

Greenbacks and Greenland - \$3000 to file as an alternate

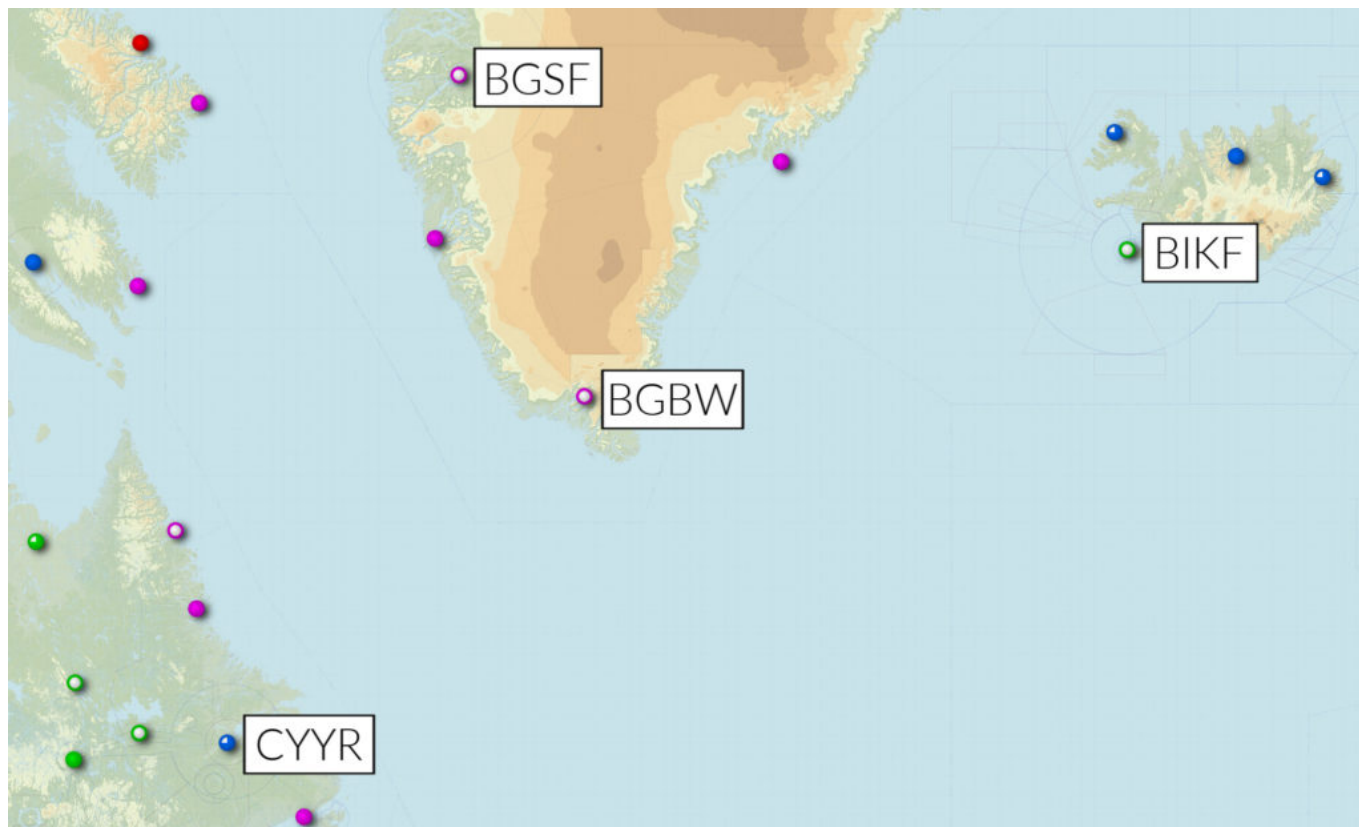
David Mumford

3 April, 2019



Trans-atlantic operators who have been putting **RALT/BGBW** or **RALT/BGSF** on their flight plans have been receiving **hefty invoices post-flight**.

Both BGBW/Narsarsuaq and BGSF/Kangerlussuaq are popular airports to use in flight planning as an emergency divert and for ETOPS, as they are perfectly positioned right in the middle of the big empty chunk of nothing that exists between the east coast of Canada and Iceland.



Both airports are open Mon-Sat 11-20z (8am-5pm local time), and completely closed on Sundays and on public holidays (watch out for these sneaky ones!).

So if you file a flight plan with either as alternates from Mon-Sat 11-20z, you won't get charged.

But outside these hours, you **will** get charged. It gets slightly complicated here: the charges in the box below apply when they stay open for you to use as an ETOPS alternate at any time that they are **closed** (which is between 20-11z), but there's an extra 10% charge on top of that for any time they are **closed and fast asleep in bed**, (which is between 00-08z). Got it?

F. Openings in connection with ETOP operations:

f.1. 1 May – 30 September, for every hour commenced

Scheduled Flights

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Non-Scheduled Flights

4.440,00 kr.

However minimum

-

13.320,00 kr.

f.2. 1 October – 30 April, for every hour commenced

-

5.290,00 kr.

However minimum

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15.870,00 kr.

Important to note: these get charged even if you don't actually divert to BGBW/BGSF. 15,870 Danish Krone equates to \$2585 USD!

If you want them to stay open for you to use as an ETOPS alternate, you need to put RALT/BGBW or RALT/BGSF in your flight plan – they'll see it, and will stay open for at the times you need. But bear in mind that if they're closed already at the time you file your flight plan, they won't see it! So they prefer you to do it properly and arrange everything in advance by email: get in touch with them at PPR@mit.gl

If you get an invoice from a company called Global Aviation Data A/S, unfortunately it's not a scam email – they are the guys who work with Greenland Airports to collect the monies owed when operators request these airports to stay open for them.

