeronautical Information Messages (AIM) will be issued prior to the start of each exercise, which will include suggested routings for flight planning around the closed areas.

Traffic overflying around these closed areas can expect to get **30NM separation if in NAT HLA** airspace (FL285-420), or **60NM separation if flying at lower levels**.

Danger in Denver: Collision Risk

Chris Shieff
12 October, 2022

On August 3, the FAA put out a new Safety Alert (SAFO) for KDEN/Denver. Here it is if you want a read.

The issue is the high number of TCAS alerts being recorded when aircraft are shooting parallel approaches to Runways 16L/16R.

It turns out that TCAS, high elevation, and reduced separation aren't a great mix, and the FAA are worried there are chances of a collision.

Here’s a breakdown of the situation.

Elbow to Elbow.

Since 2004, KDEN has been operating two parallel runways (16L and R). The two runways sit literally elbow to elbow, with only 2600’ (709m) between them. For simultaneous close parallel approaches, 3600′ separation between runway centrelines is generally required. In Denver, typically two separate controllers are feeding traffic onto the approach cones for each runway, which means **coordination can be a challenge.**

From early on it became apparent that **nuisance TCAS alerts were a problem.** The FAA sought to fix the issue, and so in June 2019 Denver TRACON started separating aircraft vertically by 1000’ in case someone busted through a localizer.

Trouble is, this didn’t fix the issue. Instead, now the **majority of TCAS events are happening when aircraft are established on the final approach course.** The big threat here is the number of folk selecting TA only (a good 20%), and there is now a healthy dose of desensitisation thrown into the mix from so many nuisances warnings in the past.

Then there’s the elevation.

Fun fact: TCAS becomes more sensitive with altitude. Or in other words, the trigger thresholds for both TAs and RAs increase the higher you get.

Enter Denver – the ‘*Mile High City*’ – called that because it sits exactly a mile above sea level. **That’s around a 5,300’ elevation.**

The next iteration of TCAS, (the romantically named ACAS XO), promises better tolerances for these conditions but it’s not here yet, so right now users of **TCAS 7.1 get all the warnings when all the warnings are not necessary.**

What the FAA are concerned about.

Operate into Denver, and the threat of simultaneous parallel approaches isn’t new, but awareness of the threats needs to be improved. The basic idea is folk should:

- Have an awareness of how the **close in approach setup** might increase the threat
- Brief how operating in **TA only mode** adds to this
- Know exactly where to be and what’s around by **listening out on the radio** and monitoring TCAS carefully
- Think about to remember to **re-select TA/RA mode** in the event of a missed approach
- Be aware of how **nuisance TCAS** cautions and warnings may **desensitize** crew.

In fact, this could be useful guidance anywhere where there are similar operational and environmental conditions which might increase the risk of collision.

Dublin Airport’s North Runway Opens

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

Dublin Airport has a brand new runway! Sláinte!

It opened on August 24, 2022, only 15 years after its original planning permission was approved. It’s actually the airport’s third runway because everyone seems to oddly forget about 16/34 (which is a none too shabby 2072m with an ILS and RNP approach, so perfectly useable!)

Anyway, **10L/28R** has opened and is ready for use. There are a load of new charts effective from August 19 for you to check out if heading in.

What's it got?

It's got:

- **10,200'** (3109m) x 45m of tarmac.
- **A CATII/III ILS** onto 10L (but no published approach to 28R).
- **The ILS is very standard**. 3000' platform altitude and 3° glideslope.
- **There are restricted areas** to the south so the missed approach is to the north. Keep an eye on this if there are any storms passing through.
- **A new apron area (5H)** which is still under construction, so watch out if you're taxying around the end of 10L (threefold of 28R). The second phase starts from September 8 so check the chart validity carefully.

You can find the Irish AIP here if you need it.

Anything else to know about the airport?

- **They favour the 28s**, and you can expect these in use until the tailwind reaches 10 knots.
- **Read the airport briefing** because there are a bunch of **taxiways you mustn't stop on** when vacating certain runways, because they won't actually get you clear of the runway.
- **They have NABT** for certain categories of aircraft.
- **Sometimes they talk fast and give you a thousand taxi clearances** in one go so be ready to copy the clearance down!

- **The aprons get congested.** Probably because some clever person built loads of nice little cul-de-sacs for the airplanes to park in, not remembering airplanes can't do three point turns to get out again.

Other than that it is a nice, easy airport to operate into.

And also…

EIDW/Dublin does have a **pre-clearance service for the US**, but it's only available to scheduled airline traffic. If you want to get this service for your private/charter flight, you'll have to go to EINN/Shannon instead.

Here's some more info on all that US pre-clearance stuff.

A little bit of history.

If you want the boring historical facts then go and look at Wikipedia. This is some of the lessor known stuff.

Dublin actually means Black Pool, but locals (well, folk who speak Irish) know it as *Baile Átha Cliath.*

Collinstown Aerodrome (as Dublin airport was originally known) was the spot where the most successful raid against the British took place, in 1919, during the war of Independence. 25 or so raiders broke in, poisoned the guard dogs (well, actually they did that in the afternoon and just timed it well), then silently captured any human sentries and managed to nab a whole load of ammunitions and weapons before escaping. They also amusingly left the Brits unable to give chase because they'd sledgehammered all their cars in the garage.

Nowadays, Dublin Airport seems to be a place where people leave stuff, rather than raid stuff from it. It has a **history of random items abandoned there by passengers** including an urn of ashes, a 42" television, some large paintings, 7 grandmothers (on separate occasions) and a toilet. One of those is not true. I'll let you guess which.

The Doha FIR: Qatar is finally getting its own airspace

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

For such a small place, Qatar has some big history. It is in the news (and in aviation news) a fair old amount over the past few years.

And now another newsworthy event is occurring, because it is finally

getting

its

own

airspace!

We feel like we should send a house (well, airspace) warming gift? Send us ideas. Or maybe just go and use the airspace.

What's the story?

We posted this back in 2021 when the news first hit the headlines that Qatar was looking to get its own airspace.

In short, (in case you can't be bothered to click the link and read it), with the exception of the OTHH/Doha terminal area, all the **airspace was controlled by Bahrain**. Which was never a problem until Qatar had a fairly large *'diplomatic dispute'* with many of their neighbours, and it reignited the campaign to get their own airspace.

They pushed the idea, there was some feedback, it wasn't good, so they put in a new proposal fixing the issues, and it was approved.

Now it is actually happening!

The **OTDF/Doha FIR** will be established, effective from **8th September 2022.**

Here is a map of what the **lateral boundaries** look like.

If you click here, you'll be transported to a lovely high res PDF fresh from the AIM (and minus the badly

done highlighting) so you can see it all much more clearly.

The vertical boundaries will be surface level to FL245, which means flights above FL245 will still be in the Bahrain FIR and under their control. So if you're overflying, you probably aren't going to notice much during **Phase 1.**

You can access all the info on this in the Qatar AIP, available here.

So that's it?

No, that's not it, because there are several phases.

Phase 2 is when Doha Control grabs control of **all the airspace above the State of Qatar and their waters**. This means surface level to somewhere unlimited above them.

Bahrain will still be responsible for controlling the **international waters bits nearby, but only up to FL245.** Now you might notice the difference if you're overflying, but not much – just some new frequencies to talk to.

This will come in from **23rd March 2023.**

Finally…

Sometime **after the end of 2024,** Doha will become the 'responsible authority' for the entire FIR, surface level to unlimited, including over the international waters.

What is important to know?

Communications:

Well, initially there won't be much change at all if you're only overflying.

Obviously, if you descend down into Doha then you are going to be speaking to someone not in Bahrain, but you would have been anyway once you entered the OTHH/Doha terminal area. Now it will just be a little earlier.

There have **never been issues with the handover** between Bahrain and Doha.

Flightplannng:

OTHHZPZX is the current *general* flight plan one.

All flight plans and departures messages for flights planning on operating through or within the Doha FIR must include addresses **OTDFZQZX**

If you're going to overfly on the A453, L602, L768, M600, M677, P559, P699, T308, T872, Y856 ATS Routes (via North of Qatar) then make sure you use **OTBDYWYX** in the message address.

In the absence of AFS, you can email: doha.comm@caa.gov.qa or fax at (974) 4462 1052 / (974) 4470 5075. An acknowledgement of receipt must be obtained via tel (974) 4470 5080 / (974) 4470 5081.

ATC (in general):

Controllers in the Doha TMA were always well trained and a good standard. There is no reason to suspect the new controllers responsible for the FIR won't also be.

Procedures are unlikely to have changed, it will now just be a Dohasian rather than a Bahrainian controller calling the shots.

(No, Dohasian isn't a real name, I made it up).

Weather:

Weather avoidance might require you to talk to both Doha and Bahrain if you'll be crossing the temporary boundary (into the international waters area).

Contingency procedures:

Until the official AIM is published this isn't confirmed, but the assumption is this will remain the same.

It's so small, why do we care?

While the airspace is smallish in the schemes of airspace size, it is biggish in terms of importance for the region. Around over **thirty percent of traffic in and out of the UAE** routes via Bahrain (soon to be Qatari) airspace, Kuwait and then up via Iraq to Europe, avoiding Iranian airspace to the right.

OTHH/Doha and **OKBK/Kuwait** provide two "final" alternates for en-route diversions for aircraft routing over Iraq, and also for aircraft routing south if UAE airspace closes. They are also close to Saudi airspace and useful alternates if ESCAT procedures prevent aircraft from operating into Saudi Arabia.

Anything else?

Not that we can think of, but you can tell us if you experience anything worthy of reporting once it goes live this September.

We did make this Airport Lowdown for OTHH/Doha in case you need it.

The Flight of Fright: Tales of Startle and Surprise

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

We may have brought this up before. I think we referred to it as "*that old chestnut*", and talked about how the lack of currency (a lot of folk were heading back to the cockpit after big periods of Covid-no-flying) made it a big threat to think on.

But it turns out lack of flying isn't the only issue. In fact, Startle and Surprise are a bit less *"old chestnut"* and a lot more *"giant conkers still encased in their spiny suits, falling on pilots' head from 40,000 feet"*. They can affect anyone, and regardless of experience or currency, can be hard to deal with.

So we thought we'd take another look, and a slightly more *personal* look, to see if that might help folk be less, well, startled when something startles them, (or surprised by something surprising).

It's all in your head.

It really is, which means reading about the *Science of Amygdala* and the *Theory of 'fight and flight'* is great, but **it probably won't actually change *your* reaction**. At least, not the one that counts. You may say *"oh, so that's why my brain did that!"* several hours afterwards when the adrenalin has worn off, but in the heat of the moment?

Knowing the theory probably won't help.

If you want to know how to not react the 'wrong' way to Startle or Surprise, then you need to **think about how you do currently react** – analyse those past events and what your brain did during them – because once you understand and are aware of that, then you can start to think about how to control it a little more.

