Always Listening: Black Boxes in the Cloud

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022

The problem with black boxes is that they are attached to the airplane.

Although their contents are invaluable for figuring out the cause of an accident*, if we can't find the airframe, we don't get the answers.*

It took two years to find Air France 447, while Malaysian 370 remains lost to this day. The industry seems to be becoming more aware that there is *something wrong* with the way we have been tracking, searching for, and finding accident aircraft.

And as part of this, there is an emerging push for black box data to be **streamed** live during a flight using internet-based technology.

From a safety perspective, it makes sense. But from a practical standpoint, **it's not all smooth sailing.** Here's a brief look at how these new technologies might work, and why organisations such as IFALPA, along with some pilots, are still pushing back.

The 'Cloud'.

Storing data in the cloud is becoming a reality with both flight data and voice. All you really need is an internet connection to let the magic happen.

With that in mind, the idea is that black box data could be **streamed to the cloud constantly**. Meaning it is immediately available to safety investigators if or when an accident or incident happens.

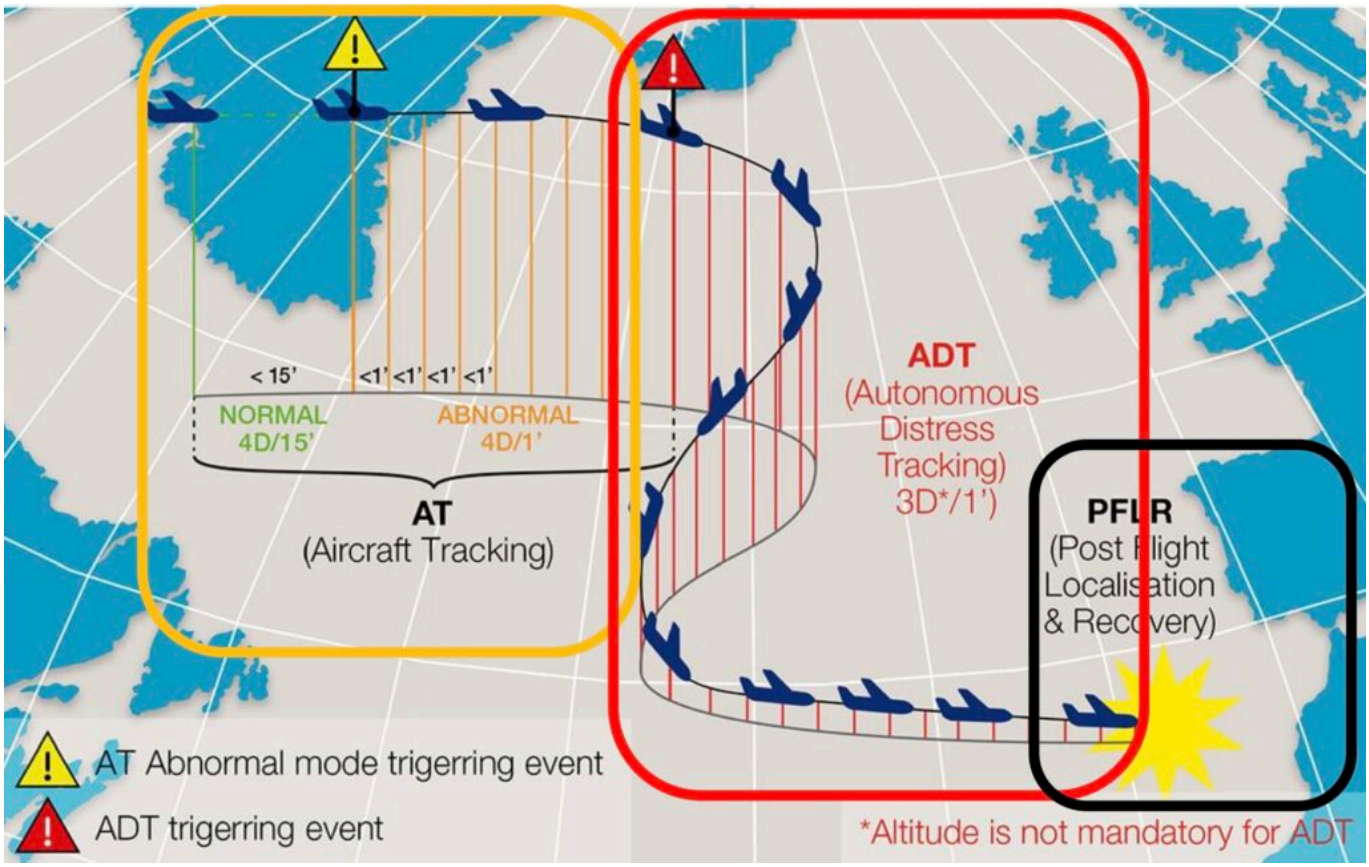
ICAO.

As a result of accidents like the ones mentioned above, **ICAO is implementing a mandate** for new aircraft with MTOWs over 27,000kg (60,000lbs) due to come into effect from 2023.

It's an extension of their Global Aeronautical Distress and Safety System, or simply 'GADSS' – their

initiative to make tracking and finding aircraft in emergencies much more efficient.

A big part of it is that onboard equipment will need to recognise abnormal or emergency conditions from parameters such as speed or unusual attitudes *automatically*, and then begin broadcasting very accurate position reports as often as **once a minute** – as opposed to the 15 minutes when ops are normal.



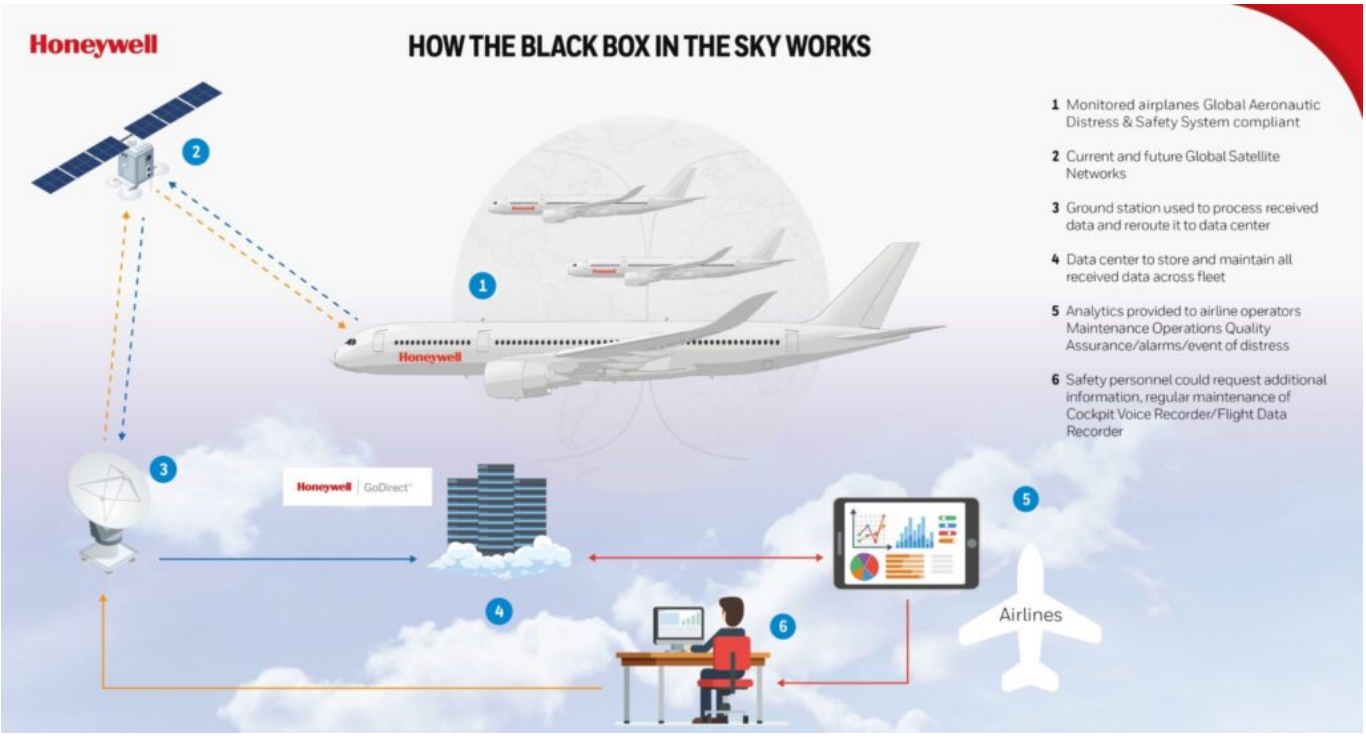
ICAO GADSS – systems must automatically detect situations of distress and broadcast position more frequently.

Big Tech.

Technologies are being developed to allow manufacturers to comply with these GADSS requirements, and in some cases they are taking things one stop further – to include flight data streaming.

Take Satellite Communication heavy hitter **Inmarsat** for example. Their 'Black Box in a Cloud' solution allows data to be live streamed via the internet, to the ground as soon as there is sign of trouble.

Honeywell and Curtiss-Wright have also joined forces to develop new recorders capable of continuous transmission to their own facilities on the ground.



Example of how black box data streaming works. Courtesy: Honeywell

IFALPA says nay...for now anyway.

So on the face of it, black box streaming seems like a no-brainer.

But there are still concerns. On May 9, IFALPA published a position paper on just this issue – and it seems they're not on board yet, due to **security concerns.**

Streaming flight data on the internet may open the door to those wanting to leak, or corrupt it. It is important that the media and public domain don't get a hold it before investigations have taken place, and there may even be those with more malicious intent who want to alter it in some way.

And there are no existing technologies that are 100% secure. IFALPA argue that as the technology develops, so too must our ability to protect it. And until then, IFALPA will remain opposed to it.

Other problems.

It's not just security either. **Here are some other roadblocks** that live flight data streaming faces:

Privacy – *a*cross the board there may be push back from crew who, understandably, don't want their voices recorded and broadcast to the internet. It may be for similar reasons why the industry has resisted the use of cockpit video recordings for the past two decades, despite the desires of the ATSB.

Cost – The suggestion of retrofitting this type of technology to existing airframes would be timely and **very costly**. And in the current industry environment, there is likely to be significant push-back on introducing additional expenses.

Speed – Have you ever tried to stream a movie on that hideously long red-eye? It can be notoriously **slow** and **unreliable** – especially in more remote parts of the world. Flight data recorders also save an immense amount of data, which means satellite time and storage could become uber-expensive.

For live flight data streaming to be effective and reliable, the logistics behind it also need to be rock solid. And there are concerns we're not there yet.

Live flight data streaming will eventually become the new normal. But how long that takes depends on the aviation's ability to overcome these hurdles.

Free Route Airspace Around The World

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

The amount of Free Route Airspace (FRA) you have available to you on your worldwide flights is growing. Here is a look at some of the new regions opening up, some that have been there for a while and some of the ones which probably never will be…

A quick overview if what it is.

Free Route Airspace is where you are allowed to fly direct rather than point to point.

*"Free route airspace (FRA) is a specified airspace within which users may **freely plan a route** between a defined entry point and a defined exit point, with the possibility to route via intermediate (published or unpublished) significant points, **without reference to the ATS route network**, subject to airspace availability."*

Now, there are usually some limits to this:

- Your direct segment can only be 200nm long otherwise you're going to have to file an intermediate point
- You'll also need an intermediate point anytime there is a level change or change in flight rules
- You can take DCTs that cross FIR boundaries, but will need to coordinate in advance for this.

Then there are the aircraft requirements (otherwise you'll be sticking to the published

routes). These are general and not all FRA airspace will have the same requirements:

- Mode S transponder
- ADS-C
- CPDLC (not everywhere, but most)

The New One: Africa.

(Well, parts of it).

This actually came in during Covid because ASECNA (the air traffic folk for the region) wanted to help with fuel savings and efficiency for all the struggling airlines. Nice of them. Even nicer is they have now **extended it until at least October 2022.**

If you are flying through the FMMM/Antanarivo, FCCC/Brazzaville, DRRR/Niamey, FTTT/N'Djamena, GOOO/Dakar oceanic or terrestrial FIRs **above FL290** then you can basically take directs.

Of course, **there are some limits** – free routing through **restricted airspace** will generally not be possible when that airspace is active, and bits of the normal airspace might occasionally not be available either. So you will have to **keep an eye out for notams** on these.

All the info on Africa's FRA is published in AIC 27-22 which you can find right here.

The United Kingdom

We wrote a big old post on this back in December 2021 because it was the *"biggest airspace change ever implemented in the United Kingdom"* (their words not ours).

The major-ness of this is that it covers areas in the **North Atlantic, Scotland, England and Northern Ireland**. There is even a portion in the London UIR which is now FRA.

This FRA is H24 and from FL255-FL660

Europe

We should have started with Europe because they've been **trailblazing FRA since 2008**, when they became the first in the world to implement it. They have a whole implementation plan which you can read up on here.

Once the whole airspace is implemented they reckon it will amount to **1 billion nautical miles saved.**

As of the end of 2022, this is what will be available:

The Cross-Border FRA is the key stuff because it means you can file those 200nm segments across border. Currently, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and Sweden all have cross-border FRA operations. These are increasing through to 2030 (when the whole region should be FRA and cross-border).

2022 is the year it's (nearly) all happening.

The European Commission has a **deadline of 2022 for implementing FRA Europe-wide above FL305.**

The legal stuff for the implementation is all in here if you want a read.

They also have a jumbo document with all the planning requirements if you need it.

Maastricht. (Yes, we know this is part of Europe).

Maastricht of course have free route airspace. The Maastricht Upper Control Area (MUAC) has had it from FL245-FL660 since a long time. Here's their page on it.

Some fairly standard stuff applies:

- You can't file within 2.5nm of the lateral boundary
- Directs do need to connect to SIDs, STARs (if required)
- There are published enter and exit point for the MUAC region

They have something new too though.

Now, this isn't FRA stuff, but is "making routing through airspace more efficient" stuff so we figured a good thing to add in here too.

The big change is the **"dualisation" of the N125 route.** *What is this?* Well, its a busy route that used to be bi-directional and have aircraft climbing and descending which was a mess. So now it is two parallel routes.

Here is a picture of it:

Might not look like much, but it impacts a bunch of German airports, some in the Netherlands and also some overflights so if you fly through this area often, it's worth knowing about.

One last thing in Maastricht…

Maastricht also publishes their own **AIRAC brief** which basically coincides with the new AIRAC cycle. This doesn't supersede the AIP, but provides some handy "complementary" information to help with flight planning.

NOPAC FRA

A study was published on this earlier in 2022 and the results showed, unsurprisingly, that there is much better efficiency for flights able to utilise free routing – especially because winds can be utilised better. This isn't quite the same as Free Route Airspace, its more *"free to plan your route for minimum time or fuel burn"*.

They saw around 243kg saved on eastbound flights and 469kg on westbounders.

However, they also saw a potential increase in loss of separation events, so a balance in separation and efficiency comes up. To be honest, we aren't sure what the situation is with this. It seemed to be a trial to see if viable, but no news on whether it will go any further.

The North Atlantic

The next step for the NAT is more likely to be **Nil Tracks** than full free route airspace. And there is no sign of nil tracks becoming a permanent thing anytime soon.

Mongolia

They are implementing FRA but it is dependant on China (where entry points are dictated by city to city pairs) and Russia (which is currently not talking to many of their neighbours on aviation related topics).

Russia

Russia has some FRA, but is looking to add more entry and exit points. See above for progress on this though.

The US

The FAA are implementing some **High Altitude Redesign plans** which you can read all about this Circular.

They don't call it Free Route Airspace, but if you've flown in the US you might have noticed you do tend to get a lot of directs. If you want to plan for these a little more 'officially' then you need to look out for the (little-known by some) waypoints all around the US known as **'NRS (National Route System)' waypoints.**

Coming to an airspace near you…

Free Route Airspace is predominantly a 'Europe Thing', and a very good one, but a work in progress. If you work in the planning side of things, keep an eye out for changes to European airspace as more FRAs and cross-border routes become available.

New York ATC is grumpy for a reason

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

This started off as (and still really is) a very specific post just aimed at folk who operate into

KTEB/Teterboro – because **the runway 06/24 rehab project has begun!**

So we copied all the information from the Teterboro User's Group site and threw it into here. But then we realised the 'problem' with KTEB is that it's very, very close to a lot of other bigger airports…

So if you operate into **KEWR/Newark, KLGA/La Guardia or KJFK/New York Kennedy** then we reckon it's worth a read too. Because you might not realise what is going on underneath you and having an idea of the lay of the land (so to speak) is useful for that old SA we all harp on about…

So Teterboro is back in rehab?

They have a whole 11 months of works (to April 2023) planned for **runway 06/24.** Mostly it means closures, and these are pretty much all planned over night and on weekends.

Overnight closure timings:

- Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 22:30 – 06:30
- Monday 22:30 – 08:30

Weekend Runway closure times and dates:

- Friday 22:00 – Sunday 12:00 (until August 31)
- Sunday 12:01 – Sunday 23:59 (until November 30)

Weekend Airport closure times and dates:

- Friday 22:00 – Sunday 12:00 (July 1 until August 31)
- Sunday 12:01 – Sunday 23:59 (October 1 to November 30)

But it is more than just the closures that you need to think about if you operate in here.

Arrival Stuff

Northerly Flow:

Depending on wind and weather, and what's happening at KEWR/Newark you can usually expect an ILS 6 with a Circle to Rwy 1 or the RNAV (GPS) X Rwy 6

They are trying to bring in lateral and vertical guidance for Rwy 1. Watch this space. The circle to Rwy 1 is a nasty little thing so check out their guidance on it.

Departure Stuff

Southerly Flow

If its a southerly flow you can expect the Teterboro 4 SID which means delays.

Why?

Because they try to keep a **10nm gap between KEWR/Newark 22L arrivals and KTEB 19 departures.** Which is why there is also the **Dalton 2 visual departure** (which only needs a 5nm gap).

Expect an infinite delay…

Well, that sounds bad. It doesn't actually necessarily mean a lengthy delay though, particularly if you can accept the Dalton 2. The Dalton 2 keeps you down at 1,300' and 180 knots in VFR until clear of all the KEWR traffic then you can expect a transition to an IFR clearance.