The really interesting thing is this – if more than one operator asks BGBW/BGSF to stay open for them **at the same time**, the costs are **not shared** between these operators – they both have to pay the standard fees! That's great news for the Government of Greenland, who will be getting paid multiple times by different operators for BGBW/BGSF to stay open at the same time!

Islands of the South Atlantic - enroute ETOPS and diversion options

OPSGROUP Team

3 April, 2019



Operating a flight across the **South Atlantic** is complicated by very limited en-route diversion options.

There are only really three airports worth considering between Brazil and Africa, south of the equator. All have their own complexities.

Your three best bets:



Operational Considerations:

FHAW/RAF Ascension Island





Wideawake Airfield (FHW) is a military facility operated jointly by the USAF and the RAF. Under the terms of the joint agreement, only state aircraft are authorized to land at Ascension. A monthly RAF flight arrives from the UK and weekly USAF C17 movement occurs.

We have also been advised by local authorities that “the runway is beyond its life cycle and we have imposed aircraft maximum weight limitations on its use to extend its operation”.

Because of these restrictions, passenger links to/from UK were stopped.

To file as an ETOPS/EDTO alternate or not?

The official line is here.

“The US Air Force has agreed its airfields may be identified as ETOPS emergency landing sites for flight planning purposes. This is consistent with the policy that an aircraft can land at any US Air Force airfield if the pilot determines there is an inflight emergency that would make continued flight unsafe. However, we also understand **there are published criteria for ETOPS airfields and our policy concerning emergency use is not agreement or certification that Air Force airfields meet those criteria.**

Ascension Island is a remote location with resources (accommodations, medical, hangars, crash/fire/rescue, etc) limited to levels essential for support of assigned personnel and the military mission. The airfield is available “as is” for emergency use only as indicated above. Whilst **FHW may be declared as an alternate for ETOPS flight planning purposes**, it cannot be used as a weather alternate, except for flights departing from or destined for St Helena.”

However! After we enquired with local authorities, we received the following response:

“As this is a USAF military only field, **it is not allowable to nominate as an ETOPS alternate.** There are no lodging facilities here on the island, and there is only very limited medical capability.

We will always accept an emergency divert and have done so in the recent past. **Nomination as an alternate drives a set of requirements that we do not meet** – hotel, medical, 24 hour operations, etc. Since we cannot meet those requirements, **nomination is not allowed.** If an aircraft were to experience an emergency and need to land, we would make do with what we have.”



As we have reported in the past, it can be costly to nominate enroute alternates sometimes.

Famously, a Delta 777 diverted to Ascension back in 2013 after experiencing engine troubles.

Either way- it's another '***interesting***' approach.

FHSH/St Helena



This is a new airport.

It's windy! It is subject to "**severe**" **windshear** and the runway is on top of a mountain and it's short! There is only limited flights to/from Namibia with an E190 and a monthly flight connects onwards to RAF Ascension.

Even the first commercial flight there need to 'go-around' due to the wind.

It was closed shortly after it opened due to these safety concerns, but it's back up and running now.

SBFN/Fernando De Noronha



Small island airport. Very scenic on approach and great beaches! Limited ground handling and parking options. Close to the ITCZ – susceptible to unstable weather at times. Regular commercial flights from the island and popular tourist destination with appropriate passenger facilities. Fire fighting only CAT 5. PPR – expect to pay for parking by the hour. Not an airport of entry and no fuel available to non-Brazilian military aircraft. Handling all done by island administration and special permit landing permit required. Also important to note that the runway will be closed for maintenance between 2001 and 1131 UTC, between May 24th until Dec 31st, 2018 and that all runway lights are unavailable also.

Extra Reading:

- Voyager landing at RAF Ascension Island
 - ICAO-Ascension Island FHAW/ASI and its criticality to airline operations
 - Information for Aviators at FHAW
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ENSB: No more direct flights, emergency diverts still OK

David Mumford

3 April, 2019



This is now officially a domestic airport – international arrivals are no longer permitted.

We asked the Norwegian CAA the million-dollar question: can ENSB still be used as an ETOPS or emergency enroute alternate?

Their response: “ENSB now being a domestic airport, it shall not be used as an alternate airport in normal flight planning, but in case of emergency, medical – or flight safety related, the airport may be used.”

In other words, if you are planning a Polar flight and want to use ENSB as an ETOPS or emergency enroute alternate, you can.

We also spoke with the ATC tower at the airport: they confirmed that you can still use ENSB as an emergency divert, and they have someone there on duty H24. The normal RFF category is 8.



So why has the airport been downgraded from international to domestic?

It seems it has something to do with the authorities desire to limit the amount of charter flights operating directly to Svalbard. Now, if you want to go there you will first have to go to one of Norway's international airports to clear customs, and then continue on to Svalbard as a domestic flight. The Norwegian CAA say direct international charter flights may still be allowed "in the interests of tourism", but it seems this will be the exception rather than the rule.

Interestingly, you can still fly to ENSB direct from Russia, as they have a separate agreement from 1974 regarding the use of the airport - which is unaffected by this new rule.

Even more interesting is that when you get to Svalbard, if you decide to leave the main town of Longyearbyen, it is a legal requirement to carry a gun, and to know how to use it - they're not joking about those polar bears.