A very wise lady wrote an interesting thing of this for the RAeS magazine. She pointed out that one of the big issues with training for Startle & Surprise is the fact that **you can't really do it that effectively in a simulator.**

- First of all, we all go to the sim **expecting hideous things to happen** and are generally quite primed for it.
- Secondly, unless your sim is particularly high tech then chances are **they have to build up to a lot of those startlingly surprising things.** Like the old *"close your eyes and only open them when I say ready"* UPRT practice. If you know what's coming, the effect is less.
- Thirdly, as much as we're told to treat the sim like a real flight, our little brains always know deep down that it is just a sim and **we aren't going to really be in any life threatening jeopardy**, which can change just how much 'fight or flight' it really goes for.

So it is hard to really experience a full Startle or Surprise in the sim. But we can still benefit from the practice by using it to review our reactions and thinking about how they felt, what we did, how we recovered – **we can mentally prepare ourselves** for the real deal should we ever encounter it.

Are you a 'flight' risk?

I am a naturally very jumpy person. My husband takes great amusement in making me jump at every opportunity which sadly has only further developed my "*scream first, think later*" response.

Would I have a similar reaction in an airplane?

Embarrassingly, yes. I once flew into my wind shear memory items after the system yelled *"Wind Shear!"* at me. Great. Nice to know I'm that well conditioned. Only the warning had gone off at 12,000' because the system had malfunctioned, and me hurling it into TOGA basically all out panicked the poor thing.

Are you a 'fight' risk?

I've seen other pilots startled by the dings of ECAM during an engine start, seen the EGT skyrocketing and yanked the start master off – de-powering a bunch of the systems the clever FADEC probably would have used to help the situation.

Both the flight or fight reactions generally have us wanting to do something immediately – to take action, to get 'out of danger' – and generally before we've really understood the situation and all the information in front of us.

The 'duh!' Moment

The other response is **the 'freeze up'.**

A prime example of this occurred in the French Bee go-around incident of 2018. Startled by an unexpected wind shear warning the FO seemed to freeze – **cognitive incapacitation.** This was quite an extreme example (extreme in how long it lasted).

I've heard folk say *"I really froze up!"* when they were startled or surprised, *"There was this moment of cluelessness, where I just didn't know what to do!"* This isn't the same as the poor French Bee FO though who, after carrying out that probably amounted to a conditioned memory reaction then checked out entirely for almost the entirety of the go-around procedure.

Is a momentary freeze up such a bad thing?

That 'duh' moment is a pause. It is your brain trying to work out what is going on, and this can be to your benefit if you recognise it, and use it as a trigger to start getting the brain back into gear.

The worst thing to do would be to *do something* because you feel you need to. You need to give your brain time, but **how can you do this?**

What should that response be?

A lot of folk say *"sit on your hands"* but this is easier said than done.

I mean, you're not literally going to sit on your hands. Mine tend to go into a sort of weird claw shape when I'm truly startled, which I've never understood because what use is that? I'm not a clawed apex predator, and it makes sitting on my hands particularly uncomfortable.

What I think the phrase is aiming for is **giving yourself a couple of seconds** to allow your brain to get out of the startled state and start actually taking in the information and processing it properly. So a better method, or technique, is the **deep breath trick**.

Literally one big guzzling breath of air.

I like this one for two reasons – one it really works, and two it turns what would have been a mortifying yelp into a sort of wheezing gasp which is less startling for the person sat next to me.

Be a rock.

Or rather a **ROC – Relax, Observe, Confirm.**

Actually, ROCK works too – Relax, Observe, Confirm, Know (what to do).

This is a really good mantra to get into your brain. Deep breaths to clear the mind. Look at what is in front of you. **Vocalise it** so the other pilot knows what's going on.

The point is, you are going to be startled at some point. Things are gong to surprise you, and chances are, you will have the age old human survival reaction to this. You probably can't help it, but if you can recognise it in yourself and stop it from taking over totally, then that is a good thing.

After all, the other 'old chestnut' CRM thing – the one about stress levels and how well you perform (because adrenalin is a useful thing, to a point) is also a science fact.

So – a challenge.

Try and think of a time when you've been startled, or surprised, and try and remember the feeling.

Once you start to recognise it, and to understand how you react, then you can really start to condition yourselves with a better response, or at least a way to manage it.

Then try to think of a situation when an immediate response really is required. Aside from the obvious *"TERRAIN AHEAD, PULL UP!"* or a really violent wind shear warning, there are very few. Engine fire? You still need to confirm the right one. TCAS? RTO? They build in the natural delay.

We've put together a bunch of 'stories' – A Startle and Surprise Story Book.

We aren't astronauts.

Chris Hadfield, Canadian Astronaut, once talked about how **astronauts sometimes might only have the time they can hold their breath for to solve a problem.** I tend to yelp which means I let all the air out, so I would be awful in this situation.

Thankfully, we aren't astronauts, and there is rarely going to be a moment when you have to act *right this second* or that'll be it. So taking two seconds, *two breaths,* to calm down and work out what actually does need to be done is pretty much always going to be a good thing to do.

Want to read some other stuff?

Try this for size. (It's the old post we wrote about this very subject when folk were heading back into the skies after long periods off).

And here's our book again in case you didn't already download it. If you have a personal story to share of a time when you fought the twin headed gorgon of Startle & Surprise, send it in and we will add it (anonymously of course). Email us at news@ops.group

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NAT Basics: An Unofficial Checklist For Pilots

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

We have a handy **'My First North Atlantic Flight is tomorrow'** briefing guide which is for everyone – the planners, the operators, the pilots. Everyone involved in getting airplanes across the NAT. If you want it, head to the shop (or member's dashboard) and grab it.

This post is just a mini slice of that – just for the pilots. Not because you don't already know how to *'do the NAT',* and not because your operator doesn't already have a procedure in place, but just because we thought it might be a handy little guide on the basic *stuff to do* if you're a pilot heading into the NAT HLA…

On the Ground

We'll start when you're sat in the plane getting ready to go. There are three things you probably want to do at this point:

1. Check the Techlog.

Make sure you have the equipment you need. That means none of it is broken. The vast proportion of the **NAT HLA requires Datalink** now, so make sure you're CPDLC and ADS-C are functioning (because you need both of them to be able to do the Datalink). Also check bits like HF, altimeters and all the usual stuff you'd need for general RVSM-ing while you're at it as well.

2. Check what you're loading in the FMS.

If all your waypoints are **five letter named ones** then this is less annoying to do, but getting the other pilot to independently check there are no discontinuities or rogue vowels that might send you off in the wrong direction is still a good idea.

If you have the dreaded **LAT/LONG points** on your flight plan then you are going want to check more thoroughly.

- First up, make sure there are **no funky ones** stored in your box by a different pilot from an earlier flight.
- Load yours in using the **correct format**, and get the other pilot to independently confirm you haven't messed up the numbers with half degrees (or no half degrees if they are supposed to be there).

- Check the **track and distances** between all your points (from Entry to Exit) and make sure what is in the box matches the flight plan. It's a whole lot easier to fix it on the ground if it doesn't.

3. Have a little look over the weather and Notams for the en-route alternates in the NAT region.

Places can get nasty in winter, and there aren't many, so if one of them is under 10 feet of snow or has some **hideous Notam** then you're better off knowing before you go so you can make a different plan.

Check the old **space weather stuff** too because if there are some storms raging up there you might experience some HF blackouts or satellite navigation issues and again, good to know what to expect (and what to do about it) before you're in it.

In the air (approaching the NAT HLA)

- Make sure you know who you need to **Logon to for the clearance**, and when to do it.
- Check **everything is still working.**
- Once you get your clearance make sure both of you check it. That means checking **what you've been cleared is what you have in the box.** If it has changed then you'll need to do those track and distance checks again. Select North Ref to TRUE for this but don't forget to set it back to MAG once the checks are done.
- Make sure you have the right **Mach set** (if it's a constant mach segment).
- Check the **RNP and Nav Accuracy** is High.
- Check your **altimeters are all within 200'** of each other.
- **Brief your contingencies** again and think about whacking something in the secondary to help if you want to.

Entering the NAT HLA

In you go…

Put that **SLOP in (0/1/2nm RIGHT of track, or 0.1 increments if your airplane is that clever)** and select **123.45MHz on VHF1** (unless you still have an active ATC VHF). Keep a good listen on 121.5MHz on VHF2. If you're heading into HF land then check in and do your **SELCAL check.**

When you're **30 minutes in, set your squawk to 2000.**

Now, some do this, some don't, and a lot do it different – it depends whether you're old school and using a plotting chart, or new school and EFB-ing. But even if you are in a high tech aircraft this is still one good method for checking you don't get any GNEs:

- As you cross over a waypoint, set your timer.
- After 10 minutes, check your GPS position in your FMS, and plot it on your chart/compare it to where your airplane is showing on your (electronic) map. If it doesn't match then you've got yourself a problem.

Keep an eye on those alternates and their weather. Plan stuff in advance so if anything happens

you’re not flailing about in the sky like a headless chicken.

UH OH! I’ve got issues…

Use the contingencies, but not before trying to talk to ATC.

- If it’s a **weather thing** and you only need up to 5nm to detour around it then maintain your assigned level. If you’re going to need more than 5nm then use **SAND** – if your turn moves you South then ascend (climb) 300’. If your detour moves you North than descend 300’.

Always **check the tracks and traffic proximity first.** Turning the direction which will mean a longer detour might keep you more clear of traffic.

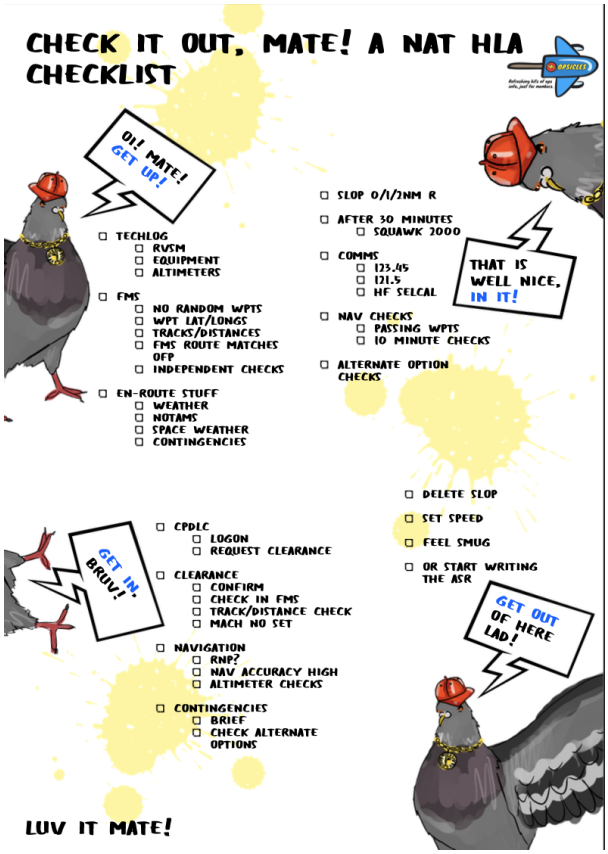
- If it’s a **serious technical problem then turn 30° and offset laterally by 5nm.** Once established, climb or descend 500’ (1000’ if above FL410) or descend all the way down below FL290.
- If it’s a **communication issue** then stick with your assigned clearance and do what you can to get in touch with someone.
- If it’s an **ATC issue** (ie they’ve evacuated and aren’t there anymore) then follow the published contingency procedures.
- If it’s some sort of **navigation problem** then get in touch with ATC and go from there.