There is a meeting!

Yep, there is, on June 15 at 10:00 am EST. Organised through the Teterboro Users Group (TUG) which we strongly recommend you getting yourself in on if you do operate here and aren't already in on it.

What else is going on down there though?

Well, like we mentioned, you've got **several major international airports** to consider as well, and some smaller executive airports and a military base. We counted and found more than 10 just in the immediate proximity to Teterboro.

KJFK, KEWR and KLGA have the dubious titles of **ranking first, third, and fourth for worst delays in the nation.** They are looking at ways to improve this, but most of them involve building more runways which won't necessarily help poor old KTEB stuck underneath the every growing traffic flow.

Then there is the weather.

The east coast of the US gets hit with some pretty heavy storms. In April, a single day of bad weather saw over 4500 flights into the east coast delayed and the knock on effect across the busy airspace is considerable.

OPSCHAT Summary June 7

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

Hi Members,

We had another busy OPSCHAT call this week with Chris in the hosting seat, along with returning Quiz Master Dave and Rebecca.

You can watch the full replay on your Member's Dashboard.

Here's a roundup of what we talked about:

The Big Stuff

- **Bahamas –** The Click2Clear (fast track customs clearance) roll out for everyone is no more… indefinitely. Because it was confusing. We're waiting for clarification on the rules and a new roll out date.
- **Antigua –** TMA overflights are being denied (all the bits below FL245). 'Cross border' permits are needed. Look out for the Notam on it.
- **America –** A big political summit is happening, four TFRs across LA basin affecting access to airports here especially KBUR/Burbank and KVNY/Van Nuys ,so look out for the special procedures.
- **Europe (in general) –** World Fuel Service releases. Something is going on with them. Possibly a fuel shortage or a staff shortage? We ain't sure. But there are a few airports impacted and we think it extends beyond WFS. LFPB/Le Bourget, LIML/Milan Linate… not accepting various cards including WFS, but other airports across France and Italy have reported problems.
- **Italy –** Strike season. ATC strike June 8 for Milan ATC and then a general airport worker strike on June 16.
- **North Korea** – eight unannounced launches in one go! Keep an eye on things, and don't overfly. safeairspace.net is where we report the changes.

Unsolved mysteries

Canada FTL Regulations in Italy – Yes, you might get ramped checked. Yes, they might check your duty

hours. But the general consensus seems to be that if it is state approved, and in accordance with your company's ops manuals, then you're probably A-OK. They're generally just checking everything is order, not digging deep into the specifics.

A question about the chunk of restricted airspace over the Atlantic and why – maybe because of military exercises? We're looking into it.

OPSQUIZ

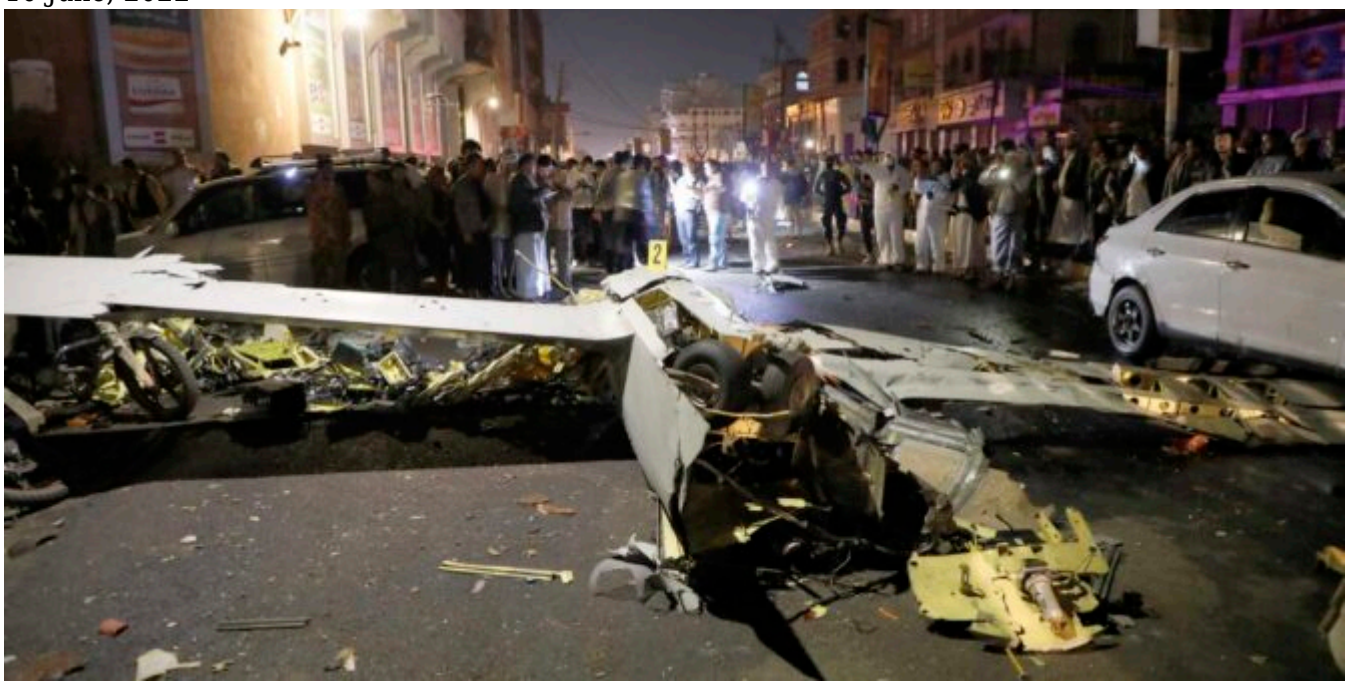
Dave was back to host this week's OPSQUIZ. Congrats to this week's winner, PHIL! A prize will wings its way to you. Here's a sample question for this week: *What are the new standard symbols on US airport charts to show hotspots?*

As always, we're here to help with any operational support, info or questions. You can reach us on news@ops.group, or via the slack channels #flightops and #questions.

To watch the replay of the OPSCHAT in full: head over to the dashboard. We hold a new one every week on Tuesdays at 2000z, click here to register and join us live. See you next week!

Saudi-Yemen Airspace Update

David Mumford
10 June, 2022

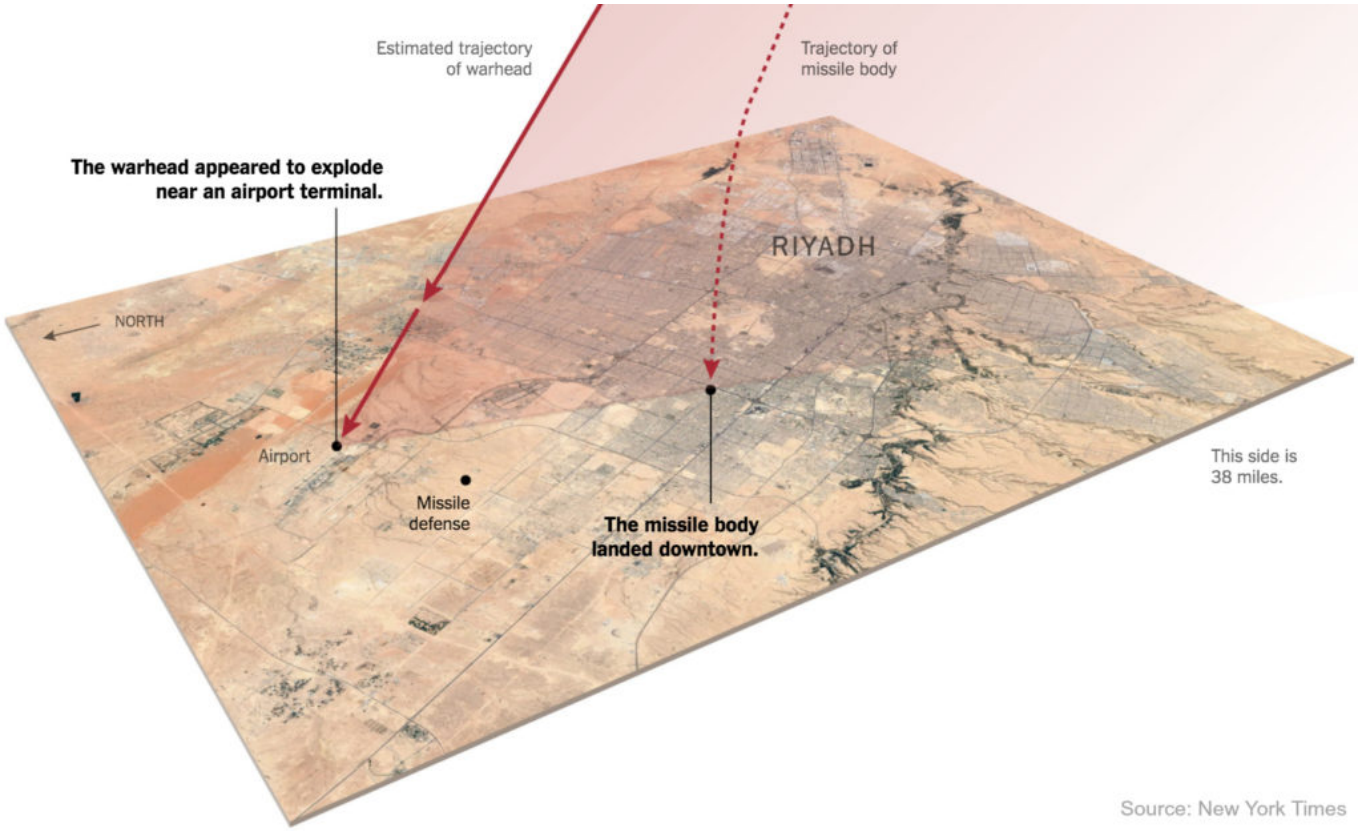


There's an **improving airspace risk picture** in Saudi Arabia since a ceasefire was agreed in April – which has now been extended to Aug 2. All groups have agreed to **halt the conflict** inside and outside Yemeni borders. The first month of the ceasefire saw **no reported drone strikes in Saudi Arabia.**

However, long-standing airspace warnings remain in place. If the conflict resumes, Houthi drone and missile attacks on targets in Saudi Arabia pose a potential threat to ops at Saudi airports, and for overflights of the OEJD/Jeddah FIR. The most significant risk is in the south of the country along the border with Yemen, but OERK/Riyadh and OEJN/Jeddah airports have also been targeted in the past.

Back in March 2021, **OEJN/Jeddah Airport** closed temporarily following multiple attempted drone attacks. Saudi media reported dozens of drones were intercepted in their airspace, and the US Embassy also issued a statement. **OERK/Riyadh Airport** was targeted in June 2020 and again in October.

Much of the information comes from state media and cannot always be independently verified. In 2017, a New York Times investigation suggested that at least one of the most high-profile attacks from that year may not have been “shot-down” or intercepted by Saudi defense systems at all.



Saudi Arabia Airspace Risk

With the ceasefire now in place, we’re waiting to see if any of the countries who have issued airspace warnings for Saudi Arabia will amend their guidance.

Germany and **Canada** warn of a risk to landing anywhere in the country, but particularly along the border with Yemen in the southwest part of the OEJD/Jeddah FIR. **France** has issued similar advice, with the specific warning not to operate to OEAB/Abha, OEGN/Jazan, OENG/Nejran, OESH/Sharurah, OEWD/Wadi Al Dawasir and OEBH/Bisha airports:

A note on Yemen

The first month of the ceasefire saw notably reduced hostilities in Yemen, and commercial flights resumed at OYSN/Sanaa Airport for the first in six years.

However, Yemen remains an active conflict zone, and the vast majority of Yemeni airspace (OYSC/Sanaa FIR) should be avoided. Several countries have **prohibited flights** here due to the ongoing conflict on the ground. The oceanic portion of the OYSC/Sanaa FIR is excluded from most warnings, by nature of being offshore. The guidance issued by the US FAA currently looks like this:

Essentially, US operators are banned from flying north of a line KAPET-NODMA-ORBAT-PAKER-PARIM-

RIBOK. The US FAA specifically mentions UT702 and M999 as being ok to use.

Watch out for ESCAT

You might know this as SCATANA. ESCAT is the new name, but the process is the same – if you're overflying the OEJD/Jeddah FIR and hear **"ESCAT RULES ARE NOW ACTIVE"** (or something to that effect) you need to be aware that these apply to you!

You will likely be given a **change of route directly out of the airspace**, or will be **directed to land at the nearest suitable aerodrome**. The purpose is to clear the affected airspace of all civilian aircraft at which point they close down all nav aids and airports until the threat has been dealt with.

ESCAT procedures are published in GEN 1.6 of Saudi Arabia's AIP. If you don't have a login, you can see the relevant section here. There are some special routes that you have to fly in the southern part of the OEJN/Jeddah FIR, as advised by Notam, and you can find these in AIP SUP 02/21.

SafeAirspace.net continues to provide up-to-date information for both Saudi and Yemen airspace.

Busy Week in LA: Special Flight Procedures

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022

It's a busy few days in the skies of **Los Angeles** this week.

A major political event – The Summit of The Americas – is happening there from June 6-10. A number of **TFRs** will become active affecting access to numerous airports throughout the LA Basin.

The FAA has now published the details, so let's took a closer look.

Update on Restricted Airspace

It looks as if some newer TFRs were issued after we posted this post. First up, **check the list** because we can't predict changes and they do happen.

But right now, we can see a few more like **2/5019, 2/5016, 2/5015** which might get in your way if you're not a scheduled commercial service. These don't supersede the other, they are for shorter time periods. But they are **a lot more prohibitive** (particularly if you're a GA or private flight wanting to get into KLAX).

Restricted Airspace

There will be four TFRs becoming active in the LA area. Three of them are further west near Santa Monica and Central LA, while the fourth is out east near Pomona. The upper limit of all of them is **2,999'.**

They will be active each day of the event at various times which you can access here.

If you're operating on a valid flight plan in or out of **KLAX/Los Angeles**, **KSMO/Santa Monica** or **KEMT/San Gabriel Valley** then you won't be affected.

Otherwise only **essential traffic** will be allowed through – SAR, medical, fire-fighting, or if you're experiencing an emergency.

If you *are* allowed into one, make sure you're squawking a discrete code. The FAA are reminding us that the timings and positions of the TFRs are subject to last minute changes, so keep an eye on the Notams too. The current one is FDC 2/4276 – and it's a solid read. So, here's a picture, because we like pictures more.

Impact

The majority of **VIP movements** will be via KLAX/Los Angeles. Although they are possible at other airports too.

Traffic may be given priority to enter the queue which means potential holding, slow-downs or delaying vectors. The impact will likely be minor, but a little common sense may prevail here – consider topping the tanks off with some **extra contingency fuel** just in case.

The largest impacts will be felt at **KVNY/Van Nuys** and **KBUR/Burbank** – flights in and out of these are not exempt from the TFR restrictions, so if you're heading in or out of one, here is what to expect:

Head-to-Head

Or in other words, **opposite direction operations** at both airports (weather permitting). It is not a normal configuration, and may take a little extra briefing – especially when it comes to traffic and runway awareness.

STARs (and not the Hollywood Type)

Over at KBUR/Burbank arrivals from the east can expect and plan for the JANNY 5 when the TFRs are active. This will temporarily replace the usual THRNE 3.

Overflights

SOCAL Terminal Area Control traffic which usually routes via V186, V201 and V459 can expect to fly via the Palmdale (PMD) VOR instead.

Other tower en-route control (TEC) routes may be unavailable during the next few days too.

I still have questions…

Detailed information on the TFR can be found on the FAA's official website, here. Or if you still have a conundrum to solve, you can contact Flight Service 800-992-7433.

Otherwise get in touch with us on team@ops.group and we'll do our best to help!

Oshkosh 22′: Special IFR Flight Procedures

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022

It’s that time of year again – Oshkosh 22’ is just around the corner. The world-famous air show is happening this year from **July 25 – 31.**

And as you’d expect, it’s going to be big. In fact, it will have the highest concentration of airplanes in the world. Over 10,000 of them to be precise, along with more than 700,000 fans.

To help with the influx of traffic, special air procedures have been published. They’re effective from **July 21 – 31** and apply to several airports in the region, not just **KOSH/Oshkosh** itself.

You may not be headed in for the show, but if you are chartered to take people there (or anywhere near it), it’s time to start planning.

At over thirty pages, the official doc is a solid read. To get you started, here’s a bite-sized summary of the major points for **regular turbine IFR operators.**

Special Procedures – Managing the flow

There are thirteen airports in the Oshkosh area that the generic procedures apply to. In a nutshell, if you’re headed to one, you will need to take part in the IFR Reservation Program. Or in other words, if you’re non-scheduled, you’ll need a slot.

Big things to know for arrivals:

- They will become available at 17z on July 18, here.
- They won’t be issued more than 72 hours in advance.
- You have to confirm your slot within 12-24 hours of your flight (or you’ll lose it).
- You must include your final confirmation number in your flight plan.

Ops tip: When working out your ETA, they suggest adding 30 minutes for delays (along with fuel).

The good news is that things are a little easier for departures – only **KOSH/Oshkosh** itself requires a slot through the same process.

Filing your flight plan

A little common sense prevails here – file early. You can file an IFR plan up to 22 hours in advance. At seven of the Oshkosh area airports, only approved IFR routes in an out are allowed. For arrivals click here, for departures click here.

Picking up your IFR clearance

If you're departing any airport within 600nm of KOSH (even if you're not headed near the show), it's a good idea to get your clearance on the ground to save on airborne delays.

Within 150nm, **airborne clearances will be no-bueno**, so don't try it. ATC won't issue them.

Another ops tip: Avoid plans with multiple stops. ATC advise it is better to file separate plans for each leg.

Airport Specific Procedures

Three airports have their own specific procedures (in addition to the above). Let's take a look.

KOSH/Oshkosh

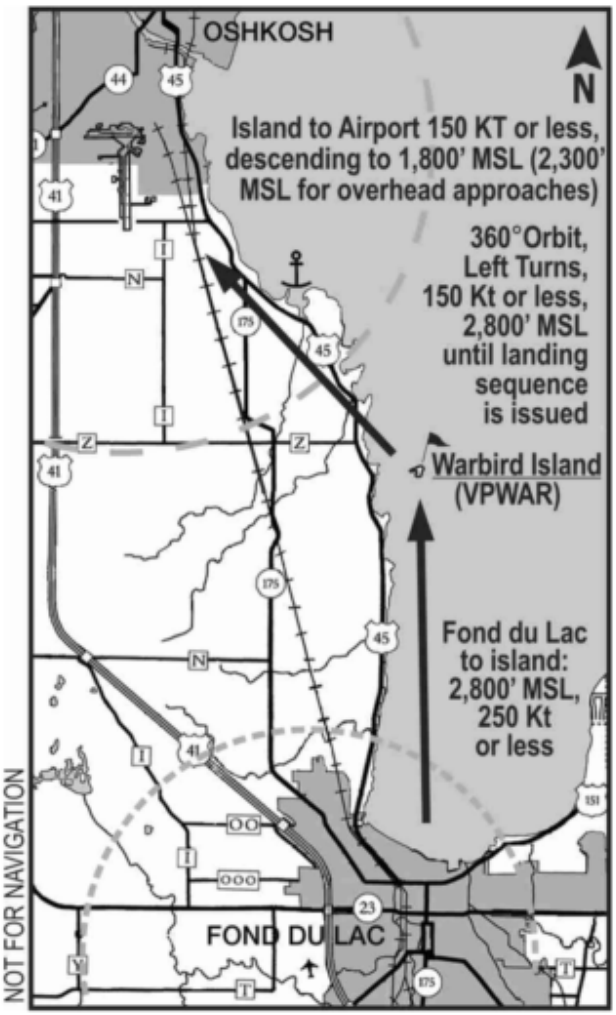
If you're headed into Oshkosh itself and the weather is good (ceiling 4,500'+, visibility > 5'), turbine aircraft are asked to cancel IFR at 60nm and transition to the arrival below.

Turbine/Warbird Arrival

Restricted to aircraft types listed

- This procedure is restricted to high-performance turbojet, turboprop, and Warbird aircraft capable of cruising at 130 knots or greater. Slower Warbird aircraft shall use the VFR Arrival from the ATC designated Transition (pages 5-14).
- The city of Fond du Lac is the entry point for all Turbine/Warbird arrivals. Monitor the AirVenture Arrival ATIS (125.9) for anticipated landing runways (see charts on pages 10-13).
- Avoid the Fond du Lac County Airport (FLD) airspace. FLD has a temporary control tower from Saturday, July 23 until Sunday, July 31, 2022 (operating hours on page 21). FLD airspace is 3,300' MSL and below within 4 NM.
- Aircraft weighing more than 12,500 pounds must advise ATC on initial contact.
- All aircraft shall report arrival over the city of Fond du Lac and again at Warbird Island to Oshkosh Tower on the appropriate tower frequency:
  - **When RWY 36L/R is in use, report on 126.6**
  - **Otherwise report on 118.5**

  Examples: "Blue and yellow Wildcat, Fond du Lac" "White Citation, Warbird Island"
- Proceed from the city of Fond du Lac direct to Warbird Island (6 miles SE of OSH, along the west shore of Lake Winnebago). When 4 NM North of FLD, descend to maintain 2,800' MSL.
- Pilots may be instructed to orbit the island until a landing sequence is issued. **Use caution; make left turns; and stay alert for other aircraft!**
- When cleared at Warbird Island, proceed to the assigned runway as directed by ATC, reduce speed to 150 knots or less and begin descent to 1,800' MSL (2,300' MSL for overhead approaches). Pilots are cautioned to maintain VFR separation at all times.
- If your landing clearance appears unsafe because of spacing, speed of preceding aircraft, or any other reason, go around! A new sequence will be issued.
- Pilots may request a 360° overhead approach to RWY 36 L/R or RWY 27. Break altitude is 2,300' MSL. Expect a right break only.
- ATC may initiate a 360° overhead approach to other runways as needed for spacing. Break altitude will be 2,300' MSL. Expect a north break for RWYs 9/27 and an east break for RWYs 18/36.
- Under all circumstances, avoid the VFR arrivals area southwest of OSH.
- Pilots of Warbird aircraft are encouraged to call Warbird Ground (123.9) when arriving at the Warbird area and also before starting engines for departure.



Make sure you grow eyes in the back of your head for other traffic, it's going be busy.

When you land, you'll need a nice big sign to show where you'll be parking to show marshals outside of the left window. Unless you're staying for the show, it will likely be '**FBO**' for the Basler Ramp (assuming you have arranged this beforehand).

Chances are though, most non-scheduled charters won't be operating into KOSH/Oshkosh. Here are the next two closest options.

KFLD/Fond du Lac

- Distance from Oshkosh: 14nm
- Longest runway: 5941' (1800m)
- Parking: Fond du Lack Skyport (920-922-6000)

The FBO is only open between the hours of 06:30 and 21:00LT.

The biggest gotcha is there will be a **temporary control tower** in place from July 23 – 31, operating between 07:00 and 20:30LT (closing a bit earlier on the last day).

You'll need to contact them at 10nm inbound. They're expecting things to be really busy to – so take fuel for holding. They also recommend you arrive before sunset for safety.

If the weather is good, expect to cancel IFR and fly a visual approach.

KATW/Appleton

- Distance from Oshkosh: 17nm
- Longest runway: 8003' (2439m).
- Parking: Appleton Flight Center (920-738-3034)

The airport is controlled between 05:30 and 23:00 LT every day.

The Main Event Itself

KOSH/Oshkosh will **closed to all non-air show traffic** during the actual displays.

The action will happen in a TFR within a 5nm radius of the airport up to 16,000.' It will be active each afternoon during the event dates, and on two evenings – July 27 and 30. The exact timings will be published here, during which time the airport will be closed.

Need more help?

The official notice is the place to start – it's lengthy, but it's written in plain language which we like.

If you're having difficulty reserving an IFR slot, contact the Airport Reservation Office at (540) 422-4246.

If your question is about something else, you can reach us on news@ops.group and we'll do our best to help, or find the right person who can.

Sri Lanka Asks All Flights To Carry Extra Fuel

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

Sri Lanka, and Colombo's VCBI/Bandaranaike airport is a fairly key spot for aircraft requiring alternates for the likes of the Maldives, and an en-route and fuel stop option for aircraft routing to the Far East.

But there is growing political and economic instability, and this has already led to one European carrier cancelling flights to Sri Lanka, and to a Notam advising fuel availability issues.

Here is an overview of the current situation and the possible implications for international aviation.

What's been happening?

Sri Lanka is undergoing its **worst economic crisis** since gaining independence in 1948 and also just got a new Prime Minister.

Tourism was a major part of the country's economy. On top of this, the country is unable to meet the rising global gas and oil prices. There is a shortage of cash and so a **shortage of basic necessities** in the country, and this has led to a lot of unrest.

Most major authorities **advise against all but essential travel** to Sri Lanka because of increasingly violent protests and riots. These have been building since March 2022, with many through May focused in Colombo.

The Government impose **local restrictions and curfews at short notice** and although the state of emergency has been lifted, there is still a heightened military presence.

There is a **general fuel shortage** across the country which means long queues at gas stations, and long waits for transport. If you plan on having crew layover this might be something to think about.

There were also several big protests through April and May that saw roads to Colombo's **VCBI/Bandaranaike and VCCC/Ratmalana airports** blocked, in an attempt to stop parliamentarians accessing the main airport.

There have been an **increasing number of power cuts**, and with that, loss of internet services, across parts of the country. Contact with agents and permit requests might be disrupted because of this.

The Aviation Situation

One European carrier has cancelled operations into Sri Lanka because of security concerns. This is just because of security concerns though, not direct safety concerns.

There is however also a fuel shortage. Sri Lanka has issued notams under the VCCF code saying that **all flights to airports in the country should tanker fuel inbound.** Local agents report that some fuel may be available on a case-by-case basis, but don't count on it.

A0476/22 -
DUE TO LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF JET A-1 FUEL AT SRI LANKAN AIRPORTS, APPROVAL FOR NON SKED ACFT REQUESTING REFUELLING STOPS WILL NOT BE GRANTED. HOWEVER TECHNICAL STOPS SUCH AS CREW CHANGE WILL BE APPROVED. 27 MAY 18:05 2022 UNTIL 30 JUN 18:29 2022 ESTIMATED. CREATED: 27 MAY 18:05 2022

A0475/22 -
DUE TO LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF JET A-1 FUEL, SKED ACFT OPERATING TO ALL AIRPORTS IN SRI LANKA ARE HEREBY INFORMED TO STRICTLY ADHERE TO THE REQUIREMENT OF CARRYING RETURN SECTOR FUEL.THIS REQUIREMENT DOES NOT INCLUDE DIPLOMATIC, HUMANITARIAN AND EMERG ACFT INTENDING TO OPR TO SRI LANKAN AIRPORTS. 27 MAY 18:03 2022 UNTIL 30 JUN 18:29 2022 ESTIMATED. CREATED: 27 MAY 18:03 2022

Emirates is reportedly now tankering fuel from Dubai, and Singapore Airlines is carrying extra fuel on its flights to the country. SriLankan Airlines has even made fuel stops in India to refuel some of its flights, with more stops planned here in the coming days.

Fuel Stop Options

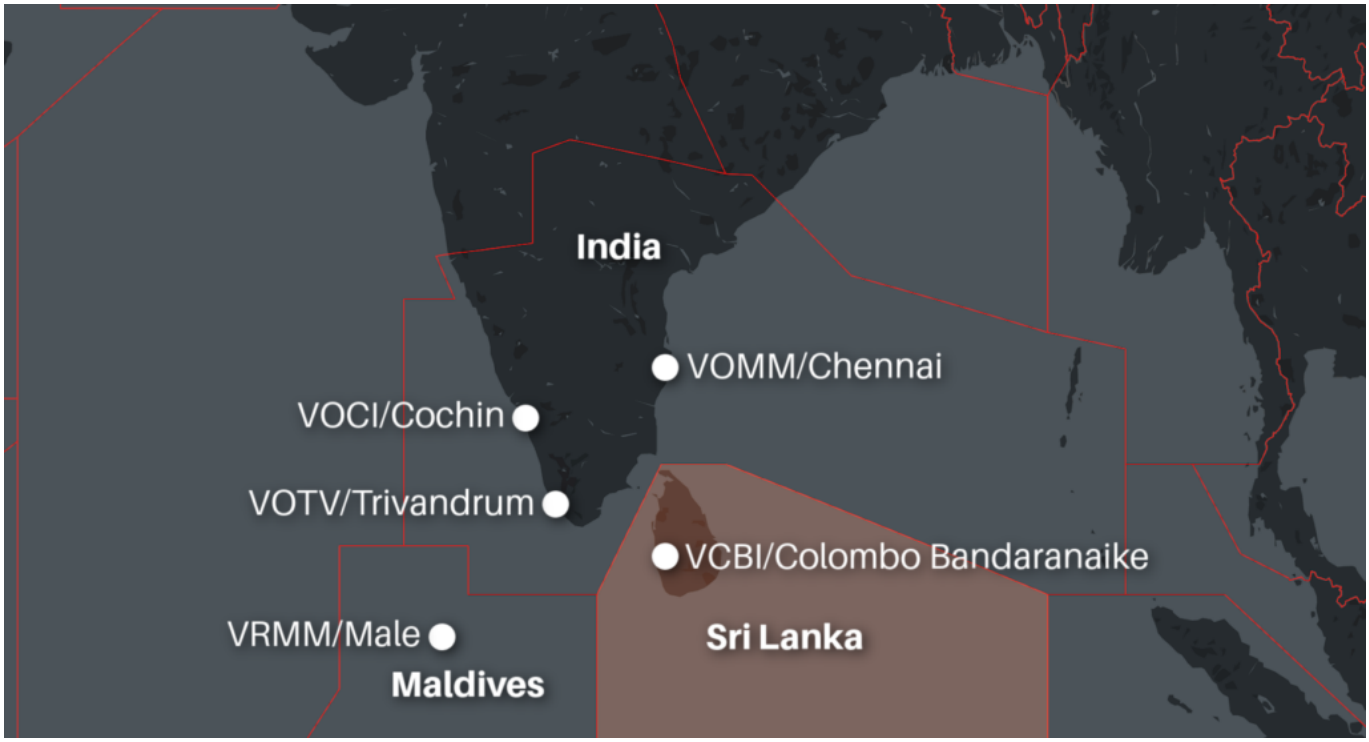
VCBI/Bandaranaike is a very handy airport for fuel stops, and as an en-route alternate, and alternate the Maldives. The monsoon season is starting soon, and the availability of this airport for possible fuel (tech) stops means it might be time to look at the other options in the area.

So what have you got?

The southern region India is as prone to bad weather during the monsoon season as anywhere else, but you do have VOMM/Chennai on the east coast, VOTV/Trivandrum in the southwest and VOCI/Cochin on the west coast. VABB/Mumbai lies further to the northwest.

VOTV/Trivandrum seems to be the big favourite for fuel stopping. You can get in touch with the airport directly on tm-d-tvm@aai.aero. VVIP Handlers are one of the main executive handling agents. Talk to them on +91 80106 86868 / ops@vvipflight.com or try Hindustan Petroleum Corp direct on mktghqo@hpcl.in (they're the main fuel supplier at the airport).

VRMM/Male is your main airport in the Maldives.



What is the level of concern right now?

The current risk is primarily with fuel availability and security. However, tensions are high within the country and the level of economic and political unrest does need to be watched.

South China Sea Dispute: Impact To Ops

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

The South China Sea dispute (don't be fooled by the sea's name) is between a bunch of the states in the region including, of course, China. It isn't so much over who owns it, but how much each bordering state owns.

The reason they all want as much as they can get? Well, it's an important bit of sea for the movement of maritime trade, and for general military control.

Who has been doing what?

There has been a lot of *'Cabbage tactics'*, *'Salami Slicing'* and sneaky island building going on by several of the nations for quite some time.

Wondering what 'salami slicing' and 'cabbage tactics' are? They are when you do small things that all add up to bigger implications, and when you start 'wrapping' your military around stuff.

Here's what each country's territorial claims in the region looks like:

Why are we more concerned now?

The dispute has been going on for a long time and has **rarely had much impact on aviation.** However, China have recently been upping the game, carrying out large numbers of military drills across the region. We wrote about some of these a while back.

The majority of these are maritime only and the primary impact for flights ops is really just an increase in offshore helicopter traffic. Occasionally the exclusion zones have impacted aviation traffic as well because the upper limits are not always clear, and they often lie close to coastal airports.

There are drills planned through the start of June.

China are militarising islands.

China are rumoured to have **‘fully militarised’ several islands** in the South China Sea. These are purpose built islands (part of that sneaky island building strategy) designed to increase the Chinese military presence, and so control, in the region.

The militarisation is a potentially a cause for concern because the equipment on these **includes anti-aircraft missile systems, laser and jamming equipment, and fighter jets.**

The region is a relatively busy overflight area, with numerous airways as well as the traffic routing in and out of the surrounding countries.

Previous incidents.

In 2015, an **Australian RAAF aircraft** was carrying out “freedom of navigation” exercises over the China Sea in international airspace, but China responded with threats against them via state owned media sites, ‘strongly advising’ Australia that such flights were not welcome.

In 2015, a BBC News crew flew over some of China’s militarised islands in a **US military aircraft** and the order on the radio was less than friendly.

Was a missile launched?

A video has been circulating this week, **reportedly showing a missile fired** into a region with commercial air traffic. The video claims to have been filmed from within an aircraft told by ATC to immediately turn 90 degrees to move out of the missile’s path.

It is unverified and the airline reportedly involved have denied it occurred.

Drills were announced from May 22-27, but these referred to maritime exclusion zones only, and made no mention of possible missile launches or airspace hazards. There were no notams issued on the day for any launches and the lack of any additional information suggests it may be a fake video.

Is there a risk here?

There is a heightened military presence, an ongoing dispute and tensions are increased however there is **no verified indication** that the risk to commercial operations is increased at this time.

If operating in the region, maintain a listening watch on **121.5** at all times and ensure you are aware of contingency procedures in case of an emergency.

OPSCHAT Summary May 31

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022

Hi Everyone,

It was another great OPSCHAT call this week hosted by Rebecca, with the help of returning quiz master Dave.

You can watch the full replay on your Member's Dashboard.

Here's a roundup of what we talked about:

The Big News

- **Sri Lanka** – A new VCCF Notam has been issued telling operators to tanker in fuel. A domestic crisis there has lead to widespread fuel shortages along with security issues. We talk about alternative options for fuel stops.
- **East China Sea** – Unverified footage emerged this week of a missile launch filmed from the flight deck of a commercial airliner. No official sources have released a statement. Real or not,

we briefly touch upon the ongoing dispute in the region and what to look out for.

- **Canada** – Construction is causing delays at CYYZ/Toronto. But in better news, a new list of 47 smaller airports has been published which can now be used as a point of entry.
- **Bermuda** – A TCAS mandate is on the horizon for next year. Some aircraft will be exempt – we take a look at the specifics.
- **The NAT** – A military exercise will affect some tango routes on June 1 and 2 – keep an eye on the Notams if you're flying those tracks in the next 48 hours. [NOW CANCELLED]

Unsolved Mysteries

Bahamas: The new 'Click2Clear' system has left us scratching our heads. Does anyone have solid intel on who needs to use it, and who doesn't?

EU LISA: That old chestnut. We still don't have all the answers, but we've received a solid update, and discuss the latest we know.

OPSQUIZ

Dave was back to host this week's OPSQUIZ. Congrats to this week's winner, "Leroy". A juicy prize is on its way to you…

As always, we're here to help with any operational support, info or questions. You can reach us on news@ops.group, or via the slack channels #flightops and #questions.

To watch the replay of the OPSCHAT in full: head over to the dashboard. We hold a new one every week on Tuesdays at 2000z, click here to register and join us live. See you next week!

What's going on at Schiphol?

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022

In the past few weeks and months, we've been reporting on delays at major European airports. But one in particular has been making headlines more than any other – Amsterdam's **EHAM/Schiphol.**

Overcrowding and understaffing have been causing multi-hour queues to clear security, or collect baggage. In fact, things have gotten so bad that airport authorities previously closed roads and asked major carriers to cancel their flights there. And it looks like there is more to come.