I made it!

Congrats. Delete the SLOP, set the speed to what you need and out you go, smug in the knowledge you traversed the NAT HLA without mistakes.

A checklist for you

We turned all this info into an **Opsicle.** It has London pigeons in it because they are clearly the masters of crossing the North Atlantic. Grab it here.



Aug 2022 NAT Doc 006 Changes

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

Are you *Trevelyan* across the NAT HLA anytime soon? Then here is a summary of the changes that just came out in NAT Doc 006.

What is Doc 006?

It is the Air Traffic Management Operational Contingency Plan for the North Atlantic Region, and we are talking about the Second Edition, August 2022 version which you can find here if you want a look. The last time it was updated was back in Feb 2021, and we covered those changes here.

Page 1

"Aha, a handy list of all the changes," think Rebecca and Dave as they glance at page one. *"This will be easy. Our job is done already."*

"What does it say?" Rebecca asks.

"It says that there is a new chapter on Common Procedures which were there but are now here…" replies Dave. *"And also something about a Notam and some route something somethings…"*

"There's still a lot of red again, isn't there?" whispers Rebecca.

"Yes, there is," sighs Dave.

"Should we read it for them?" Rebecca says wearily.

Dave nods.

All the changes are in red.

Finding the changes isn't hard. Understanding them is the annoying bit. So we shall try and make sense of what all those changes are for you so you don't have to.

(But before we go on though, here is the record of amendments so you can see if any of it looks remotely interesting to you. If not then you can go and do something much more interesting with your time instead of reading further.)

Chapter 1

They have updated the information on contingency situations thats might affect multiple FIRs. What could cause that? **Volcanic ash** could cause that.

They have also **added in Reykjavik.**

Chapter 1

Sorry, that bit before was just an intro or something.

So, Chapter 1 – Common Procedures.

- **Limited Service:** If ANSPs are going to only be able to provide a limited service they will try and let everyone know at least **12 hours in advance by Notam**. This is for times like if **datalink going to be down** or if there are some huge **solar flares** heading their way that might take out their HF for a bit.
- **No Service:** It's the No Service Situations we really need to worry about. If this happens then they will get a message to whoever they can, and whoever gets the message will help share it out to as many people as they can.

In any region, the results will be the same. With Comms disruption, they will obviously attempt other methods. There is likely to be a fair amount of **frequency congestion** on whatever methods are still working.

With control services, there may be some **additional restrictions which affect traffic flows**, and there may well be reroutings. Where possible, these will be limited to those not yet in the NAT (a bit easier for the old fuel planning).

In the event of a **sudden withdrawal of services,** here is an excellent chart for pilots to print out and have handy.

Immediate withdrawal of services

It's what the handy guide says, but in case you don't want to read that:

- **Already in the NAT?** Basically, stick with the last received and acknowledge clearance, try and talk to anyone you can and make sure you give position reports. You can use SATVOICE for this too. If you're in the middle of a level change, complete it as quickly as you can. If it's a control centre evacuation and you're on ADS then revert to voice.
- **Approaching the NAT?** If you're within 20 minutes and it is getting evacuated then stick with your last clearance. Only aircraft less than 60 minutes from their OEP can transit Gander. They guarantee no conflict profiles.

The Next Chapters

Shanwick: Contingency procedures have moved to chapter 11.

Gander: Nil Red

Reykjavik: This has a lot of new info, although not specifically in this section. The main thing is, if you can't get hold of **Iceland Radio HF** then **try Shanwick radio first**, then Gander or Bodø if still no luck. Reykjavik is the only FIR without supporting procedures.

Santa Maria: If Comms are down and you have **ATS safety SATVOICE** (INMARSAT or IRIDIUM) then you can call them on **426302 or 426305**. If you have a non ATS safety satellite network (some big old sat phone from the 80's onboard) then try **+351 296 886 655** but only if you really, really need to.

New York: Nein Rot.

Bodø: Bodø ACC includes Domestic control, Oceanic and Radio (HF). Thankfully it can be supported by basically all its neighbours FIRs (except Reykjvik).

Shannon: Non Rouge.

Brest: No roja.

Chapter 10 – Notification Messages

Or *'The Great River of Red'* as I know call it. Actually, most of this can be looked at in the below image (it's a picture of their example of a Notam).

Limited service? Info will be sent via other ANSPs.

No service? It has probably been evacuated and notifications of this will be sent via the NAT track

messages and transmitted on any appropriate frequencies.

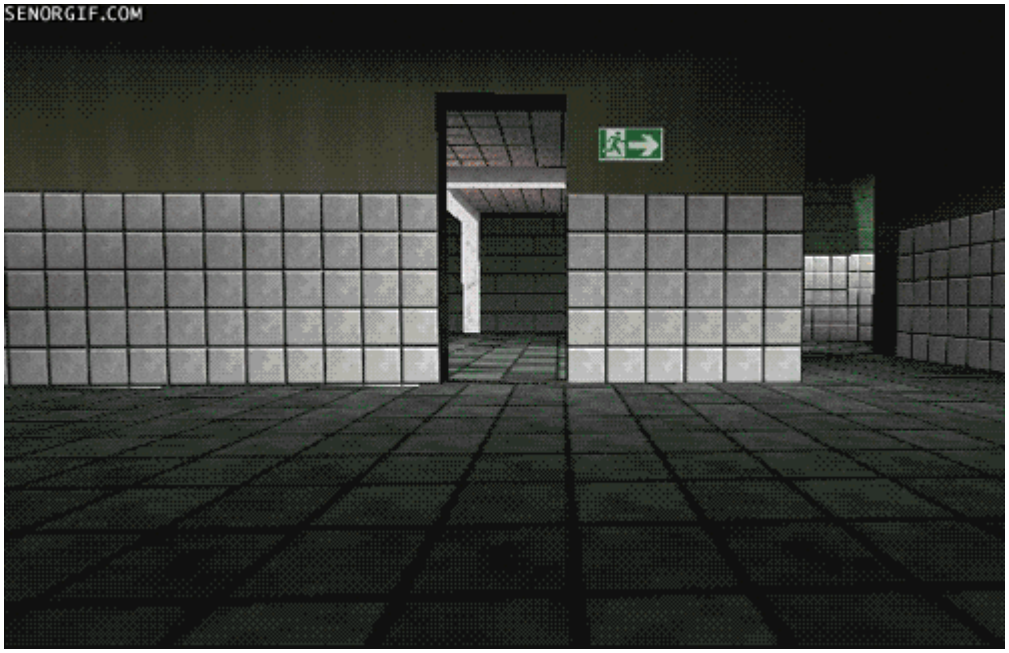
Chapter 11 – Route Structures

This contains info on the routes for each region. Mainly Reykjavik because they've added all of those in. There are some nice diagrams in this bit.

Chapter 12 – Contact Info

This is the contact details. Lots of red for the **new Reykjavik folk.**

That's it. We're off to play some Goldeneye on our N64. **Found something important that we missed?** Let us know! news@ops.group



Is breaking the rules always bad?

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

“So, Rebecca, tell us about a time when you didn’t follow an SOP?”

I don’t know about everyone else, but this question always seemed to pop up in interviews for me. Maybe I come across as ‘rigidly adherent’ to rules, or perhaps I tick too many of the “like finding alternative solutions” answer on the personality questionnaire and they think I will constantly be bending the SOPs into elaborate balloon animal shapes for the fun of it…

Here’s the question:

When can we ‘go outside’ the SOPs? How do we justify it? How do we actually do it?

It turned into three questions, sorry.

First up, what is the point of an ‘SOP’?

To prevent wild cowboy pilots from jaunting about willy nilly? Yes, probably that. But at the root of it, I think a fair definition could be **“to help with safety”.**

By the very vague ‘help with safety’ term, I mean *all the stuff* – providing guidance to help us stick to rules and regulations, helping us deal with situations, ensuring we all know what to do and how to do it, and what to expect. They create a sort of script, a choreographed dance to lead us.

Basically, making sure we’re all playing by the same rules.

Standard operating procedures are put out there not just to be a “that’s how we do it” rule book, but more a **“that’s how we can do it, because it should help with safety”** guidance book.

So compliance equals safety?

Now, a quick interlude on the word ‘compliance’ because **I don’t like it much.** If you search the definition of someone who is compliant it says they are “disposed to agree with others or obey rules, especially to an excessive degree”.

OK, the rules bit is fine, but the excessive degree? Following rules for rules sake, excessively? Nope.

But…

But compliance is necessary in aviation, and much of my dislike really comes from the fact I think it is generally **misunderstood, misused and misapplied.**

Someone wise said that *'compliance is the foundation and structure which helps build safety' (*I may have not quoted that completely right), but it sounds good to me.

So being compliant doesn't automatically equal being safe. **Rigid adherence for the sake of saying you adhered** does not automatically lead to safety. The two can absolutely go hand in hand, but just ticking boxes and saying *"I ticked them all, so I'm compliant, so I'm safe"* doesn't actually work, at least not all the time.

Sometimes it might, but it's not a guarantee.

The same goes for SOPs. Sort of...

An SOP generally isn't (shouldn't be) created for the sake of creating an SOP. Then you just end up in a hideous loop of *'the SOP says I must follow the SOP that says I must follow the SOP that says...'* you get the picture.

This is pointless.

Any procedure should be put in place because it does 'something safetyish', and so following it will help you be 'safetyish'.

Which brings me, finally, to the two occasions where I think it is ok to let something non-standard occur.

First up: The 'letting it slide' situation.

If I say *"checked"* instead of *"check"* on a checklist then I might not be compliant with the checklist terminology, my *'knowing the correct response on the checklist SOP'* might be subpar, but has that really impacted safety? No, it hasn't, because the same outcome has been achieved.

You pulling me up on it might impact safety though because it will make me angry at you!

So 'non-standard' stuff, for me, has to have some common sense applied to it. If it hasn't impacted safety, then the balance between rubbish CRM versus helping correct a bad habit (that could become more of a thing) has to be considered.

That's letting something slide.

Secondly: The ‘blind obedience’ situation.

Fastidiously following for following’s sake.

There could be times when an SOP might actually decrease safety, and that’s probably when you might want to **bend it, break it, or work outside of it.** I guess this is what all those interviewers are hoping to get at by asking this question?

Ultimately, safety is the aim of SOPs, and **if they don’t achieve it – do what will.**

And this can be tough to do, because often we fall into the trap of thinking SOPs are everything, and we become reliant on them to keep everything OK, rather than using them alongside our professional judgement and experience.

What about less black and white situations?

You’re stuck in a box that says ‘no permission, no can do’ and the operation is grinding to a halt? This is when to really think about the “instructions” that go with that box, so to speak. **The actual intent or purpose of the procedure,** and what you can do to maintain that. Because not being able to tick ‘exactly compliant with procedure’ is less important that ticking the ‘compliant with safety awareness and standards’.

The procedure might turn out different, but the outcome will still be achieved.

If you’re not getting my point on intent, refer back to the earlier paragraph where I used the splendid word ‘safetyish’ – it’s not in the dictionary, but you understood it, and it got the point across (hopefully).

Be Effective!

The final question then, if we're going with the **"same purpose, so all good!"** principle is the "Effectiveness Test". Quick definition – doing something effectively means doing it the best way.

Which is what SOPs are sort of there for. **Getting us to the most efficient (safest) outcome, the most effective way.**

So I can't just ignore a load of SOPs and say *"but the outcome was the same, what's the problem!"* And if that's the case, then how much should we be considering the effectiveness (rightness) of our process alongside the outcome?

To try to comply with the Effectiveness Test, we can fall down a rabbit hole of ticking every box, crossing every 'T', dotting every 'I' so to speak – basically, **worrying about the effectiveness versus the outcome too much.** Which is exactly what this whole post started out talking about.

But I can't swing the other way and barrel roll an airplane down an approach disregarding every stabilisation criteria but touchdown on speed not the blocks and say *"hey, the outcome was fine."*

So where do we draw this line? Is it even a line?

It comes down to airmanship. This might feel like it's not really an answer at all, but I think it will be **different for each of us** at the time, on the day, when we're faced with something that has us asking it.

And this leads to a last question, that came up as I thought through all of this – *"Is there a chance that too stringent SOPs actually stop us from thinking and judging, because we expect there to be an answer to every situation?"* Because SOPs help keep everything predictable, but often the situations are anything but.

My motto is this.

Let's aim for safety, and use the SOPs because they provide us with the most effective way of achieving that. **Until they don't.** And that's when we will do what we need to to maintain safety. But we'll try and do it with the SOPs, rules, regulations in mind *as best we can.*

New US Terrorism Warning: What's the impact to aviation?

Chris Shieff
12 October, 2022

On August 2, the **US Department of State** updated its worldwide terrorism warning for the first time since 2019 – terrorist groups around the world may be actively **planning attacks** on US interests. This follows news on July 31 that the leader of a major terrorist organisation was killed during a military operation in Afghanistan.

My flight is tomorrow, what does this all mean?

For starters, no *new* airspace warnings have been issued due to the recent events. But it is equally important that operators (especially N-registered ones) heed the information that is already out there.

This comes from a combination of FAA SFARs, KICZ Notams and Background Information notes.

In the most dangerous airspace, the FAA **bans US operators at all levels**. In which case, the decision to overfly is an easy one because it has already been made for you. You just can't do it.

But it's not always that clear cut. Risk may be present, but not enough of it to justify closing entire pieces of airspace. So the FAA carries out assessments and decides on what precautions operators should take to stay safe.

This is where the lines start to get a little blurry because these assessments take time, and security risks can evolve more quickly than the papers can be signed. In other words, what was safe *yesterday* may not be safe *today*.

And so operators may need to re-evaluate their exposure to known risks, based on what is happening right now. With that in mind, here are some hotspots US aircraft are *permitted to overfly* that we think deserve a second look.

Iraq

Back in October, the FAA lifted its long running Notam barring US operators from entering the ORBB/Baghdad FIR. The SFAR is now in effect, meaning overflights are technically okay provided you **stay above FL320.** But just because you *can*, doesn't mean you *should*.

Militant groups are active throughout the country and are known to have access to anti-aircraft weaponry. The have also have a proven track record of targeting US interests in the country. Scour through the OPSGROUP archives and you'll see report after report of rocket, drone and mortar attacks on

ORBI/Baghdad along with other regional airports.

Our advice hasn't changed – avoid overflights at all levels if possible. Although the eastern airways UM860, UM688 and UL602 are frequently used and considered safe options by some major carriers.

See: SFAR 77, Background Info Note.

Mali

The FAA currently advises US operators to **use extra caution if overflying Mali below FL260.** The main issue is the ever-fragile security situation on the ground. The FAA cites extremist or militant groups that may actively target civil aircraft with various weapons.

And things seem to be getting worse. On July 29, the US Embassy ordered the urgent departure of non-emergency US Government employees due to the risk of terrorism. Which is a warning sign for us that these risks may be escalating.

See: KICZ Notam A0009/22, FAA Background Information.

Somalia

The FAA currently allows US operators to **overfly the HCSM/Mogadishu FIR above FL260**. It's important to remember though that the security situation on the ground there is unstable – especially since a controversial election back in April.

Terrorist groups are active in the country, and may have been motivated by recent events. These groups have a proven track record of targeting civilians and aviation interests. In June this year news broke that several local carriers were considering suspending flights over security concerns onboard aircraft and at airports.

There is also currently an active trial of Class A airspace throughout the Mogadishu FIR, which means Somalia may be seeing higher numbers of overflights than normal. The problem is that emergencies and diversions may put aircraft at risk, especially US-registered tail numbers.

See: SFAR 107, KICZ Notam A0028/19.

Egypt

Back in March the FAA **lifted its airspace warning for the HECC/Cairo FIR**. It previously advised operators to stay above FL260 over the Sinai Peninsula – in the east of the country dividing the Red Sea from the Med.

The issue was the presence of extremist groups who may attempt to target civil aircraft. It's not clear what improvements led to the warning being lifted, but other countries have kept theirs in place – including the UK and Germany.

Recent events have proven that all is not well. An attack in Western Sanai in May this year was one of the most significant in the past two years – and was a clear indicator that terrorist groups are still active in the region. If they have been motivated by the happenings in Afghanistan, this may put aircraft at renewed risk.

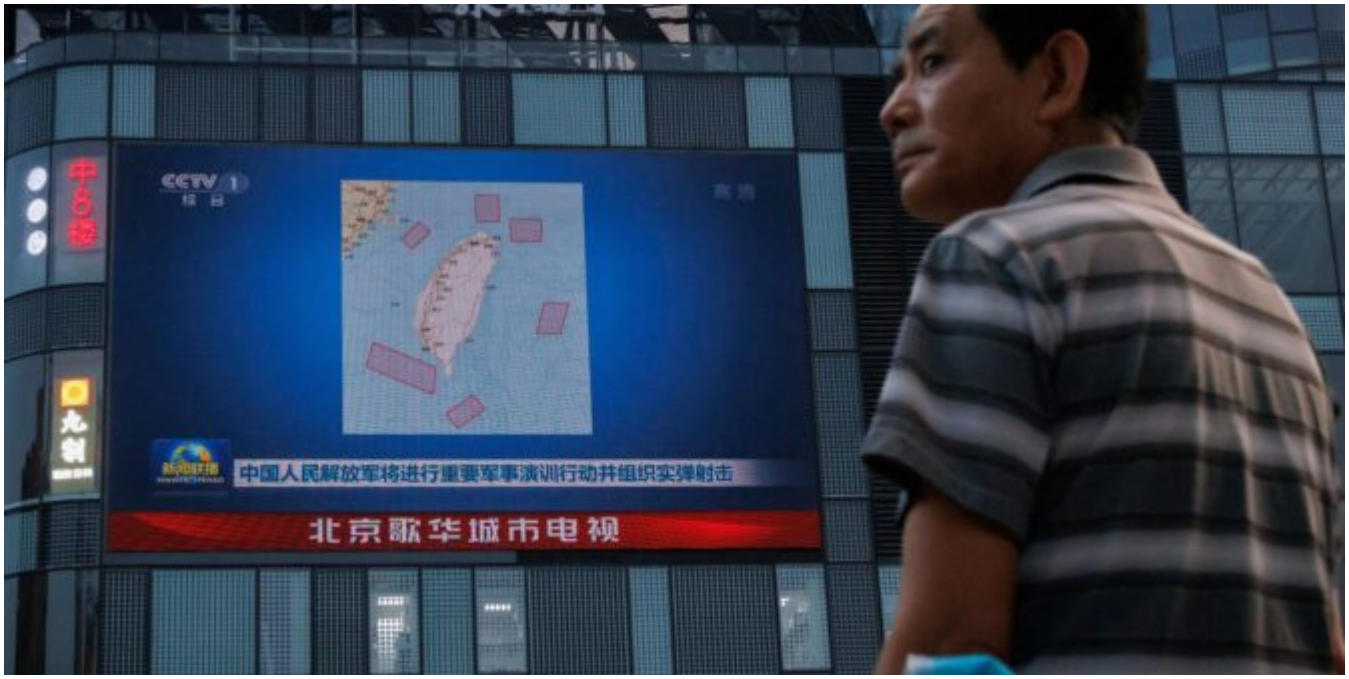
Where else to look.

As things change, airspace warnings get updated. For US operators the starting point is here – it contains everything officially put out by the FAA.

There’s also safeairspace.net – our conflict zone and risk database. The OPSGROUP team keeps this updated as new information comes to hand. You can view a global risk briefing by clicking here.

We Need to Talk About China!

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022



China held new drills near Taiwan on Monday, a sign that they may intend to **normalize their military presence around Taiwan.** This came a day after the Chinese military ended their extensive 3-day exercises encircling Taiwan, effectively simulating a blockade.

During those exercises, there were **significant impacts to flight ops in the region**. Xiamen Airlines and Korean Airlines made adjustments to several flights to **avoid the airspace**, Cathay Pacific pilots were reportedly advised to **carry an extra 30 minutes of fuel**, and there were cancellations at **RCTP/Taipei** airport in Taiwan and **ZSAM/Xiamen** and **ZSFZ/Fuzhou** airports in mainland China.