But why Schiphol, and why now? There's more to it than simply the Northern Summer. Let's take a closer look at what's happening there.

The Perfect Storm

The trouble at Schiphol is a unique brew of delay-inducing ingredients, all happening at the same time:

- Industrial action
- Surging demand
- Staffing
- Weather

Strikes

On April 23, airport staff went on an unannounced strike which brought ops to a grinding halt for several hours. The airport became **overcrowded** with passengers unable to travel, and authorities scrambled to close road access to the airport before things got any worse.

The news is that this may be about to happen again. A major union of airport workers (FNV) has announced their intention to strike from June 1 over pay and conditions – the impact could last for several days.

Crowds

It's good news for the industry, but not so much for airports struggling to play catch-up. EHAM/Schiphol is one of the busiest airports by pax numbers in Europe, based on the latest stats. It's streaks ahead of

Frankfurt, Munich and even big hitter, Heathrow.

All those passengers are causing a log jam, and some aren't happy about it. On May 22, news broke that a threatening security situation developed at security by passengers stuck in forever-queues, when staff began to feel unsafe – some even walked off the job. Military police were called in to calm the situation down before processing resumed. Which brings us to the next issue – staff, or **lack thereof**.

Getting more people

With Covid restrictions easing, passenger levels are steadily increasing, but staffing levels are lagging behind – it takes time to find and train new manpower. It is an emerging problem in a resurgent industry, with airports across the globe reporting similar problems. It seems that Schiphol is one of the worst affected.

Those Pesky Clouds

Talk about the straw that broke the camel's back, but the weather has also been playing a role. Or more specifically, clouds have been.

On May 24, Eurocontrol reported that low clouds were delaying inbound flights due to arrivals being regulated with holding or other delaying actions. Perhaps the only good news is that summer is just around the corner, and with it, better conditions for flying.

Outlook

With the crowds going nowhere, and strikes on the horizon, it seems things will get worse before they get better. While impacts on the ground may be bigger for scheduled operators, airborne delays affect everyone.

What are the alternatives?

The good news is that there are a couple of good options nearby which may keep you clear from the log jam.

EHRD/Rotterdam

It's only 24nm away, and about a fifty-minute drive to Amsterdam Central. It's the nearest international option with customs.

Handling:

- *Aviapartner* rtm.handling.ops@aviapartner.aero +31 10 238 27 00
- *Jet Aviation Rotterdam* rtmfbo@jetaviation.com+31 10 298 49 49

EHEH/Eindhoven

A little further afield at 56nm, about an hour and fifteen minutes on the road.

Handling:

- *Viggo Eindhoven Airport: info@viggo.eu* +31 40 258 11 58

Stay updated

For major delays, the best place to stay informed is the Eurocontrol website here, which is updated around the clock.

What we're seein' in the Caribbean

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

A bunch of Caribbean countries are changing things up to 'harmonise' themselves with ICAO SARPS. That's Standards and Recommended Practices.

Here's what we know.

You need TCAS 7.1

This is a Bermudian requirement. Bermuda is of course actually part of Great Britain, sort of (they are a British overseas territory), so by doing what ICAO say, they are fitting with the UK CAA regulations which makes it all a bit simpler.

So, if you want to visit Bermuda in a turbine-engined airplane under **FAR 121, 135 or 91K rules** which weighs more than **5700kg (12,500 lb)** or is authorised to carry more than **19 passengers** then you'll need ACAS II (that's TCAS II Version 7.1)

If you fly a turbine-engined airplane involved in **FAR 91 or non-commercial operations,** then the specifications to know are certified take-off mass more than **33,000 lbs (15,000kg)** or **passengers more than 30**, with your airworthiness certificate first issued after **January 1st 2007.**

When will you need it?

April 1st 2023.

Where's the official notice?

It is right here – OPSN 03-22 and it says exactly what we said but on official Bermudian BCAA headed paper.

You can also get in touch via email with them directly if you have any questions: foreignoperatorpermit@bcaa.bm

You said several countries?

We did. **The Bahamas also have some changes coming in.** Actually, they came in in 2021, but with Covid you might not have noticed them so here's a refresher.

They brought our their Civil Aviation Act of 2021, published in their *'Extraordinary Official Gazette The Bahamas'.*

What it says is that foreign commercial operators will need a **Bahamian Air Transport License** to fly there. To get this you need to be safe, secure and meet some financial obligations. These are listed in Section 15.

Section 16, Subsection 2 Part 1 clarifies a little point about foreign operators – **it doesn't apply to folk overflying** or even landing if you don't have passengers, cargo or mail that gets off in the Bahamas.

There are also a lot of pages on what will happen if you don't abide by the rules etc etc so it is **worth a read if you haven't been into the Bahamas since February 16th 2021.**

EXTRAORDINARY

OFFICIAL GAZETTE
THE BAHAMAS
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

Is that it?

Yes, for now, but more things will hopefully come in at some point.

All this started to come about in 2018 during a big meeting between CARICOM (all the Caribbean member states) and ICAO where they talked about it. You can read the 2018 ICAO press release here if you want to.

NAT Conundrums: Volume II

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

Questions about the North Atlantic pop up a lot, and every time we think we've got all the answers, someone else manages to come up with a question we can't (immediately) answer.

We wrote **NAT Conundrums: Volume I** last year, which you can read here. That post 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?**

So today we thought we'd take a look at three more questions we've seen recently including an interesting 'what to do if…?' scenario.

4. Do you need to plot on Blue Spruce Routes?

Plotting is less *drawing your position on a big paper map* and more confirming there are no errors with your navigation, which means you can do this on paper, or via some sort of electronic system.

The reason we want to check for errors is because the North Atlantic is a big place, without radar, (although ADS-B is helping with this a lot now), and we are very reliant on our GPS navigation systems. Some routes use just lat/long points meaning there is an added chance of input error by the pilot. So we check where we are and make sure it is where we should be.

But the Blue Spruce Routes are defined routes so there's no risk? Well, no, there still is, because you're still flying over big chunks of ocean without much backup. So checking for errors is still a very good idea.

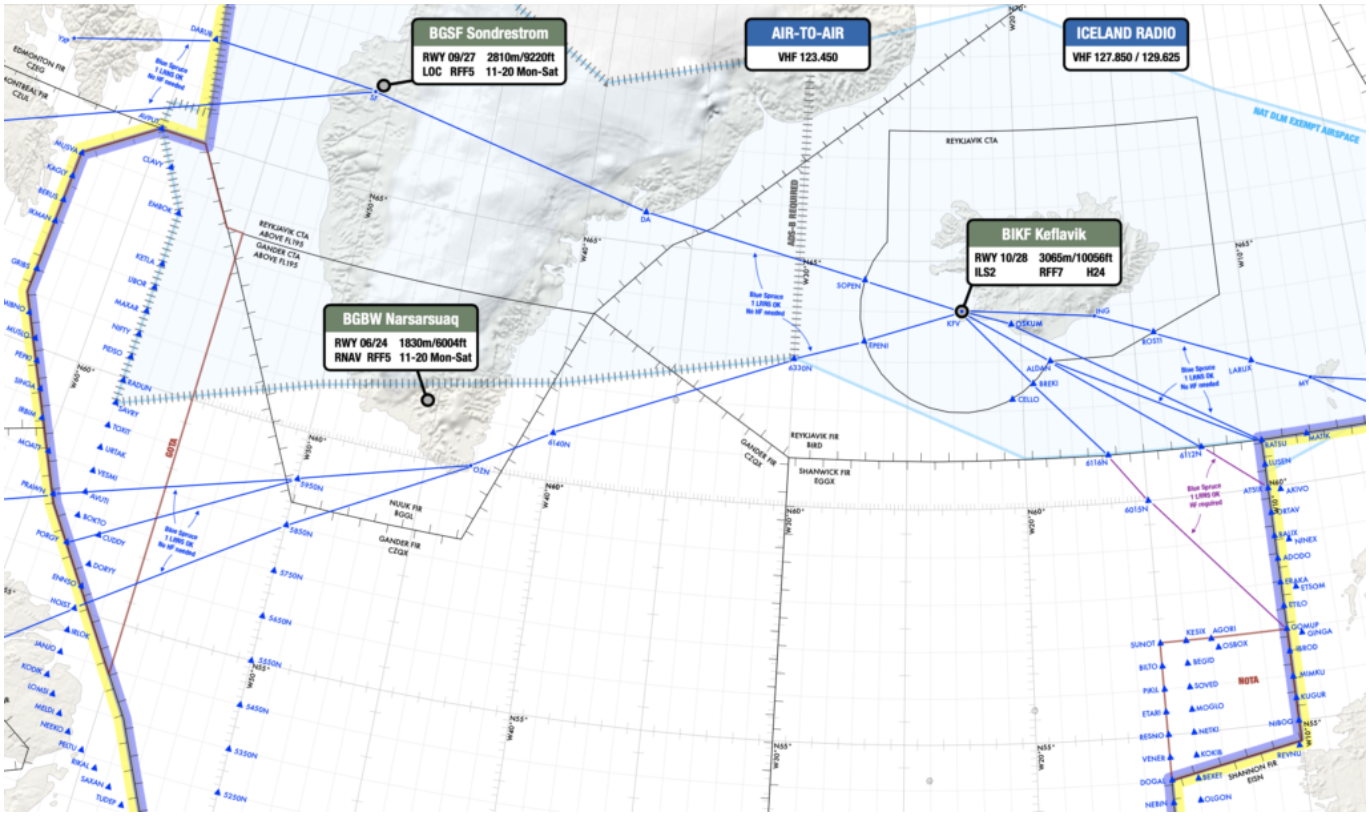
5. Do we still fly Weather Contingency Procedures on Blue Spruce routes?

The Weather Contingency Procedures are more oceanic contingency procedures than NAT HLA specific one.

In fact, since Nov 2020, there has been one standard set of Contingency and Weather Deviation Procedures for all oceanic airspace worldwide – and there are no special exemptions for the Blue Spruce

routes.

So they are a good thing to do if you encounter a weather situation and cannot get a re-clearance from ATC.



Which leads us to the big question…

6. When can we disregard an ATC clearance and follow the contingency procedure instead?

Let’s set the scene.

You’re flying in the NAT and there is a big old storm up ahead which you need to deviate around. Obviously, whatever happens, you can’t fly into it.

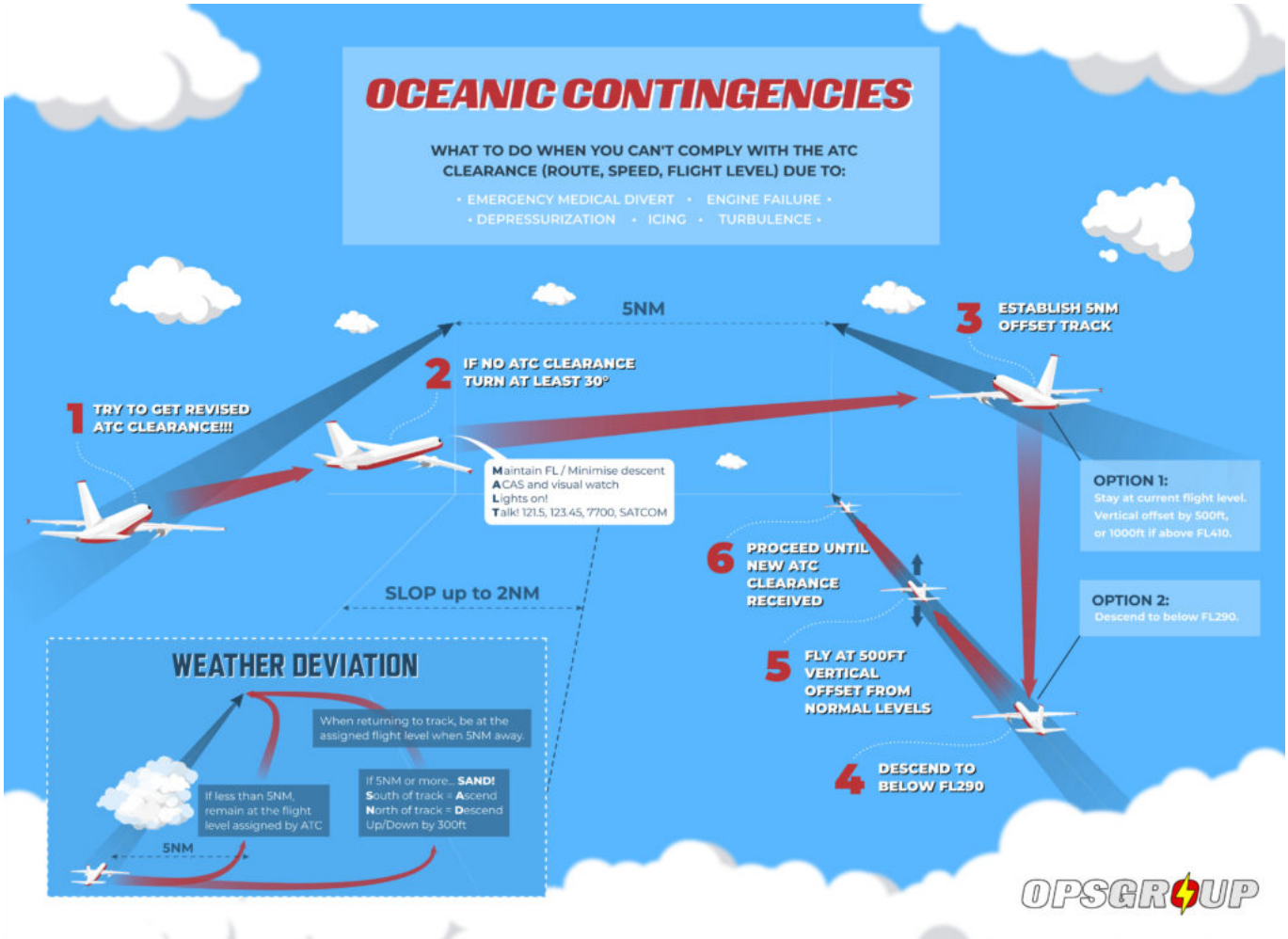
So what do you do?

Well, NAT Doc 007 provides you with some guidance: **Apply the weather avoidance contingency procedures.**

They are fairly straightforward. If the deviation you need will be less than 5nm then stay at your level, if its more than 5nm, then you’ll need to climb or descend 300’ depending on which way you’re avoiding. **You can use ‘SAND’** for that – turning south? Ascend. Turning north? Descend.

Which way to turn depends on whether there are busy tracks to the left or right of you, and how much you’ll need to deviate by based on storm position (and wind). Use your TCAS and some airmanship on this.

Right, scene set. **So, do you just launch straight into the contingencies?**



No. It comes down to **whether or not you can get a clearance from ATC.**

You can keep this fairly simple as well:

1. **You can't get a clearance because there just ain't time.** In this case, it is probably best to declare a PAN and go straight into the avoidance contingency procedure. Don't delay waiting for ATC clearance if its not safe. Aviate and avoid the weather, talk to ATC as you do it.
2. **What if you can't get a clearance because you just can't get hold of ATC?** Another easy one – follow the contingency procedure, but keep transmitting what you're doing so other traffic know.
3. **What if ATC can't give you a clearance?** This might happen if it is particularly busy out, perhaps other aircraft are already avoiding, and so they can't guarantee separation. In this case, they should inform you of the issue and ask you what your intentions are. Which will probably be following that contingency procedure, because you obviously aren't going to fly into the storm.

Which brings up to situation number 4. The less simple one.

4. **What to do if ATC give you a clearance that isn't acceptable to you?** First up, if you have time to request a re-clearance then do this, advising why their first one doesn't work for you. If you don't have time, then a PAN call with your intentions (contingency procedure) is going to be the way to go.

But remember – **you need a good reason to disregard an ATC clearance** like an immediate threat to safety. You can't just do it because they told you to go right and it means a bigger detour than left, or because you just don't fancy a temporary level change.

This is where the *conundrum* comes in – because folk have different views on what is an acceptable reason for disregarding a clearance.

- **Obvious and immediate threat to safety?** Do whatever you need to do to stay safe
- **Might have a future fuel concern because of a larger deviation, or a level change?** Well, it's not immediate and the traffic conflict you get yourself into by disregarding may be the bigger priority here…

We asked around.

The general consensus was that **fuel is unlikely to constitute enough of an 'immediate threat'** to be an acceptable reason. Things like ETOPS fuel are for dispatch planning so is not particularly relevant in flight. However, if you've already burned through your contingency, and are already running some calculations because the fuel is looking tight, then a 'Pan' call and doing what you need to do might be acceptable.

What does Doc 007 actually say?

It says the pilot **should** either follow the clearance **or** state their intentions.

There is a level of ambiguity here because there is always that need for the Commander to be able to decide another course of action is safer. A good way of thinking about it is that a crew never have to follow the letter of the law – it isn't there *just to be the law,* it is there to try and keep us safe – so doing what is most safe, with the same intent for safety in mind, is always acceptable.

What do other rules and regulations say?

The US FARs have this as fairly general rules:

'91.123 Compliance with ATC clearances and instructions.

(a) When an ATC clearance has been obtained, ***no pilot in command may deviate from that clearance unless an amended clearance is obtained, an emergency exists, or the deviation is in response to a traffic alert and collision avoidance system resolution advisory;***

(Something about changing from IFR to VFR, and then -)

(b) Except in an emergency, no person may operate an aircraft contrary to an ATC instruction in an area in which air traffic control is exercised.'

What did a helpful person in the North Atlantic ICAO office say?

Well, much the same. The contingencies are there to account for situations where ATC is unable to provide a clearance, or where the clearance they can provide doesn't solve the flight's problem. In these cases, the pilots should advise ATC their intentions and do what they need to do to stay safe.

Again, no clear line drawn as to where 'staying safe' might necessarily fall, particularly when it is a concern over fuel.

They did say they would never issue a weather deviation clearance requiring a climb without a

‘negotiation’ first.

So, the answer is…

Well, we don’t have it. At least not a clear cut, black and white one.

The general view seems to be that **it needs to be a judgement call.** If you have a genuine safety reason that makes you question whether you should be following an ATC clearance, then declare a PAN, state your intentions, and do what you must.

Just be comfortable that your decision does still maintain that same *intent for safety.* Definitely going to result in a low fuel situation? Or just don’t fancy being stuck at a lower level? There is a line, but where you set it might come down to *that* flight, on *that* day, in *those specific* circumstances.