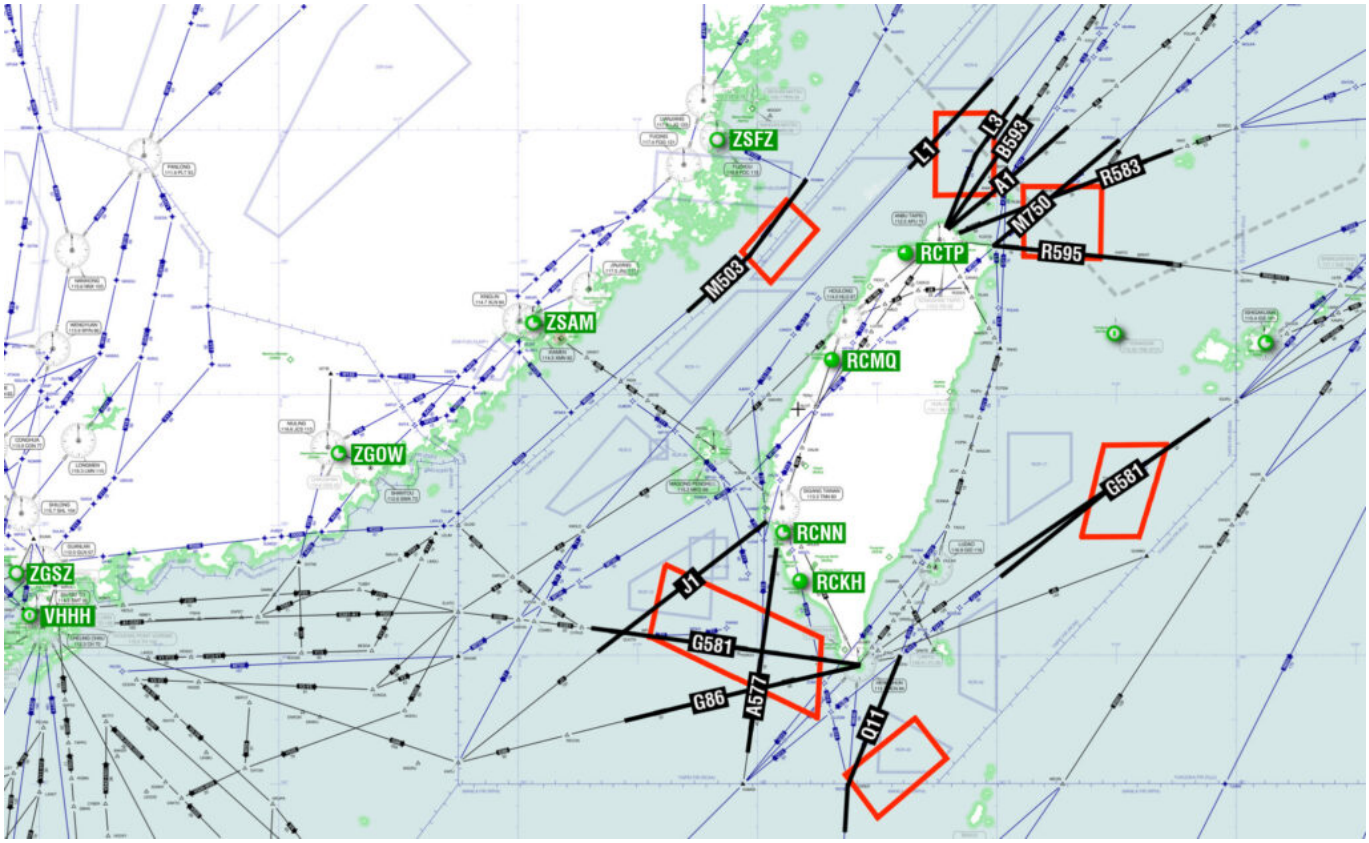
China published **ZBBB Notam A2119/22** which set out the six Danger Areas where **flights were prohibited at all levels:**

A2119/22 - A TEMPORARY DANGER AREA ESTABLISHED BOUNDED BY:
1.N251526E1202920-N245030E1200545-N250432E1195122-N252812E1201430
BACK TO START.
2.N260700E1215700-N253000E1215700-N253000E1212800-N260700E1212800
BACK TO START.
3.N253400E1225000-N250300E1225000-N250300E1221100-N253400E1221100
BACK TO START.
4.N225600E1224000-N233800E1225100-N233800E1232300-N225600E1230900
BACK TO START.
5.N211400E1213300-N213300E1211800-N210700E1204300-N204800E1205900
BACK TO START.
6.N224300E1191400-N221000E1190600-N213300E1202900-N220900E1203200
BACK TO START.

VERTICAL LIMITS:SFC-UNL. ALL ACFT ARE PROHIBITED TO FLY INTO THE AREA. SFC - UNL, 04 AUG 04:00 2022 UNTIL 07 AUG 04:00 2022. CREATED: 02 AUG 15:03 2022

Here they all are, plotted on a map:

And here are all the main airways that intersect those Danger Areas:



The Danger Areas affected major routes between Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia.

For any future exercises that China announces, if you're planning on transiting the **RCAA/Taipei, ZSHA/Shanghai or RPHI/Manila FIRs then make sure you check the ZBBB Notams** as it might not show up as part of your flight briefing pack.

Hypersonic missile launch

China launched **an unannounced hypersonic missile** on Aug 1 (we could not find any Notams for it). This marked the 95th anniversary of the Peoples Liberation Army being founded, and coincided with an announcement from the US that they might visit Taiwan.

The missile was **only fired *towards* Taiwan**, falling some 120km off the coast into the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan-China procedures

Specific procedures regarding international flights into Taiwan have existed for years, and you can find more in-depth information on these here, and a post on general tips for China Ops here.

A brief summary:

- Foreign registered aircraft are prohibited from operating directly between China and Taiwan.
- If you need to make a tech stop between the two, VHHH/Hong Kong or VMMC/Macau are good options.
- The same rules apply for China overflights – if you're flying to Taiwan from any third country, you can't overfly China.
- Only Chinese and Taiwanese registered aircraft are able to operate directly between China and Taiwan.

Because of these, the airspace over the Taiwan Strait is not hugely busy and the missile posed a limited risk to aircraft.

Heightened military activity

China have been showing heightened military activity in and around the **South China Sea**, ownership of which is disputed by neighbouring countries. This is not directly linked with the Taiwan situation, but provides some further political (and flight ops) awareness, particularly because of the strategic military positions China hold in this region.

In addition, China have been carrying out **military drills in various areas,** mainly near the East China and Bohai seas. These **rarely impact flight operations,** with the prohibited zones focused on maritime traffic. However, increased offshore helicopter traffic and some flight disruptions into coastal airports do occur.

China have been increasing their **incursions into Taiwanese airspace** for a while, with a spate of them towards the end of 2021. These **pose some risk to commercial operations** for several reasons – **increased military traffic** being the obvious one. A lesser risk of **misidentification** is heightened as well, along with the potential response if a civilian aircraft accidentally encroaches on out of bounds Chinese military airspace (well, all of it is military, but some of the really 'don't go in there' parts).

What if China shut their airspace?

We are not saying it will.

However, China are initiating a major offensive in Taiwan, and this does draw parallels to Ukraine and Russia. If the US military becomes involved, this **may lead to sanctions** between the two countries. Some early consideration as to what airspace closures might mean is therefore a good idea.

China is a major air corridor, particularly with Russian airspace currently closed to the US and Europe. Reduced access or closure of the airspace will see **flights routing far further south** via Japan, and potentially across the South China Sea before routing across Thailand, India and Pakistan and the Middle East.

The impacts would be significant for various reasons:

- This will **significantly increase flight times and distances**, and likely be prohibitive for aircraft with lesser range capability (without fuel stops).
- The South China Sea may see **increased risk levels** if China increase their military presence there as well.
- **Summer weather patterns** can create further routing difficulties particularly around the Bay of Bengal area.

Other threats to consider.

The Cyber Threat
Chinese action in terms of cyber security *breaches* have been questioned more than once.

The political stuff
China and the US have a history of 'messy' visas for aircrew already. Further tensions are likely to increase this. Security for certain nationalities will need consideration.

Trade
China is a major trade partner with the US and Europe and sanctions on trade may impact aircraft parts manufacture.

Moldova Bomb Threats: Russia-Ukraine Conflict Spillover

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022

Moldova is seeing a lot of spill over repercussions from the Russia-Ukraine conflict, but it has been hitting the international flight ops news more in the last few weeks because of a series of bomb threats.

Tell me more about Moldova.

Moldova is a small nation **sandwiched between Ukraine and Romania**, bordering the Black Sea. They were granted candidate status into the EU alongside Ukraine when all the current conflict started kicking off.

What about their involvement in the Russia Ukraine conflict?

While considered **a military neutral country**, they also broke away from the Soviet Union in 1991, and have had ongoing trouble in the **Transnistria region.** This is a breakaway republic in eastern Moldova, bordering Ukraine, with its main city Tiraspol.

This region is of interest to Russia because of its access down to the Black Sea, the close ties any in the area retain with Russia, and because of what it means for Moldova's EU entry bid – having **full control of borders is a pre-requisite** for this. All this means concerns for Moldova that **Russia might take steps towards them**, or at least the Transnistria region in a similar way as they have Ukraine.

The current conflict impact

Moldova initially closed all their airspace, but later reopened a section on their **western border with LRBB/Bucharest FIR** in order to enable flights to **LUKK/Chisinau airport.**

However, several countries have **active warnings for Moldovan airspace.** The primary risk is an **unintended targeting of civil aircraft** by military near the Moldova-Ukraine border, including misidentification (as with MAS17, UIA752).

A full post on the airspace situation from the Russia Ukraine conflict is available here.

You can also read the main warnings for Moldova on Safeairspace. As a brief overview of the big ones –

- **French operators** should not enter the airspace of **Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova**, and should also not enter the airspace of Russia within **200nm of the FIR boundaries** with Ukraine
- **Canadian operators** are **prohibited** from the airspace of **Moldova.**

Why are we talking about Moldova now?

There has been a **spate of bomb threats** made at LUKK/Chisinau airport, the latest occurring on July 30 and another August 2. **No explosives have been discovered,** but the threats are treated as real and have resulted in evacuations each time, which has resulted in a fair amount of disruption. Up to 100 institutions and buildings have apparently been targeted with fake bomb threats over the summer so far.

What is the impact on international flight operations though?

LUKK/Chisinau Airport:

There are **special procedures** in place for operating into LUKK/Chisinau, and **new SIDs and STARs** have been published. However, only some of these are available.

Special care is recommended if **arriving on runways 26/27 or departing 08/09.**

Full details of the airspace changes are available here in Moldova's updated AIP SUP.

Overflights:

Moldovan airspace is **not required for overflights.** The primary routes from the Middle East and Asia, into or from Europe, bring aircraft over the Black Sea and Romania, remaining well clear of Moldovan and Ukraine airspace.

However, the proximity to airspace with identified risks, and the **increased traffic** because of the limited routes available, should be considered.

En-route Alternates:

Aircraft requiring an enroute alternate or diversion airport in this region should **consider LROP/Bucharest or LROV/Brasov** instead of LUKK/Chisinau.