Get in the know about the Farnborough Airshow

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

Around since 1948, the Farnborough International Airshow is one of the biggest on the airshow calendar, but like *the rest of the world*, it was cancelled through Covid.

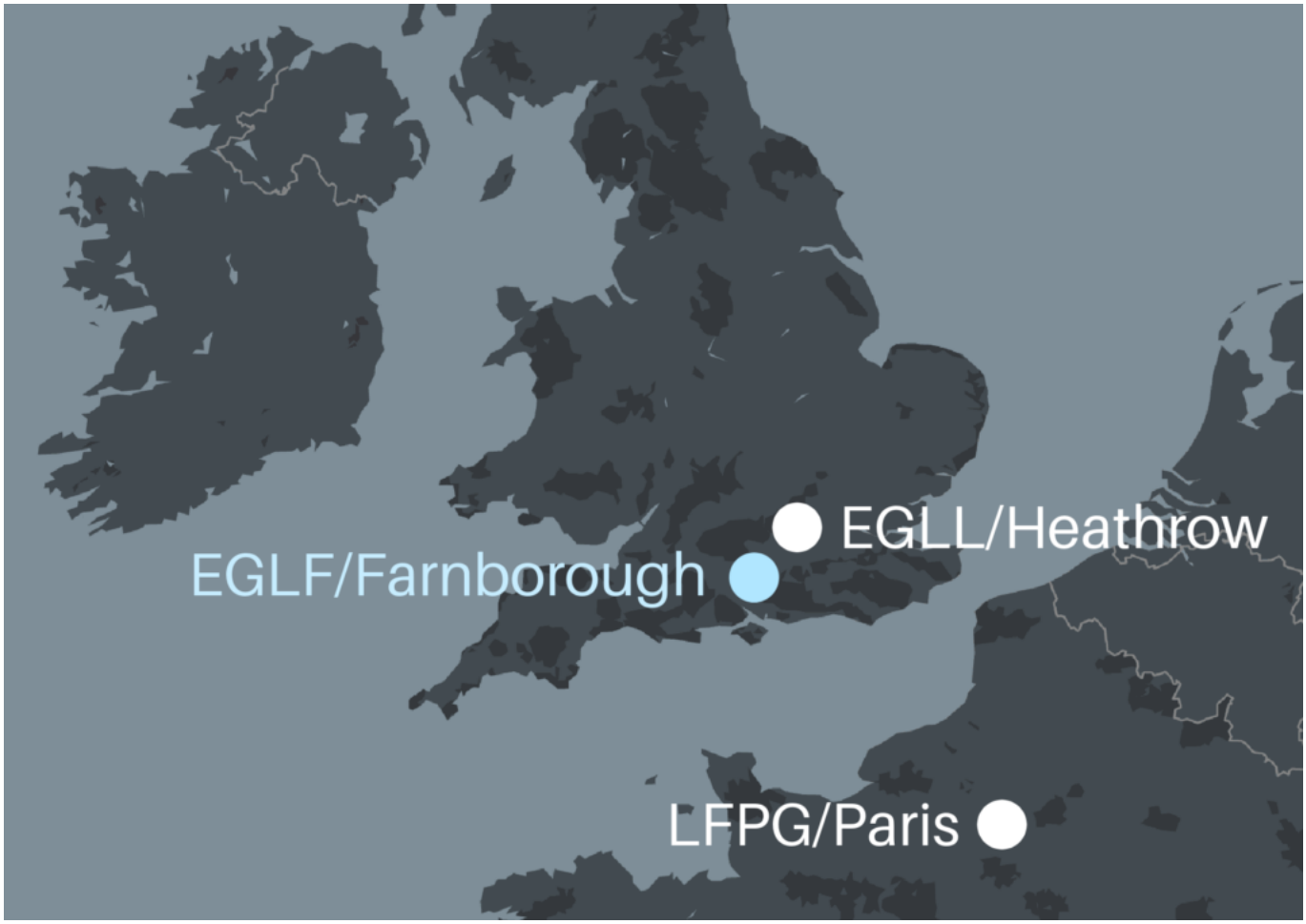
Now, in 2022, it is back! So here is what you need to know about where it is and how it might impact your operations.

What’s the date for the diary?

The show ‘takes off’ on the **18th July and runs to the 22nd July** at EGLF/Farnborough in the south of the UK.

Farnborough Airport is actually one of the leading business airports in Europe and is only about 20 miles from EGLL/Heathrow airport.

You can read about the airshow here on the official Airshow website.



What's the deal while the show is on?

The airport is going to be pretty much **off limits during the Airshow**, unless you and your airplane are part of it.

You can also expect some airspace restrictions around it, for all those aerial displays. Most of the airspace restrictions are generally only up to **lower levels like 5500'.** These will be published in Notams nearer the time.

They often set up **temporary holding pattern areas** for airshow aircraft as well. If you are operating in the area it is worth being aware of where these are – publishing in AIC update nearer the event.

Here is some info on this – display times (when you won't be able to book to operate on), delay times (or hen they're most likely) and **a notice about the ILS** (it will be turned off on the 9th to the 25th so you'll be doing visual approaches during those dates).

Got any contacts for us?

For all FBO needs, you can talk directly with the friendly folk at Farnborough airport –

- ops@farnboroughairport.com
- +44 (0)1252 379002

TAG Farnborough can also offer some aviation services –

- By telephone +44 1252 377 977
- By email ops@tagfarnborough.com

GAMA Aviation can too –

- +44 1252 553 029
- USA +1 203 337 4600
- marketing@gamaaviation.com

Tell us more about the airport

Farnborough **runway 06/24 is an 8005’ (2440m) x 46m** strip with CAT I ILS approach capability. They have **RFF6** and no slot restrictions.

While it is an international airport with customs, there is no US pre-clearance here.

The airspace is a bit of a challenge – Farnborough sits below some very **congested Class A airspace**, and there are danger and restricted areas near the airport and noise sensitive areas to know about.

There are also several smaller airports in the area with GA and glider activity.

There is loads of info to be found in here about all things Farnborough Airport if you want the official AIP info on it *(we say official, but it might be out of date, so this is just for info)*.

Farnborough airspace changes

Might be a good spot to drop this in, because there have been some airspace changes around Farnborough since 2020, so if you’ve not flown in recently (due Covid) you’ll need to get up to speed on these before you do.

Farnborough used to operate in uncontrolled airspace, which meant a lot of uncontrolled aircraft zooming about, which made it hard to have consistent flight paths into the airport.

This has now changed – **Farnborough is now in Class D airspace,** and has **RNAV procedures** (requiring RNAV 1 and 5).

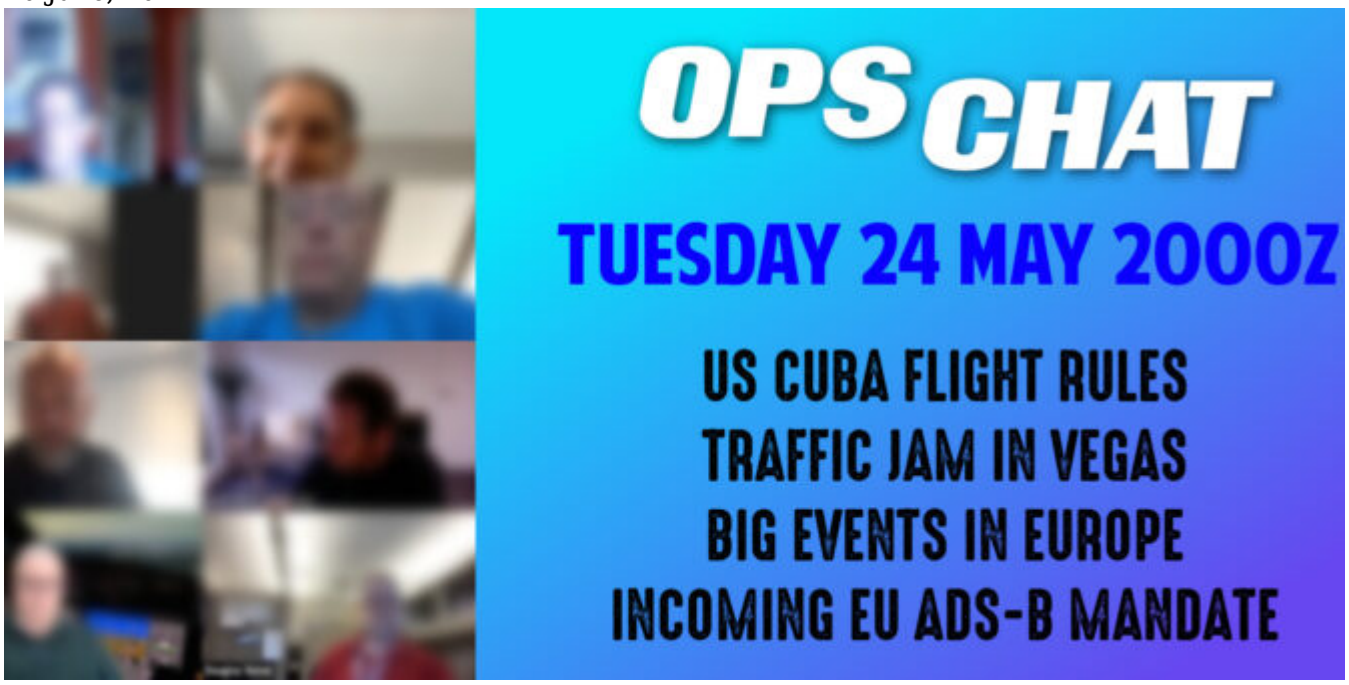
The AIC is available here for a little read.

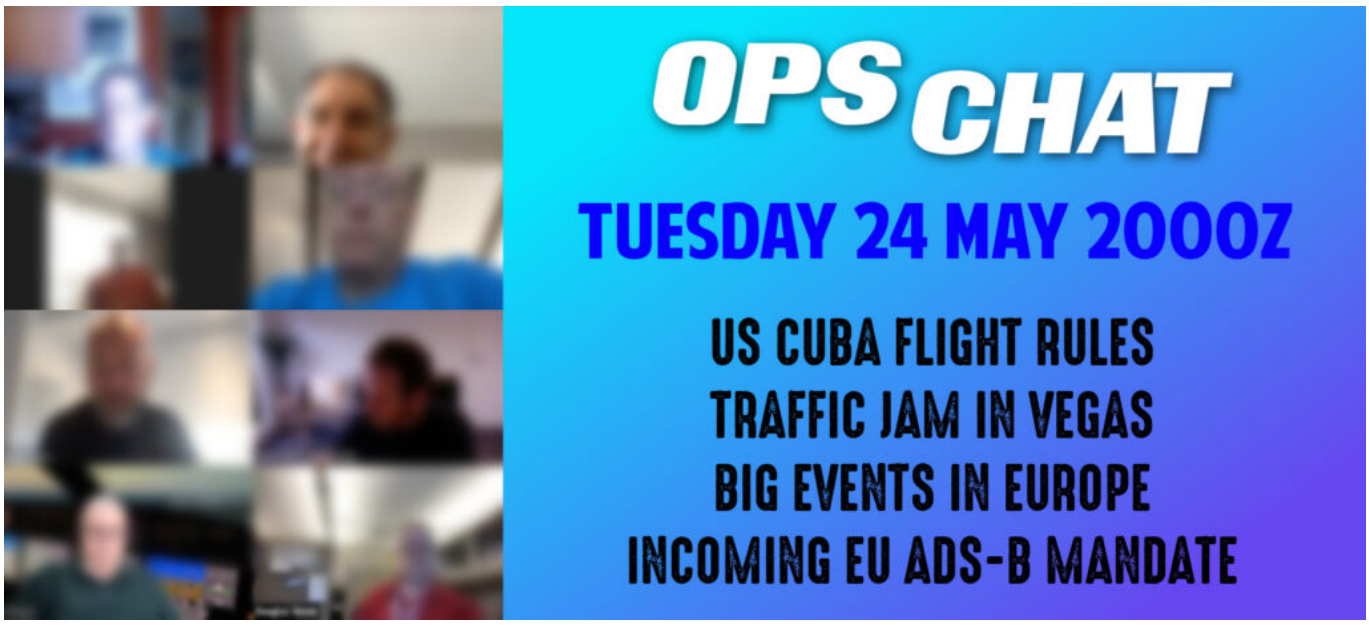
Any other big shows?

Usually considered the biggest, the Paris Airshow is another one to look out for. This is only taking place in 2023 though, from 19-25 June. In fact, it alternates years with Farnborough.

OPSCHAT Summary May 24

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022





Hi Members,

We had another busy OPSCHAT call this week, including the return of the weekly quiz with the help of Quiz Master Dave.

You can watch the full replay on your Member's Dashboard.

Here's a roundup of what we talked about:

The Big News

- **Cuba** – The US Govt is set to lift airport restrictions on US commercial operators in Cuba – the

big news is that Havana will no longer be the only option. There's been no news yet on whether the ban on private ops will be lifted.

- **Las Vegas** – The three big airports KLAS/Las Vegas, KHND/Henderson and KVGT/North Las Vegas will see very high traffic volumes this Memorial Day weekend. Expect holding and other delays, and consider extra fuel.
- **France** – Two big events are happening at almost the same time in Southern France – the Cannes Film Festival and Monaco F1 Grand Prix. Special procedures are in place at both LFMD/Cannes and LFMN/Nice airports.
- **Europe –** UEFA Soccer finals are happening in both Tirana (Albania) on May 25, and Paris on May 28. We talk about the impact to ops, and how to find more info.
- **Europe (again)** – Look out for the ADS-B mandate which comes into effect on June 7 next year. Unless you're flying something very small, or very slow, your ride will likely be affected.

Unsolved Mysteries

East Hampton Airport – has anyone had any luck actually getting hold of the incoming approvals needed to land or use the instrument approaches?

Saudi Arabia – the crew visa is only valid for 72 hours. Is there anyway to get an extension beforehand, that doesn't cost the earth?

OPSQUIZ

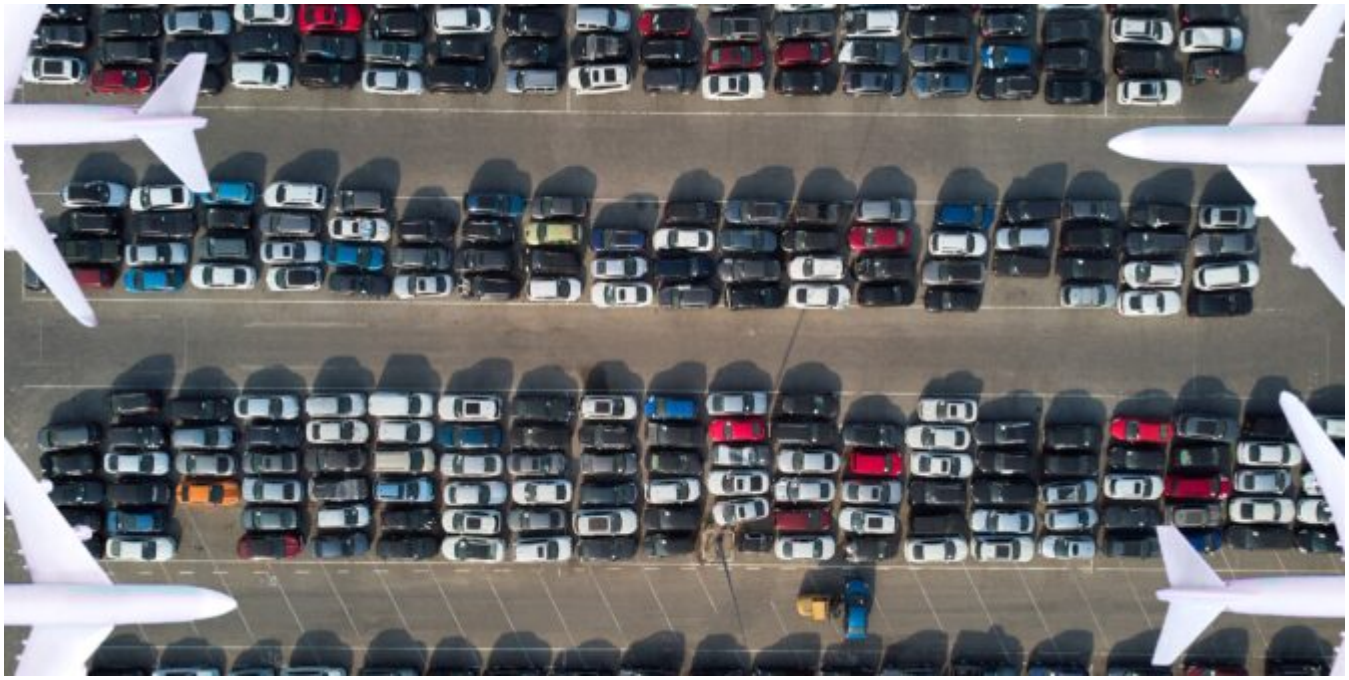
Dave took the wheel this week, and hosted another quiz. Congratulations to this week's winner who is all the way down in Auckland, New Zealand. Well done! Here's a sample question from this week: *Which major European airport closed briefly last week due to a building fire?* Join us next time as we have great prizes on offer, all hand picked by our quirky team!

As always, we're here to help with any operational support, info or questions. You can reach us on news@ops.group, or via the slack channels #flightops and #questions.

To watch the replay of the OPSCHAT in full: head over to the dashboard. We hold a new one every week on Tuesdays at 2000z, click here to register and join us live. See you next week!

Park It! A look at some of Europe's busiest summer airports

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022



Europe in the summer is a lovely thing. Sunshine, beaches, ice cream… and then the downside – parking restrictions!

Let’s talk about some of those known airports that always have parking problems – where they are, what your options are and anything else which we can think of that might help.

Why so tight?

We mean parking spots for private and corporate biz jets, not the swim trunks of French beaches.

Anyway, the problem is a simple one – everyone wants to go where it is nice, which means **a lot of traffic converging on places which have minimal parking.** Add on some summer sporting events and a few summits are it gets even tighter.

So here is a list of *(some of)* the places to think about in advance.

ITALY

Italy is a hugely popular tourist destination and during peak season **many of its smaller airports fill up** as fast as an elephant at a breakfast buffet.

In addition, some of the **southern airports have been used in the past for overflow parking** for the equally busy Greek airports.

Peak season is generally July through September.

You also have the **Italian Grand Prix September 9-11** to contend with. This is held at the Monza circuit (south of Lake Como) so your Milan airports, particularly LIMC/Malpensa, are going to see extra traffic around this time.

Italy have quite specific charter permit rules. For non-EU registered aircraft which are applying for the first time, or which haven’t operated in during the last two seasons, then you’re going to want to submit well in advance. It can take 20-45 days for approvals to be issued.

Naples

LIRN/Naples generally **only allow turnarounds** during their peak weeks – overnight parking is hard to come by.

Their traffic is predominantly international scheduled aircraft (64%), domestic scheduled (32%) and then charter and general aviation/transits making up the last few percent. The totals have risen from just over 6000 total in 2015 to just under 11,000 (10,860) in 2019.

So this airport has seen **a major increase in traffic**, without a major increase in capacity ability. With Covid "ending" and everywhere opening up, 2022 might prove as busy.

Milan

Milan is generally considered **a good spot for General Aviation.**

LIML/Linate is Milan's "city" airport with easiest connections into the city, while **LIMC/Malpensa** is the bigger but further away one (although closer to the lakes).

LIML/Linate has a dedicated GA terminal and ramp and can accept all types of aircraft, but you will need to pre-arrange parking on the local apron. During *peak* peak (during the Italian F1) remote areas might be utilised, and charters may be restricted to 36 hours on the ground (actually, this is across all of Italy). Hangar space is harder to come by.

Bergamo

LIME/Bergamo is also only about 40 minutes drive from the Monza track so a good one to consider if you're heading over for the F1.

Other Airports

LICC/Catania and LIRA/Rome Ciampino also might be an issue. Check for parking availability as early as possible.

Members have suggested looking into **LIBP/Abruzzo and LICJ/Palermo** as reposition and parking options in previous years.

GREECE

Anywhere and everywhere in Greece seems to have parking problemos.

Slot coordination for Greece is handled through the **Hellenic Slot Coordination Authority** and, we don't want to say it, but the first half of the name should tell you what slot getting in peak season can be like here…

Here are their guidelines.

There are **17 coordinated (IATA level 3) airport**s which you need to get a slot for prior to operating in, and you can organise this with the coordinator at slot@hsca.gr between 0800-1600LT Mon-Fri.

The earliest you can request a slot is **14 days in advance.** Oh, but before you do that, you need to organise a PPR with the airport operator.

The most popular destinations (from previous years) seem to be:

- LGSR/Santorini
- LGMK/Mykonos
- LGKR/Corfu
- LGRP/Rhodes
- LGSA/Chania
- LGIR/Heraklion
- LGKF/Kefalonia
- LGTS/Thessaloniki

During peak times most of these will have a **60 minute on the ground restriction** (sometimes less!) meaning you can **drop and go**, but not stay and park. LGRS/Santotini, LGMK/Mykonos and LGZA/Zakynthos have had this in place for the past few years so you can count on it at them.

Mykonos

Your only airport here is **LGMK/Mykonos** and it is small and it has very limited parking space **(3 spaces available)**. It is also popular which means you are going to have to
a) get a slot to land and
b) probably coordinate parking somewhere else.

The slots are fought over by GA and scheduled ops, and guess who gets priority…

The GA slot requirements came in July 2015. So, you're going to want to request a slot as early as you can (which is 14 days before because they restrict that for GA).

During peak times you will only get **an hour on the ground** – this is between June and September (but they have been known to extend it if the sunny weather sticks around).

So, what are the options? Well, fly somewhere else and then organise a helicopter or boat transfer. Or drop your pax off, refuel fast and then go drop the airplane somewhere else until it is needed again.

So, where can you go?

LGAV/Athens is sort of the biggest so, unsurprisingly, is one of the best option for somewhere to go park. However, Athens gets busy too. They have started to issue Notams for the peak season requiring a PPR if you wish to remain there more than 2 hours.

Your next best options are going to be **Croatia or Montenegro** which are not the same country (in case you hadn't noticed). So early planning is a good plan.

SPAIN/IBIZA

Ibiza in the summer is a very busy spot.

LEIB/Ibiza is often reported as having parking issues in the summer season, while at **LEBL/Barcelona** you may find slot restrictions in place.

As an alternate try **LEVC/Valencia.**

TURKEY

Members reported cancelling trips to smaller airports like LTFE/Bodrum due to lack of overnight parking. The major airports should be able to accommodate but costs will be much higher.

Local FBOs advised there is a **3 hours max applied during busy periods**. Watch out though, they may recommend flying to nearby Greek island airports to overnight instead, but you're going to find them just as busy.

WHERE ELSE?

All the above are based off reports from members from previous years, so if we have missed one let us know!

If you have any secret spots which are good for parking please do share (although you might want to keep it a secret if it's a really good one or everyone will be trying to use it). You can send us an email at news@ops.group.

Trains, Planes and Fuel-mobiles

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

What do railways and airplane fuel shortages have in common? Well, at FAOR/Johannesburg Airport, it turns out quite a lot.

Chapter 1. Trains.

The railway lines which run through KwaZulu-Natal (the province on the east coast where FADN/Durban International airport is) were badly damaged in flooding earlier in 2022. Unfortunately, these train lines are how jet fuel is generally moved from the Port of Durban refinery to Gauteng (the province where FAOR/OR

Tambo international airport is).

The train lines are only expected to be repaired to **50% capacity by June 2022**, and **100% capacity by October 2022.** Unless further flooding occurs.

Which means FAOR/Johannesburg isn't getting the 16 million or so litres of fuel a week which it normally needs.

Chapter 2. Planes

We should say the 16 million or so litres of fuel a week which the airplanes need.

Currently (as of mid-May), the airport's **stock sits at around 3-5 days worth.**

Domestic and regional airlines will be less badly impacted by this because they can tanker more easily, or visit one of the other South African airports and uplift their fuel there.

Unfortunately, Durban (where the fuel is) lies on the southern eastern coast and for most international flights, this would require a fairly substantial diversion (fuel burn) to go simply to pick up more fuel.

Chapter 3. Fuel-mobiles.

It just rhymed…

Actually, the plan isn't to drive more fuel there in tankers, but to pipe it**. A shipment of 20 million litres is on its way**, while another 1.5 millions litres is being arranged directly with airlines that have been hit by the 'force majeures' of their normal fuel providers.

Epilogue. Where else is an option?

The fuel situation will be ongoing until October, although should ease up as plans are put in place. In the meantime, international operators do have options for fuel stops.

- **AEG** +1 305-913-5253 / dispatch@aegfuels.com is a worldwide fuel supplier, worth contacting for up to date info on the fuel situation and availability at most airports.

FBSK/Gabarone, Botswana

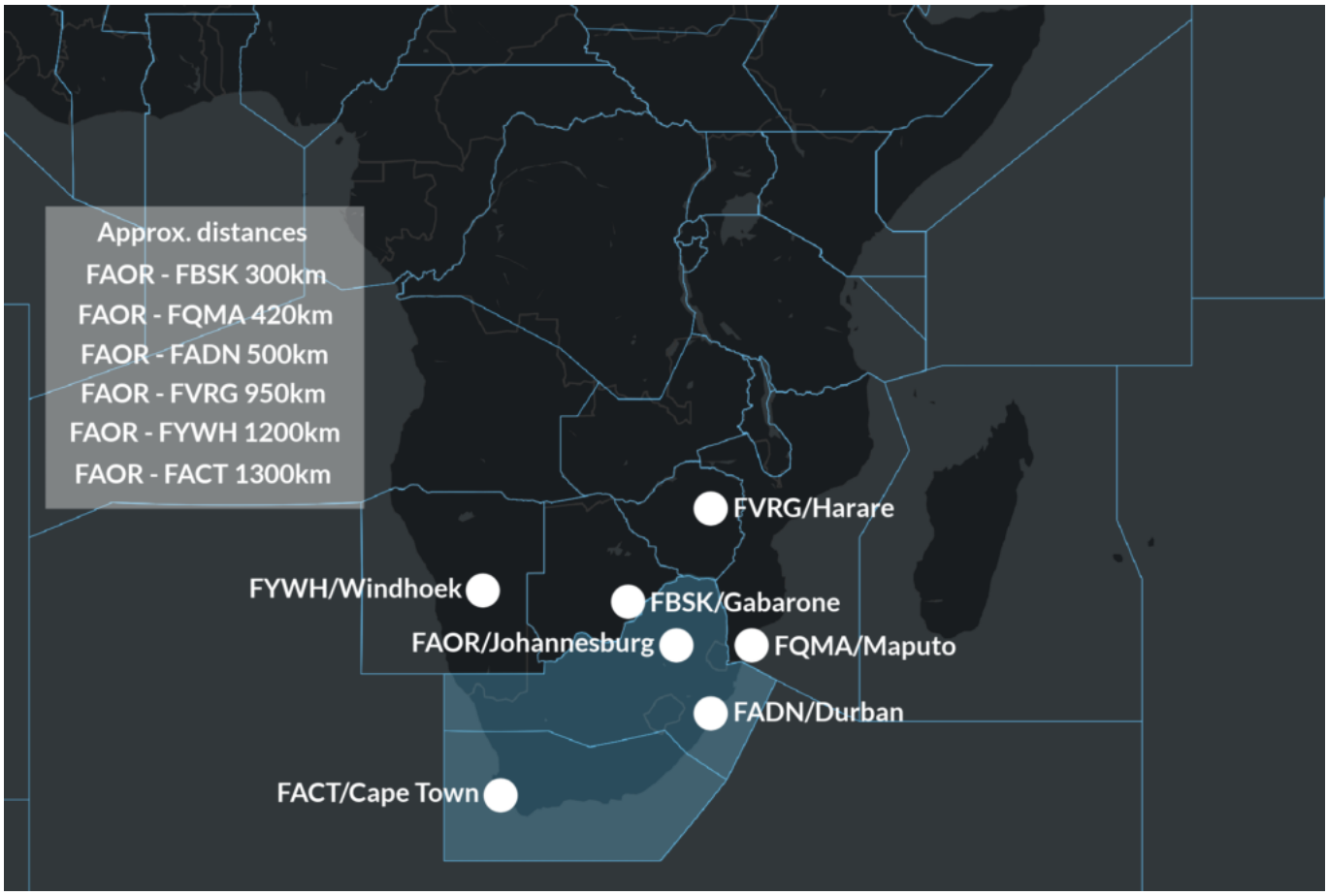
- Puma Energy +267 3 951 077 / Botswana@pumaenergy.com
- Airport contact +267 368 8200

FVRG/Harare, Zimbabwe – receives fuel supply from Mozambique (Beira). Rumour has it there is a growing shortage here though, so check in advance.

FQMA/Maputo, Mozambique

FYWH/Windhoek, Namibia

- Airport Manager shipuatal@airports.com.na / info@airports.com.na



And ones to avoid?

GOBD/Dakar and GOOY/Dakar (old one) Senegal – these are no go. They have a severe shortage and international flights have been cancelled.

Anywhere in Nigeria – There is a pretty serious fuel shortage going on here right now.

We wrote a post on the fuel shortages worldwide here which you can have a read of if you need.

Formula 1 & Movie Stars: Special Procedures in Southern France

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022

In Southern France, two of the **biggest events of the year** are taking place almost simultaneously – and it's the perfect storm for an influx of private jet traffic to the region's main airports.

The Cannes Film Festival has just started, and will run until May 28. This is followed by the Formula 1 Monaco Grand Prix on May 29. As one of the most famous events in motorsport, it attracts huge crowds. Both these events are happening within 50nm of each other.

As a result, the nearest major airports, **LFMD/Cannes** and **LFMN/Nice** will see much higher traffic volumes than normal – and both airports are heavily restricting operations.

Three AIP SUPs have been issued for the events . Don't feel like delving into all of them? We don't blame you. **Here's a quick summary** of what they cover.

LFMD/Cannes

AIP SUP 052/22 has the deets here.

The apron is going to be full. The airport isn't normally coordinated, but you'll need a **slot** if operating in or out between May 17 – 30. You'll get a slot ID that needs to go into Item 18 on your ICAO flight plan.

Even if you like to manage things yourself, the use of handling agents will be **mandatory** during this time.

Also, if you're planning on a short hop to **LFMN/Nice** on May 28-30, no bueno. More on that below.

Monaco

Monaco itself doesn't have an airport. In fact, it is the second smallest country in the world and is found on France's Côte d'Azur – its south-eastern coast. Inside Monaco is the district of Monte Carlo, where the race is taking place.

The majority of passengers for the Grand Prix will enter via **LFMN/Nice** which is found around 20nm further west along the coast.

LFMN/Nice

AIP SUP 058/22 is the one to check here.

- All arriving and departing aircraft operating at Nice from May 24 -30 will also need to co-ordinate a time slot. You can either request one directly, or ask your handling agent to get one for you.
- You won't be eligible for a slot unless your handler has **guaranteed you a parking space** when you get there – so make sure there is room for your ride first.
- When filing your flight plan, commercial operators **won't** need to include their slot ID number. But if your arrival or departure time is outside your allocated slot, your plan will bounce back.

Restricted airspace.

Info on this is published in yet another SUP – this one: AIP SUP 107/22

- From May 28 – May 30, **special restrictions** will apply to all traffic.
- All VFR ops will be banned, and **IFR flights will not be allowed between LFMN/Nice and LFMD/Cannes,** which is a little further west along the coast.
- There will be **intensive low level helicopter traffic** to look out for. For IFR traffic departing on a SID, it is important to follow **published climb gradients** and altitude requirements.
- If you don't think your ride will make it, you'll need to let ATC know with your **start up request.** In that case you may get hit with a delay, but don't spring it on them at the last minute.
- A **temporary restricted area** will be in effect which will primarily affect traffic over the event, and at LFMN/Nice airport, and will apply from surface to 3,500'.
- If you're operating on a valid flight plan, the impact will pretty minor. Just make sure you are in contact with **Nice Tower** on 122.375, and follow their instructions. You'll need permission to enter it.

The big question, who will win?

Not only is he the championship leader, but Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc is also a local to Monaco. He's the home favourite to top the podium on race day.

Some useful contacts.

LFMD/Cannes Airport Authority +33 (0) 4 89 88 98 28.

Handling

Skyvalet +33 (0) 4 93 90 41 10, operations-acm@cote-azur.aeroport.fr

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LFMN/Nice Airport Authority +33 (0) 4 93 17 21 18. If you're looking to get a slot approval directly from them, email nice-caz-agta-ld@aviation-civille.gouv.fr.

Handling

Menzies +33 (0) 4 83 76 26 02, Florence.augustyniak@johnmenzies.aero

Signature +33 (0) 4 93 21 82 18, NCE@signatureflight.fr

Swissport +33 (0) 4 93 21 58 12, nce.operations@swissportexecutive.com

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OPSCHAT Summary May 17

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022

Hi Members,

It was another busy OPSCHAT this week!

You can watch the full replay on your Member's Dashboard.

Here's a roundup of what we talked about:

The Big News

- **Europe** – Some Schengen Area countries have extended their internal border controls for another six months due to "security concerns": Austria, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and France. The EU aren't happy about this because it's questionable whether there's really any new threat here. The impact to ops is essentially delays – all passengers and crew will have their passport details checked thoroughly as if they were arriving from outside of the region.
- **United States** – There are ops updates for several airports. KCOS/Colorado Springs has been affected this week by grass fires, KASE/Aspen is open again, there are long delays at KIAD/Washington Dulles due to runway work, KHTO/East Hampton has new operating rules, and PPR is needed for non-sched ops at KBOS/Boston until late June.
- **Switzerland** -The World Economic Forum is happening from May 20 – 26. Airport and airspace restrictions will apply. We take a look in more detail.
- **Jamaica** – The entire MKJK/Kingston FIR went ATC zero on May 12 due to a strike. More are possible. Be familiar with contingency procedures if headed there. We talk about what they are, and where to find them.
- **Sri Lanka** – There is widespread civil unrest, a notam has been issued advising operators to tanker fuel as it is unlikely to be available. Security is a problem for layovers – avoid if possible.

Unsolved Mysteries

Can pilots use contingency procedures on the NAT when refusing a climb/descent clearance from ATC? We get various points of view from the group.

Danger Club!

We're holding our next session on Wednesday, May 18 at 1900z and we think it is going to be a good one. Click to register here, and feel free to invite a friend!

As always, we're here to help with any operational support, info or questions. You can reach us on news@ops.group, or via the slack channels #flightops and #questions.

To watch the replay of the OPSCHAT in full: head over to the dashboard. We hold a new one every week on Tuesdays at 2000z, click here to register and join us live. See you next week!

The Big SATVOICE Question

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

SATVOICE. Satellite voice communications. The most expensive phone call you can make (probably). But also an incredibly useful bit of kit to have onboard because it lets you talk to folk much further away than VHF and HF generally do.

But just because you have it doesn't mean you can count in it, at least not as one of your official LRCS (that means longe range communication system in case you didn't know).

So, there is a great system which lets you talk over long ranges, but isn't always approved as a long range communication system?

Before we get to the 'why not?'…

A quick recap on what SATVOICE is.

It is exactly what the name suggests – a system that allows voice communications, via satellites. So your voice message zooms up, bounces off the satellite and zooms back down to wherever you're aiming it. And because it heads up and then down, it can go further.

OK, it might be a little more scientific than that, but that's a basic description.

There are some things it doesn't do though.

It doesn't replace VHF or HF as a primary means of communication. One of the reasons being not every ATC has the facilities to receive or call you via it.

It doesn't always work at high latitudes because not all satellite providers have coverage up there. **Iridium satellites are ok** – they are in low earth orbits rather than geostationary ones so they don't get that SATCOM shadow you might have heard mentioned.

It doesn't always avoid the impacts space weather – the stuff that affects HF, particularly at high latitudes, can also disrupt your satellite comms.

You probably know all this already.

If you don't then you can read some more about it here.

Now, let's get down to the real question…

Can you count your SATVOICE system as a LRCS?

OK, well firstly where do you actually need LRCS?