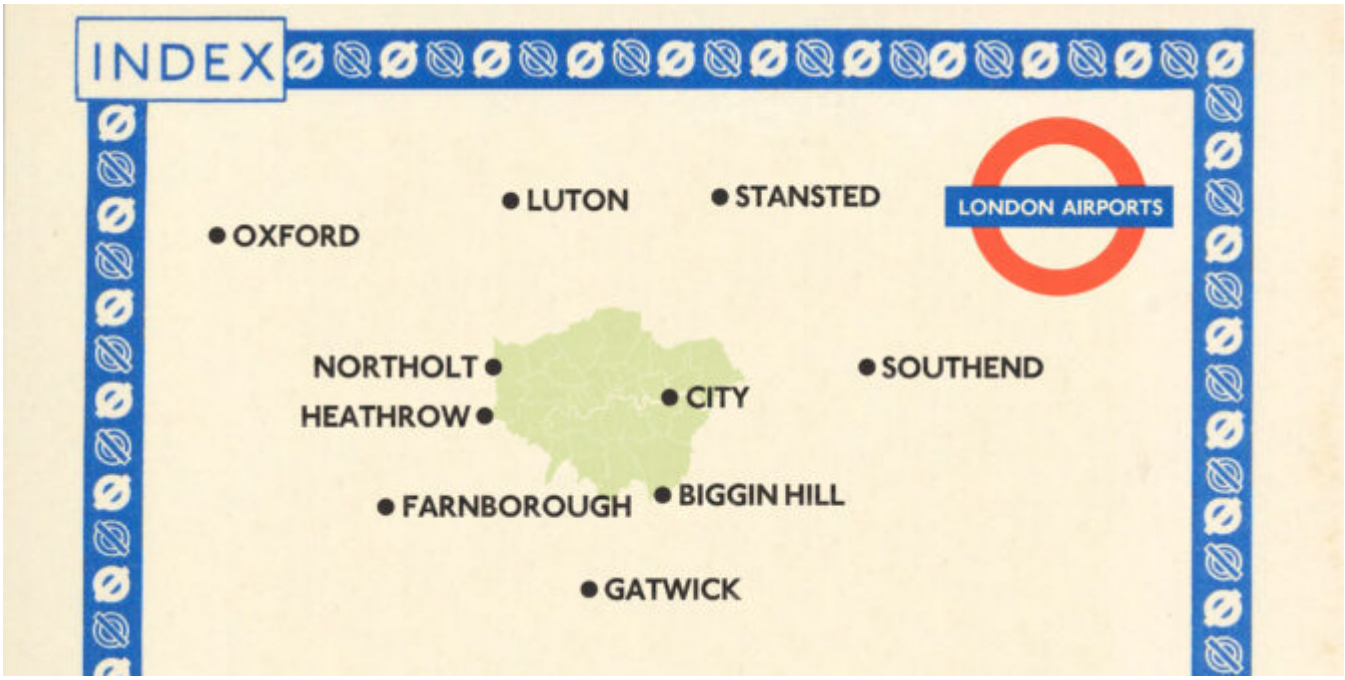
Security concerns:

If operating into Moldova, review your own measures and responses for bomb threat or other security threats, and **consider organising additional security.**

The US have recommended caution for their citizens in Moldova, and advise that **all alerts be treated as genuine** (and report anything that looks dodgy).

London Airports Top Tips

OPSGROUP Team
12 October, 2022



Here's some basic info we put together on the London Airport options, made with help from the London Underground tube map publishers, circa 1962.

How many airports are there around London?

Well, you have the big international ones – **EGLL/Heathrow, EGKK/Gatwick and EGSS/Stansted.**

Then you have **EGMC/Southend** which is also quite big but a bit less big really, it mainly just serves European routes really. Same for **EGGW/Luton.** FYI – both of these are officially 'London' as well.

Then you have smaller or predominantly business aviation airports – **EGLC/London City, EGLF/Farnborough** (not a London, but closeish), **EGTK/Oxford Kidlington** (this is a London), **EGKB/Biggin Hill** (really near London but not called London) and **EGWU/Northolt** (8nm from Heathrow and actually a military base).

Back in 2015, the UK handled something like **2 million flights a year and 1.2 million of them were in and out of the 5 main London airports.** In fact, here's a cool video of 24 hours in London (also from 2015 so probably wildly inaccurate at this point, but has some nice neon colours.)

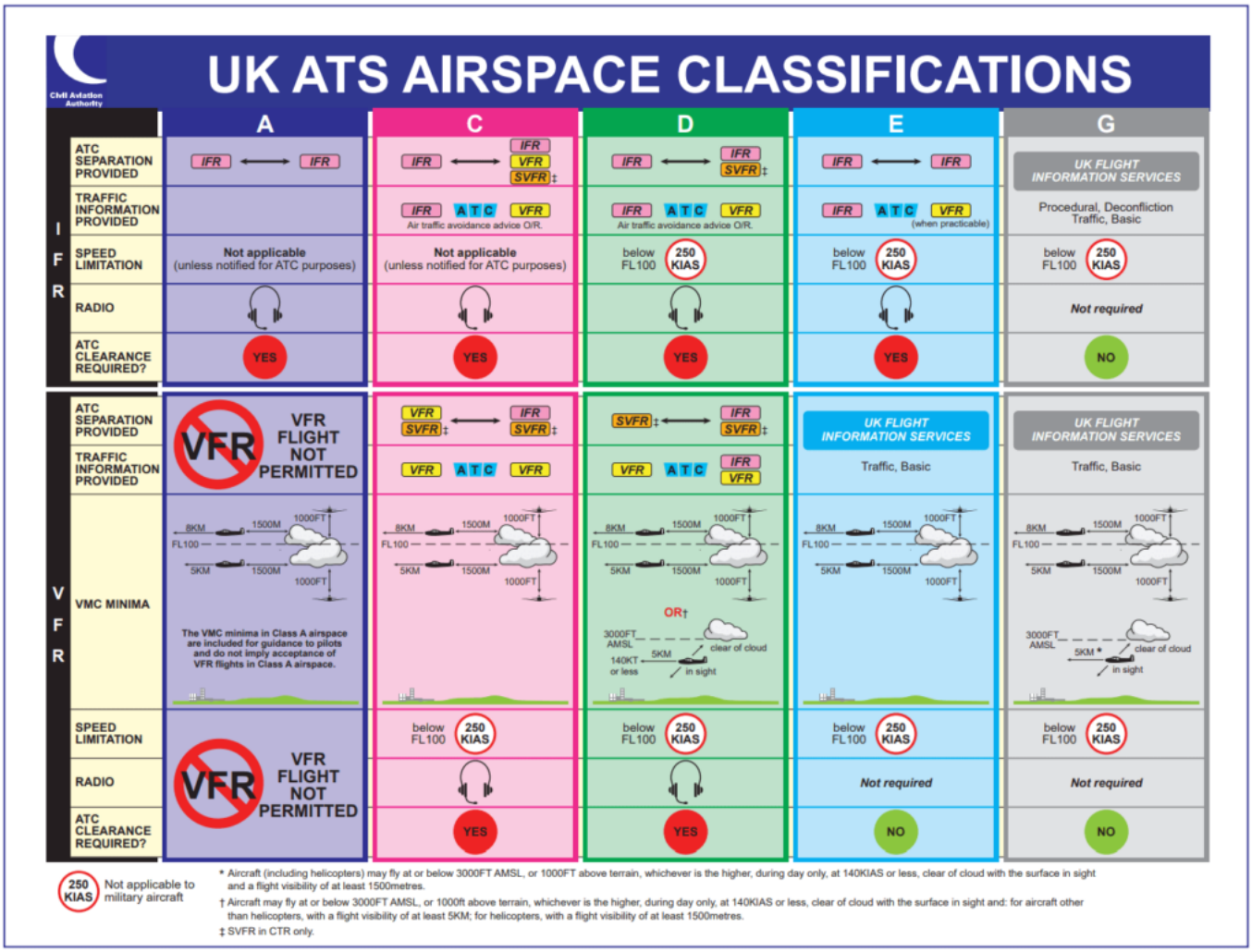
Right, so, it's busy. What are some things you need to know.

- **The constant frequency changes.** So many of them. But generally well managed on ATC.
- **The headings after departure.** For reasons known only to ATC, it seems to be easier for them to manage all the traffic out of the London area by keeping you on a heading for lengthy times.
- **Transition levels and altitudes.** Not set at a specific number – they can change with the weather, and at different airports. Watch out if there are extreme QNHs going on.
- **The airspace**. Actually, this can have its own section…

The airspace.

It only has **3 FIRs – London, Scottish and Shanwick,** although these are split in UIRs as well.

All the airspace in the UK is **split into 7 types classes – A to G.** Here is a picture:



I will point out, in case you miss it, that **Class G is uncontrolled.**

Class G airspace (and Class E a bit)

If you're in Class G (and some class E if you're VFR) then you get **Flight Information Services.** These work like this:

- **Basic service.** ATC might tell you about activities that might affect you if they have time. Up to you to miss it all.
- **Traffic service.** The use a radar to tell you about specific conflicting aircraft. You only get this if they have time, and still up to you to not fly into it.
- **Deconfliction service.** This is only for IFR flights in class G. It's basically the traffic service but they'll throw in some 'how to miss it' guidance as well, which you can ignore if you want.
- **Procedural service.** I don't really understand this so have just copied and pasted their description – *Only available to IFR flight. A non-surveillance service in which deconfliction advice is provided against other aircraft in receipt of a Procedural Service from the same ATCO; the ATCO will not be aware of any other aircraft.*

All this information is in here, with some more information if you need to know more.

When will you ever be in Class G?

Remember this started as a post about London, sort of? Well, now it is **a post about Biggin Hill specifically**, because that's where you – a BizAv aircraft maybe routing over from the US on some nice business trip – might find yourself in Class G airspace.

First, let's talk **Air Traffic Zones (ATZ)**. If the longest runway is longer than 1850m, then these zones are generally 2000' high and 2.5nm around the aerodrome – if shorter than that you generally have a 2nm ring.

To go in or out of an ATZ you need to either:

- Have permission from the ATC unit there if it has one
- Have information from flight information service if it has one
- If there is no ATC or FIS, then be talking to an air/ground communication service.

Read more here.

So, Biggin Hill has an ATZ and it's a funny sized one and it's right in Class G airspace, and if you fly there you probably want to know about the procedures to go in before you.

Biggin Hill stuff

We were told this by a very helpful Opsgroup member who had just been there.

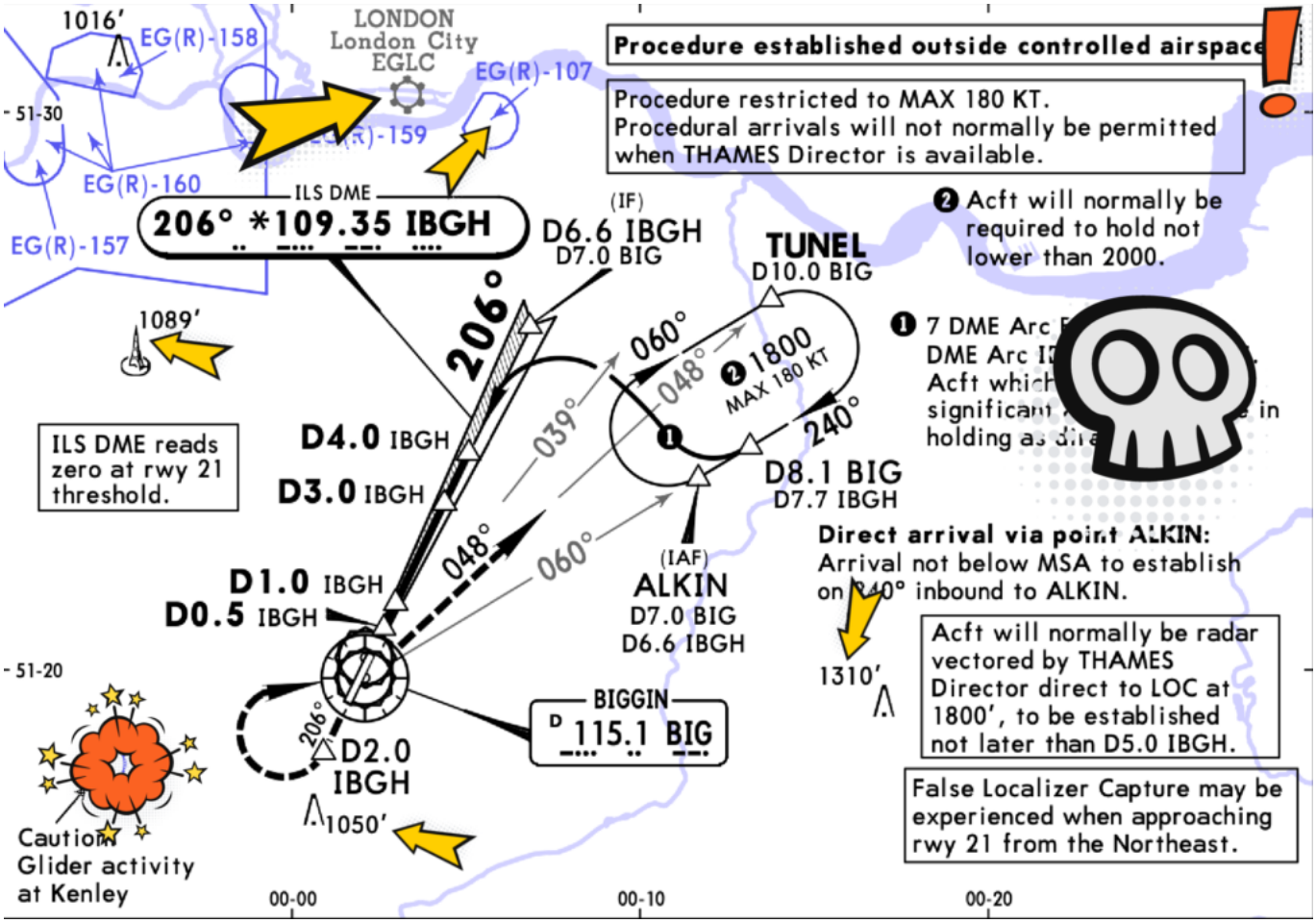
It is in class G, has an ATZ, and a tower. The tower give you all the permissions and clearances you need.