In short, anytime you'll be flying for extended periods over watery regions or remote regions where VHF stations probably aren't possible (so anytime you'll be outside the 'line of sight' of ATC). Like the NAT HLA for example.

In these regions you generally require **two LRCS, and one of these must be HF.** Where you only require one, this must be HF.

The FAA published this which covers some info on comms requirements in oceanic airspace.

They also published this – AC 91-70B – which is the full guidance on Oceanic and Remote Continental Airspace Operations, and this has a whole section on SATVOICE that is pretty handy.

So if one LRCS is HF, what does the other need to be?

Because of frequency congestions and solar conditions that often make HF annoying to use in oceanic and remote spots, other systems can be approved as an LRCS. It doesn't only have to be HF.

CPDLC is on option that is considered suitable. The FANS 1/A+ with its RCP 240 system satisfies the requirements.

And (finally) what about my SATVOICE system?

Well… just because you have SATVOICE doesn't mean it meets the criteria…

This hasn't answered the question at all!

No, we know. We're trying…

Basically, it has to meet a whole bunch of criteria in order to be IAW 20-150B certified, and this certification should be reflected in your MMEL/MEL.

In case you don't know what that is, the info is all covered in this FAA advisory.

AC 20-150B

There is a whole looong list of requirements. We won't list 'em all here, but some of the top ones are:

- Whatever you say on SATVOICE has to be recordable on the CVR
- You have to have considered whether it will work if you're in a "load shed" situation (ie will it still be available in some hideous emergency power lever situation?)
- It has to be able to tell the pilots things like if its broken, if someone is trying to call on it, etc
- It has to meet certain RCP criteria (RCP400)

- Oh yeah, and it has to have *priority, preemption and precedence* abilities (PPP).

Say what?

PPP. Priority, preemption and precedence. Preemption is defined by the FAA as the "*immediate and automatic seizure of resources allocated to a lower priority call".*

It might be easier to look at this table, but in short calls have to be routed through the CMY and filtered according to this –

Tell me which ones are?

Well, that is a very big question and really not something we can answer. Yep, we made you read all that and still don't actually have an answer for you.

What we do know, because other people told us, it that:

- Typical AirCell installations do not meet the criteria
- Latitude SkyNode S200-12 ATC Safety Voice Systems generally do

- The Aspire 300 SATCOM system also generally does
- And there are possibly a whole bunch others but the surest way to find out is to talk to the manufacturers and ask them directly.

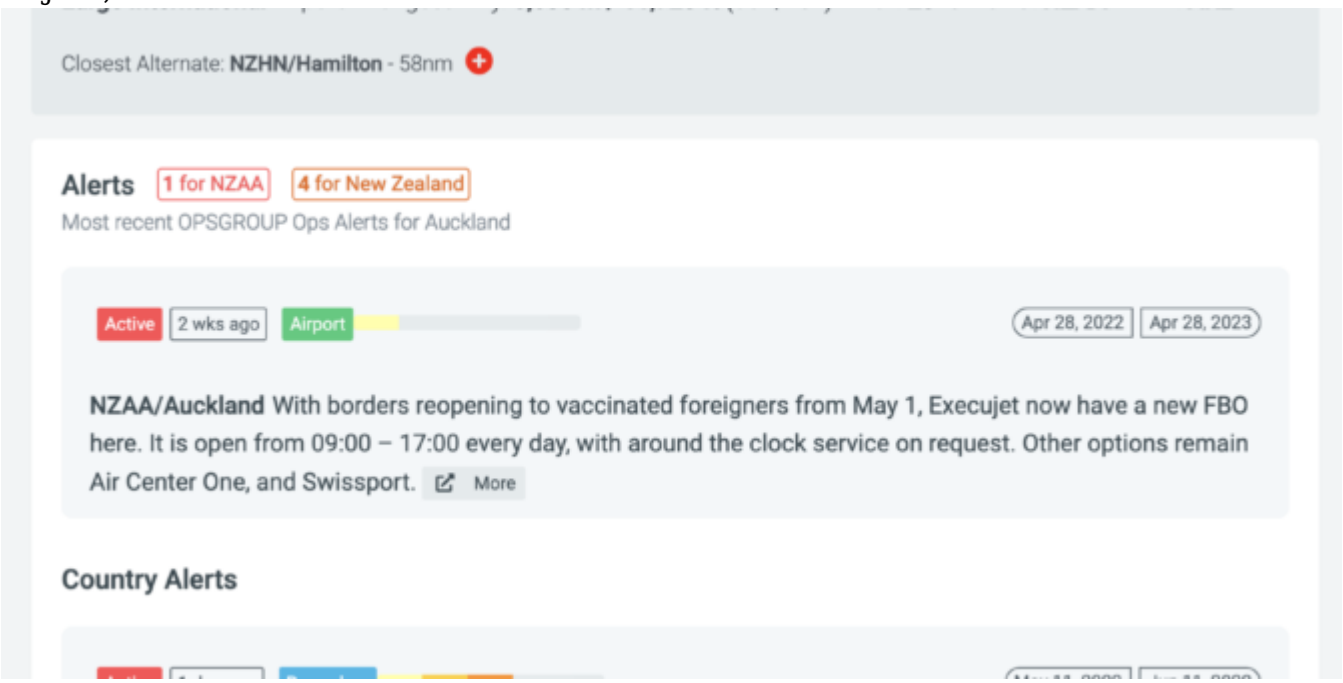
Anything else?

Well, we definitely don't want to get your hopes up, but a little birdie told us that a change might be coming to the "one of the LRCS systems must be HF" requirement. This is in part due to the reliability and practicality of SATVOICE systems.

When this will happen we ain't sure, but listen out.

New Dashboard Tool – Airports and Countries

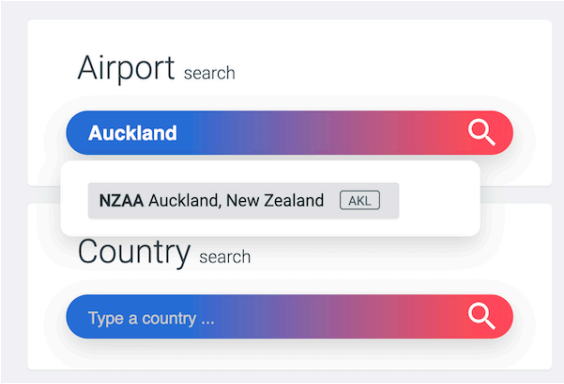
Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022



Hi Members,

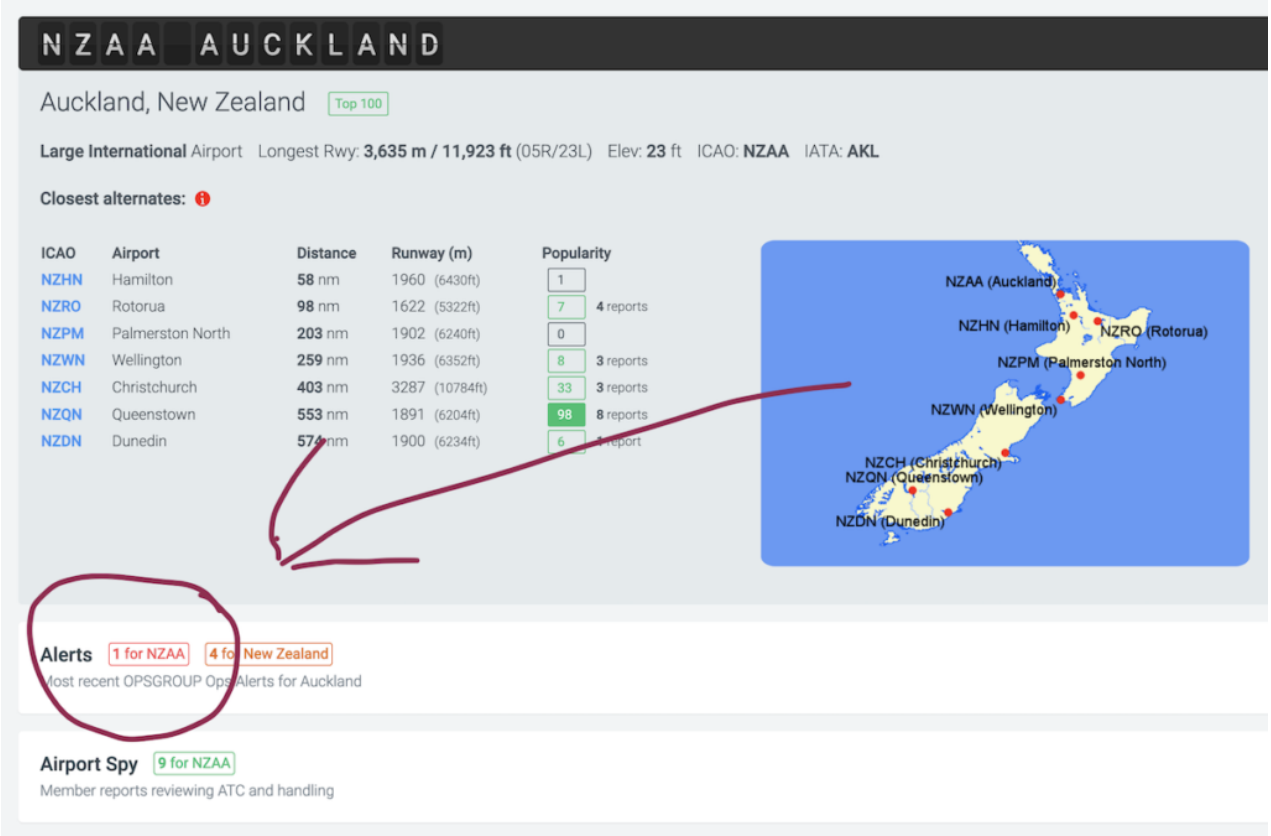
If you're planning a trip somewhere, you might have used the search tool in the Dashboard. We've just added a new feature, so read on.

Let's plan a quick flight to **Auckland, NZ**. So, on the main Dashboard page, just type "**NZAA**", or "**Auckl …**"



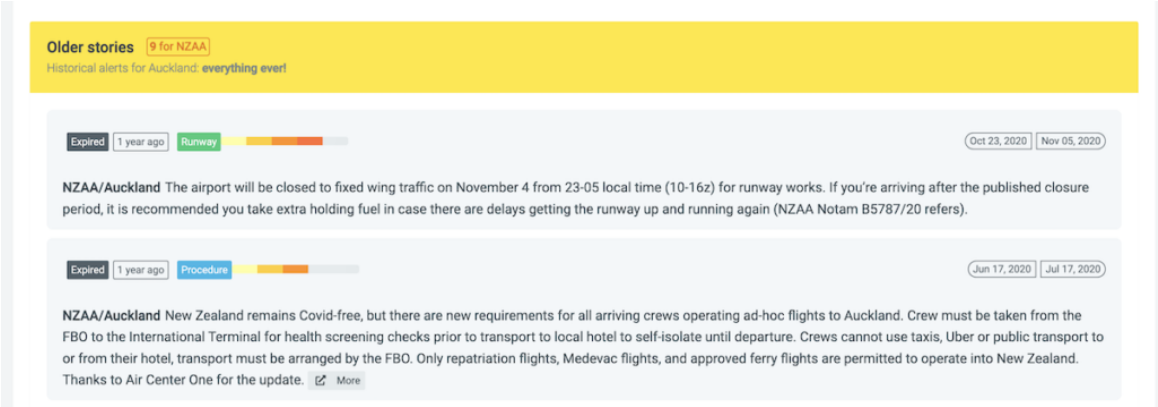
You'll get this panel showing all the things we know about Auckland in OPSGROUP.

Click on the **Alerts** tab to see what's been happening lately, from a flight ops point of view.



Until now, we've been showing current alerts, and those that expired in the last 3 months.

But now, we've added the option to see **all historical alerts**.

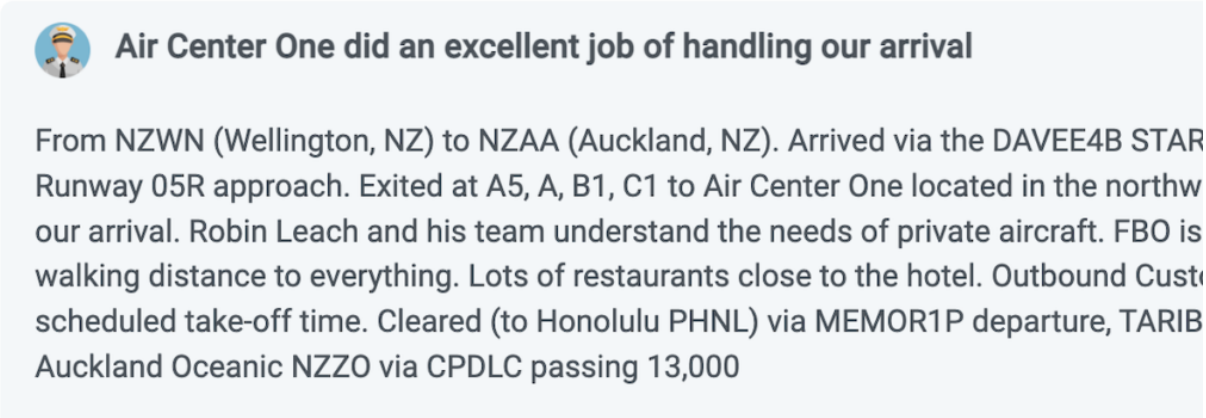


For both the **Airport** and **Country** search pages, you can go back in time to the beginning of OPSGROUP, and see everything ever said about that place. This might be handy to get an overview when operating to somewhere new.

What else?

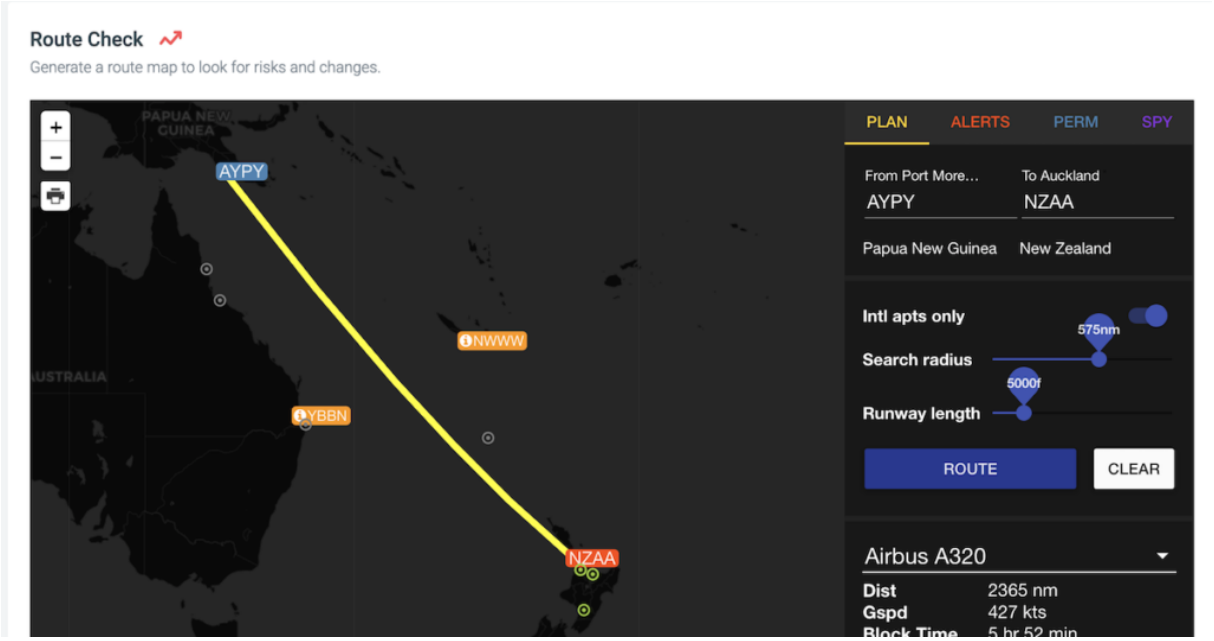
Keep scrolling down and you'll see the rest of the tools that will help you with that particular airport.

Airport Spy reports from other members …

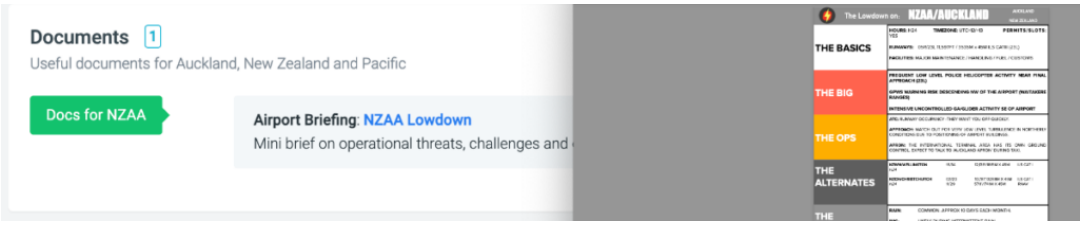


Run a quick **Route Check** to see what bothersome changes might affect you enroute … and your fuel, time, distance.