Right above Biggin Hill you're **straight up into Class A (2500').** Your instrument approach starts below Class A and is outside the ATZ… so many non radio carrying, non transponder transmitting aircraft could be wafting about all around you. You might get one of those service I mentioned above, but you might not, and **you will always have to make sure you don't fly into stuff.** So watch out.

Also because of its airspace, you can probably expect some extra track miles as you head in and out from the west. **Arriving – count on an extra 15 minutes, departing – be prepared for an extra 10 minutes or so.**

They also only really land onto runway 21, and if you depart 21 then it's an EARLY right hand turn for noise abatement.

Here's an Airport Lowdown on all of this.



Finally, some other bits on other London airports.

1. Don't go to London City unless you have been trained (it needs prior training) and your aircraft is **certified for steep approaches** or its going to get quite embarrassing fairly quickly. If you are going to London City then take a look at the platform and missed approach altitudes because they're low. Why? Because it is directly under the flight paths for Heathrow and Gatwick.

2. Don't head to Heathrow without a bit of fuel for holding. **You usually hold for Heathrow.**

3. Don't fly level for too long if you're heading to Heathrow. They have quite **strict NABT arrival procedures** and you might get fined (and will definitely get shamed!) if you don't try and do a CDA.

4. Don't plan on using many of them at night. Really, **Southend and Stansted are your only options at night** – everywhere else is either closed or has noise curfews in place. Here's something we said on that.

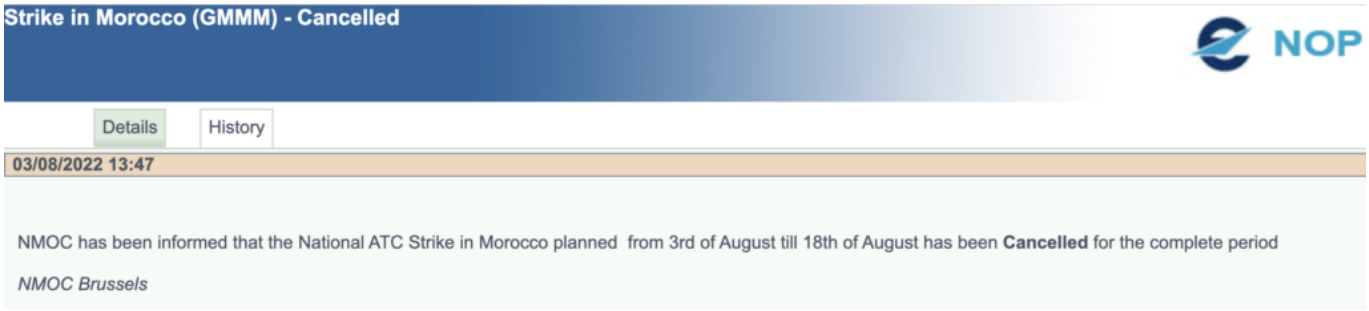
5. If you're not from the UK you're more than likely going to need to **register for a TCO before December 2022** if you want to operate any kind of commercial flight into the UK. It looks like a hideous process and we don't know much about it so if you have questions, email these folk – TCO@caa.co.uk

6. London is awesome. If you want some recommendations on top spots to visit then ask.

Morocco ATC Strike Cancelled!

Chris Shieff
12 October, 2022

Update 1500z Aug 3: And bam! Just like that, the ATC strike in Morocco is **cancelled!** There's no more info yet, but normal ops now expected for the whole period Aug 3-18. So say Eurocontrol on the NOP site.



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Story from Aug 2:

News broke last week that Moroccan ATC are threatening to strike for a **full two weeks from August 3 – 18**, and it will affect the entire **GMMM/Casablanca FIR**. Similar strikes elsewhere typically last just hours or at worst a day or two.

While it will not be a complete walk-out, the airspace may be heavily restricted – a busy air corridor linking Western Europe to Sub-Saharan Africa and South America. On average Moroccan airspace services over a thousand flights a day, and ATC want to put the brakes on hard.

It's all found in this letter written by the union responsible. Here's our breakdown of what it says, along with some nice pictures.

Let Me In!

If you want to come in, you had better get in line. If the strike goes ahead, only **one aircraft per hour** will be allowed through each entry point to the GMMM/Casablanca FIR.

Trickle effect at airports.

All major airports in Morocco will be affected by heavy restrictions on aircraft movements. In each case, only two aircraft will be allowed depart each hour.

Who's not affected?

There will be **limited exemptions,** but they won't apply to most operations. Aircraft engaged in state, RFF, medevac or humanitarian ops will be exempt. And if you experience an **emergency**, of course you'll be allowed in asap.

You will also be able to get special handling permission by including 'STS/AFTMX' in Item 18 of your flight plan to get around the restrictions. This will be by prior approval only though. To ask for it, you'll need to contact the CAA directly. You can reach them at civilair@menara.ma or on +212 537 67 94 07.

Watch out for Western Sahara

If you're hoping to avoid the hold-ups in the GMMM/Casablanca FIR, you may be tempted to route further south over the **Western Saharan region.**

Something to be aware of first – there are still **active airspace warnings** in place for this disputed territory. Despite being quiet in the news lately, there is a long running conflict happening there. Anti-aircraft weaponry has previously been identified as a possible threat to low flying aircraft below FL200. **The risk to overflights** in the upper flight levels is very low, but take extra care if planning for diversions or emergencies.

You can read a full briefing on the situation here. We've also written this article which may also help.

Right now it's just a "potential" strike.

The nature of industrial action is that it can be hard to predict until it actually happens. On August 1, Eurocontrol advised the strike was imminent but also noted that the GMMM Notams were conspicuously quiet. We also reached out directly to the Moroccan CAA, but so far *crickets*.

Other ATC strikes in Africa

It must be the season! Also be aware that on August 25 another major strike is planned affecting **five FIRs in Western Africa**, along with another over **Madagascar** in the east. You can read more about that one here.

NAT Conundrums Volume III: To GOTA and beyond!

David Mumford
12 October, 2022

Ah, NAT conundrums! We love them so much, we're into our third Volume already!

Volume I covered the following three conundrums:

1. To SLOP, or not to SLOP?
2. What's the difference between the NAT Region and the NAT HLA?
3. Can I fly across the North Atlantic without Datalink?

Volume II covered these additional three:

4. Do you need to plot on Blue Spruce Routes?
5. Do we still fly Weather Contingency Procedures on Blue Spruce routes?
6. When can we disregard an ATC clearance and follow the contingency procedure instead?

And this post, Volume III, looks at GOTA airspace. It's such a juicy topic, it gets an entire Volume all of its own.

So here goes…

Where is GOTA airspace?

This section of airspace is found off the coast of North-eastern Canada, FL290 to FL600 inclusive.

Here it is, outlined in red:

Why are we talking about it?

Because lots of aircraft transit this area when flying across the North Atlantic. Also because the requirements here were very tricky for us to track down on "paper" (i.e. the Canada AIP, NAT Doc 007, etc), and were only really made clear after speaking with a real human being at Transport Canada. *We like human beings!*

So here's what we discovered…

You don't need datalink in GOTA airspace

No, you don't. We thought you did, but we were wrong.

When we sat down to update our North Atlantic Plotting chart last year, we wanted to draw nice clear lines on the map to show where datalink was required. But we were bamboozled by GOTA.

The ICAO NAT Doc 007 says that you don't need datalink in:

"Airspace where an ATS surveillance service is provided by means of radar, multilateration and/or ADS-B, coupled with VHF voice communications as depicted in State Aeronautical Information Publications (AIP), provided the aircraft is suitably equipped (transponder/ADSB extended squitter transmitter)."

It then says to check in State AIPs to see if any of their airspace fulfils this criteria.

So that's what we did. But checking in Canada's AIP brought up this for GOTA:

7.2.1 Gander Oceanic Transition Area (GOTA)

The implementation of additional surveillance and communication sites along the north-east coast of Canada allowed for the provision of enhanced services and led to the creation of the Gander oceanic transition area (GOTA).

The lower limit of the GOTA is FL 290; the upper limit is FL 600. The GOTA is Class A controlled airspace.

The GOTA consists of airspace FL 290 and above, from 6530N 060W, east to the Reykjavik area control centre (ACC) boundary, south to 6330N 055W, south along 055W to the Gander domestic boundary, north along the Gander/Montreal domestic boundaries, north to the Edmonton boundary, and then back to the point of origin (see Figure 7.2.1 for reference).

Surveillance services are provided by Gander ACC. The automatic dependence surveillance - contract/controller-pilot data link communications (ADS-C/CPDLC) log on address for aircraft in GOTA airspace is CDQX.

And this for Data Link Mandate (DLM) Airspace:

7.2.4 Data Link Mandate (DLM) Airspace

7.2.4.1 General Information

The objectives of the NAT Data Link Mandate are to enhance communication, surveillance, and air traffic control (ATC) intervention capabilities in the NAT region. ADS-C provides conformance monitoring of aircraft adherence to cleared route and flight level significantly enhancing safety. ADS-C also facilitates search and rescue operations including the capability to locate the site of an accident in oceanic airspace. CPDLC substantially improves air/ground communications capability and therefore controller intervention capability.

7.2.4.2 DLM Flight levels

DLM airspace encompasses FL290 to FL410 inclusive throughout the NAT region.

7.2.4.3 Flights Permitted to Operate within NAT DLM airspace

The following flights may flight plan to operate in NAT DLM airspace:

1. Flights equipped with and prepared to operate FANS 1/A (or equivalent) CPDLC and ADS-C data link systems (see ICAO Doc 7030 3.3.2 and 5.4.2).
   (a) The appropriate equipage to be indicated in Item 10 of the ICAO flight plan is:
   - D1; and
   - One of J2, J5 or J7
2. Non -equipped flights that file STS/FFR, HOSP, HUM, MEDEVAC, SAR or STATE in item 18 of the flight plan.

Note: Such flights may not receive an ATC clearance that matches flight planned requests depending on tactical situations.

So none of that really answered our question of **whether or not you need datalink in GOTA airspace.** The trail went cold...

via GIPHY

Our chat with Transport Canada in 2021:

Deep in the doldrums of lockdown, we sent Transport Canada (TC) some emails asking them the question directly. Here's a massively paraphrased transcript of that email exchange:

Us: We have been trying to determine if the GOTA requires datalink? It appears to meet the definition of ATS Surveillance Airspace but we can't identify anywhere in the Canadian AIP which specifically states this.

TC: The GOTA is in fact DLM airspace.

Us: Really? So operators without datalink must cap their flight below FL290 through the GOTA airspace until they reach that datalink exempt airspace over Greenland, at which point they can climb to the higher levels?

TC: Yes. Well… flights equipped with ADS-B may operate at DLM levels within the GOTA.

Us: Oh. Now we're confused. Oh well, it's Christmas now. Chat next year!

TC: Merry Christmas.

Our chat with Transport Canada in 2022:

Us: We have been trying to determine if the GOTA requires datalink? It appears to meet the definition of ATS Surveillance Airspace but we can't identify anywhere in the Canadian AIP which specifically states this.

TC: Didn't you ask this *exact* same question last year?

Us: Yep. But then… you know… Christmas…

TC: Ah yeah. Ok. As long as you are HLA Certified (MNPS & RVSM) and you have ADS-B, transponder and VHF you wouldn't require all the DLM equipage. GOTA is technically Gander Oceanic airspace (NAT HLA airspace), but as they have Ground based Radar sources, space-based ADS-B and VHF coverage in the area it has been delegated to Gander Domestic. Due to this, the airspace is considered Class A surveillance airspace and follows the similar regulations as you would in other Canadian domestic Class A airspace.

Us: What about that ADS-B requirement?

TC: Well, technically ADS-B isn't required as it is considered class A surveillance airspace. So lack of ADS-B wouldn't prevent you from entering the GOTA area. That said, ADS-B equipage is preferred by many of the controllers. This is because the ground based radar isn't always guaranteed to the outer limits of the GOTA airspace. This makes identification and separation easier for the domestic controllers when the aircraft have ADS-B.

Us: So tell us again, what do you need in GOTA airspace?

TC: Required equipment for GOTA airspace is transponder, automatic pressure-altitude reporting equipment and VHF. As soon as you leave that airspace you would need other equipment depending on what airspace you enter.

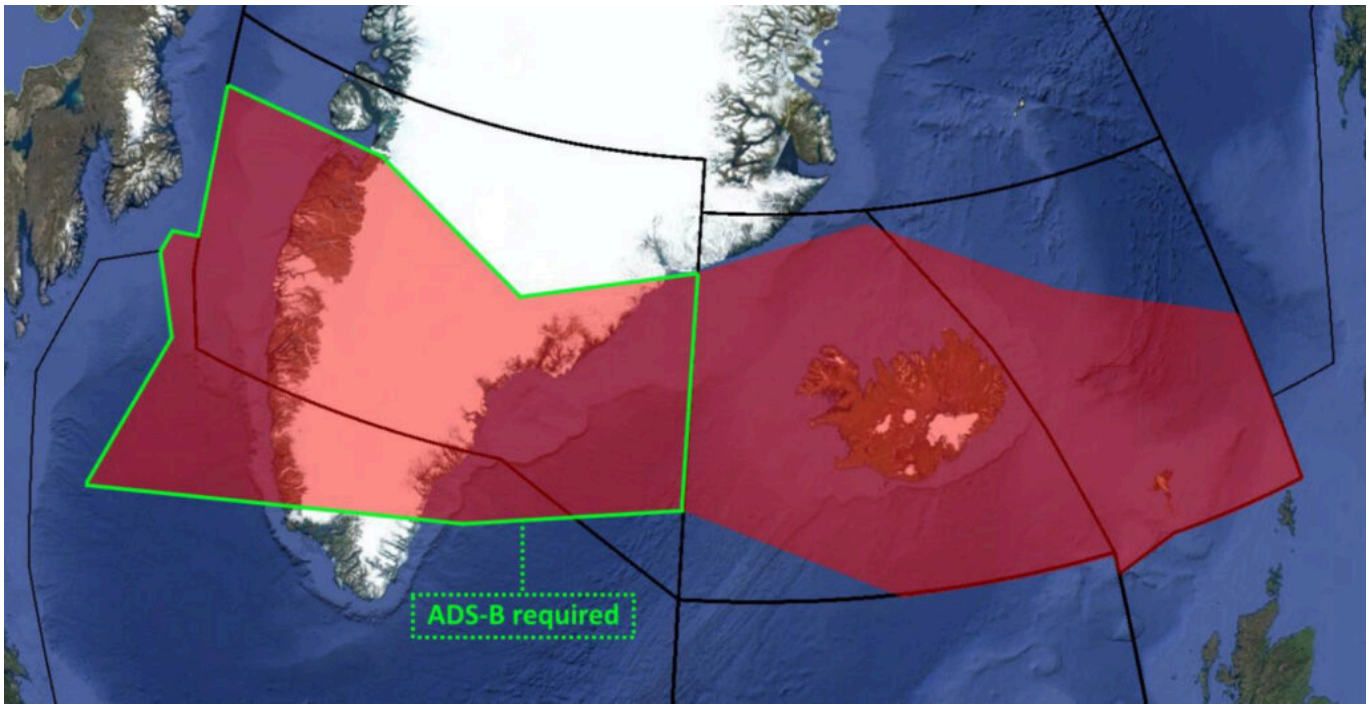
"As soon as you leave that airspace…"

Yes indeed, a good point, worthy of further investigation! Because no-one just zips around solely in GOTA airspace, do they?

So here's a look at the airspace adjacent to GOTA, and what you need where…

Datalink Exempt airspace over Greenland, Iceland, and a bit of Gander Oceanic

There's an interesting picture in the NAT Doc 007 doc that looks like this:



This the datalink exempt ATS Surveillance airspace over Greenland, Iceland, and a bit of Gander Oceanic where you can still fly if you don't have datalink.

This area is bounded by the following:

Northern boundary: 65N000W – 67N010W – 69N020W – 68N030W – 67N040W – 69N050W – 69N060W – BOPUT.
Southern boundary: GUNPA – 61N007W – 6040N010W – RATSU – 61N020W – 63N030W – 62N040W – 61N050W – SAVRY

So, putting that on our nice NAT Plotting Chart, it looks like this (outlined in green):

Us: What are the requirements for this airspace?

TC: HLA Certification (MNPS & RVSM), ADS-B & VHF.

Us: Nice.

HLA airspace

So now we're talking about the bit to the south of the datalink exempt airspace, outlined here in fruity pink:

Us: What are the requirements for this airspace?

TC: HLA Certification and full DLM certification, FANS 1/a (ADS-C(D1) & CPDLC(J2, J5 or J7)). Depending on the route of flight and the tracks that day there may be other requirements as well (ie. PBCS Certification for PBCS tracks).

The Blue Spruce Routes

So here's what we said in a previous post on these…

The Southerly ones: *These go over Greenland linking Canada with Iceland via waypoint OZN, and are not fully contained in the exempted airspace. So if you're flying these southerly Blue Spruce routes you will have to meet the NAT DLM requirements or fly outside of the vertical parameters of DLM airspace (i.e. below FL290 or above FL410). In other words: you need datalink to fly on the southerly Blue Spruce routes between FL290-410.*

The Northerly ones: *These are the ones going overhead BGSF/Sondrestrom airport. These do fall within the exempted area of airspace – so datalink is not mandatory if you're flying here.*

Us: All that stuff we told people in our previous post… did we get that right?

TC: Yeah, pretty much. The primary purpose of Blue Spruce routes is for aircraft with only one long range navigation system. This would normally exclude them from the exemption area anyway, as they are usually kept below HLA airspace (FL280 or below) as they would normally need state HLA approval to fly a blue spruce route with one long range navigation system at FL290 and above.

Gander's datalink exempt airspace won't be datalink exempt for much longer!

You: Hold on… which bit of airspace are we talking about now??

Us: This bit, outlined in black. It's the bit of airspace in the datalink exempt area which is controlled by Gander Oceanic.

So, this is where the plot thickens!

Us: Can you tell us why the plot has thickened, exactly?

TC: Yes, we can. Do you guys actually know anything, or do just come to us for all your answers?

Us: We only know how to massively paraphrase email exchanges.

TC: Okay. So here's the deal. As we are decommissioning the VHF and ground based ADS-B sites in southern Greenland we will no longer have the datalink exempt area in the northern portion of Gander oceanic HLA airspace. At that point, all Gander oceanic airspace will become DLM airspace. Although GOTA will stay datalink exempt.

Us: Decommissioning VHF and ground based thingies, you say?

TC: That's right. Nav Canada put out a circular last year and updated it again this year advising that the ADS-B and VHF sites in that area will be decommissioned. The current circular is AIC 15/22. The tricky part is, it discusses just the ADS-B and VHF sites, but many people don't make the connection from that to the exemption area. When the VHF sites are decommissioned we won't have the equipment to qualify for DLM exemption in that area. Nav Canada is keeping one frequency until December 29, 2022 to enable users to continue to use the area for this year, but that final one will be decommissioned at that time. The 127.9 frequency will continue to be used by Gander IFSS for the Blue Spruce Routes. When it gets closer to that date, there should be an ICAO NAT Ops Bulletin out and NAT Doc 007 will be amended. So just to clarify, barring any major unexpected changes, that airspace will become strictly DLM airspace on December 29, 2022. At that point it will follow the same regulations as the rest of the NAT DLM airspace.

Us: Bonza.

So, to recap…

- **Datalink Airspace:** Remember, NAT DLM airspace only applies from FL290-410. Below or above that, you don't need datalink in the North Atlantic.

- **If you have full datalink (CPDLC and ADS-C):** You can go where you like, and you didn't really need to read this post.
- **For GOTA airspace:** You need a transponder, automatic pressure-altitude reporting equipment and VHF. If you have ADS-B, that's helpful for ATC.
- **For the Blue Spruce Routes:** You need datalink for the southerly ones, but not the northerly ones. (If you're flying on these then you're probably doing so below FL290 anyway, in which case you're below NAT DLM airspace and don't need datalink).
- **For the datalink exempt airspace over Greenland, Iceland, and a bit of Gander Oceanic:** You don't need datalink, but from 29 Dec 2022 you will do in the bit controlled by Gander.

Questions

Just send us an email at news@ops.group and we'll try to find out the answer.