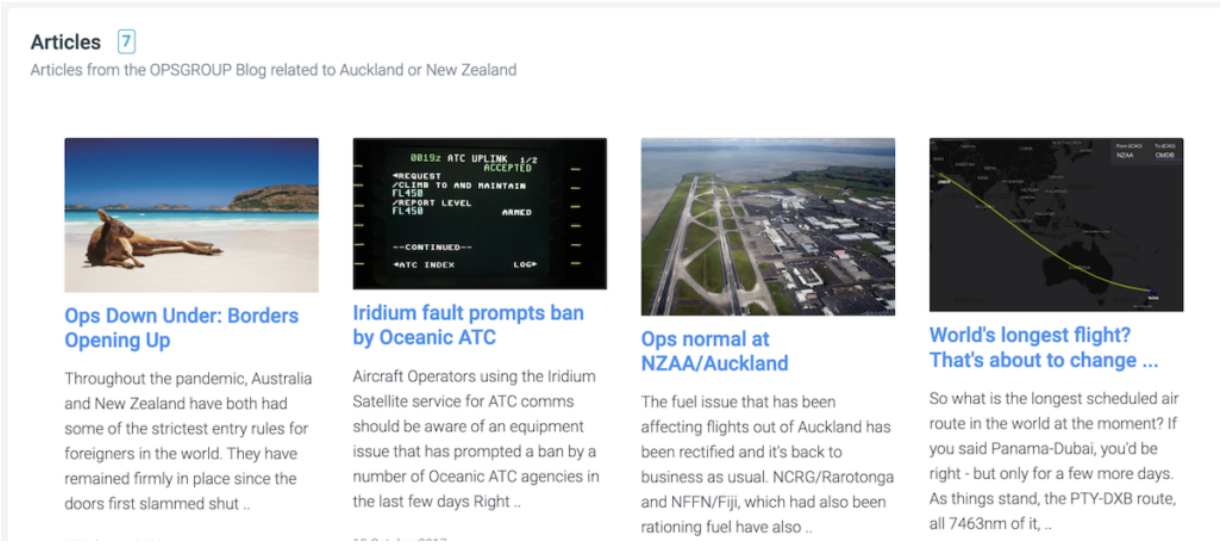
Here we'll plan a flight from Port Moresby to Auckland …



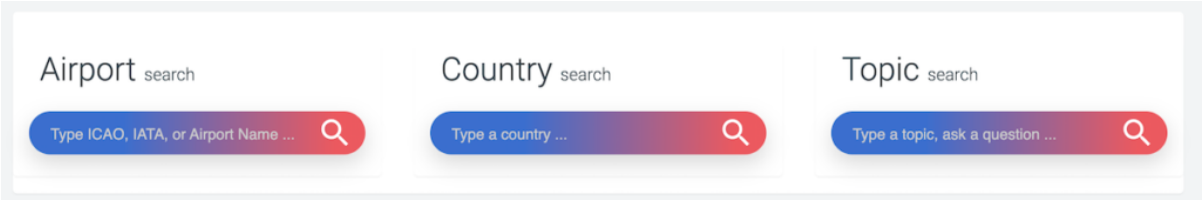
The **documents tab** usually has some goodies. Excellent, looks like Bec has made a Lowdown for NZAA!



The **articles** tab should find any blog posts or articles the OPSGROUP Team has written affecting this airport or country.



Not interested in Auckland? Don't blame you. The rest of New Zealand is far better! Try a search for NZCH, NZDN, or NZQN – or anywhere else in the world, in the search box at the bottom.



Enjoy! Let us know if you have any questions or we can help at all. We are always adding new features and that works best when you tell us what you need

Cheers,
The O.G. Team.
team@ops.group

Somalia joins the A Team

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

Full ATC service is returning to Somalia! The HCSM/Mogadishu FIR is currently Class G uncontrolled, which means a lot of fairly annoying IFBP calls to make. This is about to change though…

(Well, not the IFBP thing sadly, they recommend you continue these even during the trial period).

From May 11 to September 21 they will be running a trial which will see the airspace from **FL245** up become Class A controlled airspace.

The trial will only be between **0300-1800z** (so during the day), but will cover the entire FIR including oceanic areas.

Notam A0051/22 (A0028/22) advises on this, whilst **AIP SUP 02/22** has all the info (we're still waiting for a copy!)

Who to talk to in Class A?

The following frequencies are your best bet:

- **VHF 132.5 MHz** if within 240NM of position MOGDU.
- **HF (Mogadishu Control)**
  - Day Primary 11300Khz
  - Day Secondary 8879Khz or 13288Khz
  - Night Primary 5517Khz
  - Nigh Secondary 11300Khz or 3467Khz
- **CPDLC** for those FANS1 equipped, logon address **HCSM**

If you lose comms, then the procedures are pretty standard. These are available in the Somalia SUP 05/2018. Or you have the full contingency plans to follow in SUP 03/22.

SATCOM

Mogadishu have also re-confirmed their dedicated SATCOM numbers. Here they are:

- +252 6133 50047
- +252 6233 50047
- +252 1857 390
- +252 1857 391
- +252 1857 392
- +252 1857 393

What's the difference between Class A and Class G?

In a nutshell, Class A doesn't have VFR traffic in it, and you do need **ATC clearances.** Traffic will be provided with 10mins lateral/longitudinal separation and **2000′ vertical separation** at and above FL410, 1000′ at and below FL400

Class G is uncontrolled which means it is all procedural, deconfliction services and traffic advisory services only.

What's (less) new in Mogadishu.

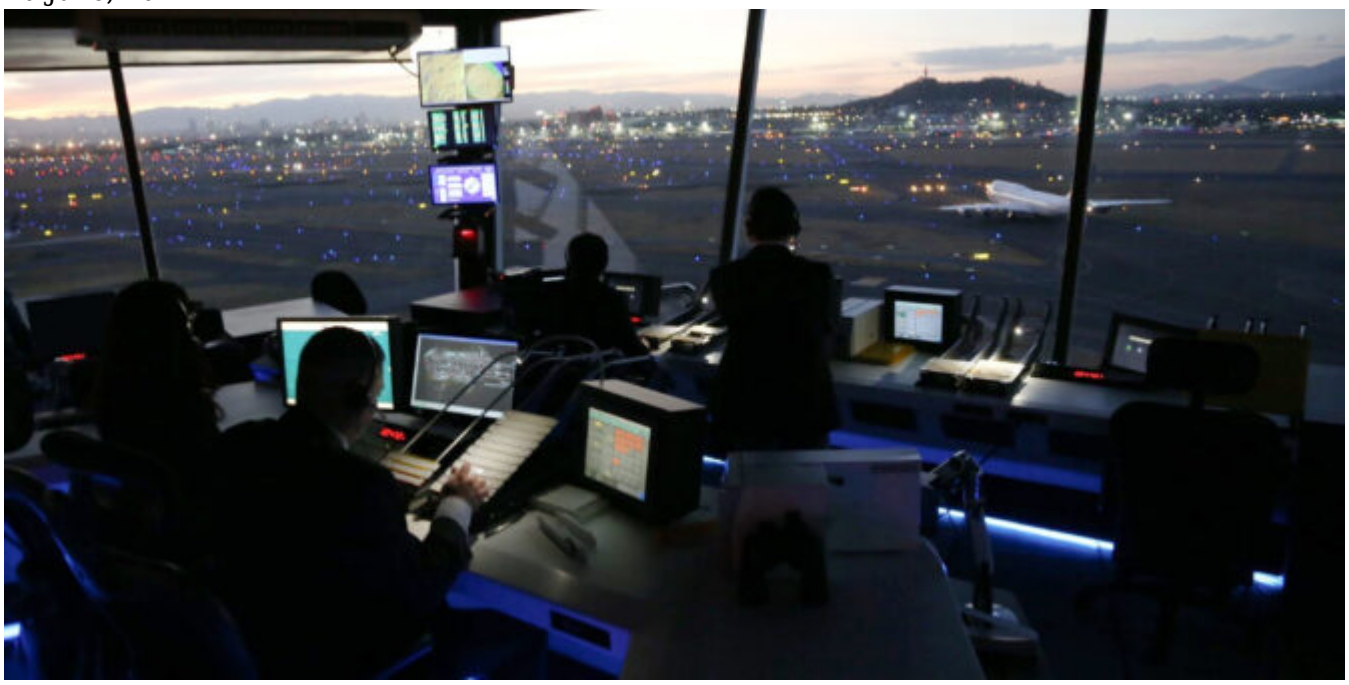
- Somalia still isn't the safest region to fly through. Major authorities **prohibit flights below (generally) FL260**, and recommend sticking to the oceanic routings rather than overflying the land. All the up to date airspace warnings are available on Safeairspace.
- IFALPA also published a bulletin back in 2018 talking about **procedures in the Mogadishu**

FIR.

- We shared a bunch of stuff on the **general security threats and risks** in Somalia here. Currently airports in Somalia are basically off limits though due big safety concerns.

Mexico City: Safety concerns

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022



What is going on around Mexico City (or should we say 'Mess-ico City) at the moment? Aircraft near misses, security and safety concerns, ATC errors…

IFALPA has issued a new safety bulletin for **MMMX/Mexico City airport**, highlighting several concerns.

- Aircraft have been landing with **low fuel** due to unexpected holding
- **Diversions** (due excessive holding) have increased
- There have been reports of **EGPWS** warnings
- And reports of **confusion** over STAR clearances

IATA report there have been at least 17 incidents of EGPWS warnings in the past year, and have written to the Mexican Airspace Navigation Services expressing concern –

"As you know, these alarms, without the quick action of the flight crew, can lead to a scenario of controlled flight into terrain, CFIT, considered by the industry to be one of the highest risk indicators in operational safety, and with the highest accident rate, as well as fatalities," their letter said.

The situation seems to be compounded by the recent opening of nearby **MMSM/Felipe Ángeles** which is causing control challenges for ATC (more on that below).

The near-miss incident at MMMX/Mexico City

On May 7, two Volaris aircraft had a near-miss, potentially due to controller error, when an aircraft was **cleared to land runway 05L** while another had been cleared to depart 05L. The last minute go-around was prompted by crew in another aircraft:

What's being done about it?

The Mexican Government have launched an investigation, but have already commented that the incident was most likely caused by an **ATC mistake**, noting Mexico has a **shortage of about 250 controllers**, which means they work longer hours.

They have also said that the airport will **reduce capacity by 25%** over the next 12 months while the situation is sorted. This is reportedly due to start in August 2022, with flights transferring to Mexico City's new MMSM/Felipe Ángeles airport as well as MMTO/Toluca airport.

The MMSM problem

MMSM/Felipe Ángeles (formally known as Santa Lucia) opened in March 2022. The government decided to upgrade an existing airbase following the scrapping of the **Texcoco airport project.**

MMSM boasts three runways, all with **CAT I ILS** approach facilities, and two **4,500m (14,764′)** in length. The airport sits at an elevation of 7362′, and has an MSA of 15,700′ making it a relatively challenging spot (although MMMX/Mexico City is arguably more challenging).

The proximity to MMMX

Both airports serve Mexico City and are **only about 40km** apart meaning ATC have suddenly found themselves dealing with much more complex airspace, and still have that pesky terrain threat to contend with as well.

According to air traffic controllers cited in local press, **the number of aborted landings has doubled** at MMMX/Mexico City airport this year due to the redesign of airspace to allow MMMX and MMSM airports to operate simultaneously. **Insufficient training** and lower than **standard phraseology** are not helping the situation. You can read more on this here.

Reports on MMSM

Sometimes folk write in with reports on airports. Someone did this about MMSM, and it wasn't great.

We have paraphrased below –

"The airport is still not fully constructed from the sounds of it, having been opened speedily by the government. The airport is not ready to support international operations and to reach it from Mexico City involves a pretty bad 2 hour drive through so rough neighbourhoods. Be safe – don't use this airport."

Safety and security

Mexico does have some **safety and security issues,** and these do impact operations, particularly into MMMX/Mexico City international.

The airport comes out one of the highest for:

- Security incidences at the airport – from illegal cargo being loaded to passenger documents not adding up
- “Follow-home crime” (ie getting followed back to your hotel and then robbed)

Both airports lie near (or in) neighbourhoods with high crime rates, so crew security if on a layover should be taken seriously.

Mexico, overall

The FAA downgraded Mexico’s safety rating back in June 2021. Here’s our post on it if you want a read.

This downgrade doesn’t mean the FAA thinks the country isn’t safe to operate into. It is generally aimed more at the safety of the airlines registered there. But it is often based off the level of oversight, quality assurance and maintenance in the country.

Which means when you see a downgrade, you should **have a little more caution** because the infrastructure, training for the likes of ATC etc, or general regulatory oversight might not be up to scratch and this could have some safety impact for you.

What to do with all this info?

Well, avoiding going would be extreme, but being **extra cautious** when you do – especially with regards to looking out for other traffic, and paying special attention to your terrain clearance – might not be a bad call.

You might want to **carry extra fuel** as well to deal with those holding issues as well.

Please send us your reports.

We can only share on the info we receive from folk heading there so if you do, we would love a report from you (and will keep it anonymous if you want) – news@ops.group

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OPSCHAT Summary May 10

OPSGROUP Team
10 June, 2022

Hi Members,

We had another busy OPSCHAT call this week!

You can watch the full replay on your Member's Dashboard.

Here's a roundup of what we talked about:

The Big News.

- **Mexico** – Trouble reported at MMMX/Mexico City. New IFALPA Safety Bulletin: unexpected holding and low fuel events, EGPWS and aircraft proximity events. The new airport MMSM/Santa Lucia is causing extra challenges for ATC. Be aware of clearances using non-standard phraseologies, and pay extra attention to your terrain clearance.
- **Africa** – ASECNA airspace (the folk responsible for 6 major FIRs in Western and Central Africa) have 'Free Route' airspace available until at least October 2022. All info included in

AICs. In other news ADS-B will be operational from May 19th (but it's not mandatory yet – that's coming next year).

- **Somalia** – ATC services are back in Somalia. They're returning to Class A above FL245 across the entire HCSM/Mogadishu FIR, including the oceanic portion (starting from May 11) 3am-6pm LT. VHF, HF, CPDLC and SATCOM. Outside of these hours, it reverts back to Class G again.
- **Europe** – Spill over risks from the Ukraine/Russia conflict. EASA has published a report identifying no less than twenty risks (highlighted by operators and other authorities). Some interesting (unconsidered) ones as well, so it's worth a read.

Unsolved Mysteries.

LRCS – Is my SATCOM approved in the NAT HLA? Here is the FAA info on it. Watch this space for a post tomorrow.

Radar vectors – who is legally responsible for terrain clearance?

The OPSQUIZ.

Mark's back to host, and we have a second time champion this week! **Congratulations!** Here is a sample question from this week: *Who publishes the eastbound NAT Tracks?* Join us next time as we have great prizes on offer, all hand picked by the team!

As always, we're here to help with any operational support, info or questions. You can reach us on news@ops.group, or via the slack channels #flightops and #questions.

To watch the replay of the OPSCHAT in full: head over to the dashboard. We hold a new one every week on Tuesdays at 2000z, click here to register and join us live. See you next week!

Are you ADS-Being watched?

Chris Shieff
10 June, 2022

ADS-B is quickly becoming mandated around the world – especially for IFR aircraft operating in busy controlled airspace at higher levels.

One of the major benefits of this is it provides 'radar-like' coverage where radar isn't possible. They no longer have to wait many minutes for the next bit of info about where you are. Now aircraft can be tracked *"as good as"* live.

But this means you are trackable by, well, anyone, and it's got some wondering whether this is an issue?

'B' equals Big Benefits.

The 'B' stands for broadcast and this is what makes this system so great. Your aircraft **continually broadcasts its precise GPS position**, along with other info through a Mode S transponder, to any receiver listening.

The biggest benefit seen so far is probably over the **North Atlantic** where ADS-B allows controllers to "see you" a lot better. Not literally see you, but receive info on where you are with a lot of accuracy and most importantly in a decent time frame (a mere snippet of a second).

The benefit is it allows for **reduced separation**.

But the Problem is also the 'B.'

Anyone with the right ears (including near airports) can listen in, and see who you are, where you are and what you're doing. You can literally buy ADS-B receivers on Ebay for less than a hundred dollars.

Take a look at FlightRadar and select the 'ADS-B' visibility on and suddenly the map fills up with many, *many* aircraft.

But this isn't the main concern.

An aircraft's ADS-B broadcast also contains a unique ICAO aircraft address – specific to every airplane and directly linked to the tail number. Which means folk can not only track an aircraft, but see a lot of information about it that the operator might not want any old Joe Bloggs seeing.

If someone knows your tail number, it is pretty easy to discover who owns the aircraft, and even the

address of the person registered to it.

And this is the concern. **ADS-B has created a privacy and potentially even a security issue.**

How can we be less visible?

If you are flying in **USA domestic airspace** then the FAA have two systems you can sign up to.

First up **LADD, which stands for 'Limiting Aircraft Data Displayed'.**

This came into place from the *'2018 HR 254 FAA Reauthorization Bill: Section 566, Right to Privacy When Using Air Traffic Control System'* as a replacement for the old BARR (Block Aircraft Registry Request) system.

This scrubs your data out of the FAA SWIM feed – the place where commercial tracking providers get their info.

You have two levels of privacy you can opt for. One that removes it all so these sites get none of your data, and one that allows tracking providers to still track you (the airplane owner or operator might like this), but not publish the data to the general public.

Then there is **PIA – the Privacy ICAO aircraft address program** where you can request an *'alternate, temporary ICAO aircraft address which will not be assigned to the owner in the Civil Aviation Registry'.*

Let's Talk Hexes.

How does the PIA program work?

Well, your aircraft has a HEX code assigned to it – the **unique 24-bit ICAO address**. This is linked to the registration number which is registered in the Civil Aviation Registry, along with a bunch of private information about the aircraft and its owner.

So via the PIA system, you can get a different code assigned to your aircraft. One that isn't linked to the tail number. This doesn't stop your aircraft being tracked, but does mean not identifying data will be published because no-one can find it now.

These don't solve the whole problem though.

There are several big limitations to know about.

Firstly, the **FAA can only tell the commercial providers what to do** with the data they receive from SWIM. Unfortunately, there are a lot of random trackers out there who have their own ways of tracking you, and the FAA has absolutely no power to stop them. Which is why getting the HEX changed is useful.

But, both **LADD and PIA also only work in US domestic airspace** which means as soon as you leave this and head into somewhere like the Deep Waters routes for example (which is Oceanic and managed but not owned by the US) then the FAA can no longer stipulate what is available and what isn't.

The Atlantic, Pacific, off the East coast of the USA, and of course anywhere else in the world, still has the same problem.

Then there is the actual **hassle of changing your ICAO HEX code**. It has to be changed within a lot of your aircraft systems and involves a fairly lengthy maintenance process.

The NBAA are on it.

As usual, the very helpful NBAA are looking out for you already, and are working with the FAA to improve the timeframe it takes for your PIA request to be processed (currently within 60 days). And they are working to see if things like multiple codes could be an option.

There is also discussion as to how the programs can be extended into non-US domestic airspace.

So if you want to register, how can you?

All of it can be done via the FAA website.
File your LADD request here.
Head to this page for more info on the PIA.

If you want some more info?

The NBAA did an excellent podcast on this not so long ago which you can listen to here.

There is a good article on it here as well courtesy of ‘Plane and Pilot’.