

# Edinburgh security rules create painful delays

David Mumford  
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## Key Points

- **EGPH/Edinburgh airport has a rule that means all aircraft have to go through outbound security screening, regardless of weight or type of flight.**
- **Airport Spy reports suggest this can easily take an extra hour to complete, so plan for departure delays.**
- **If planning a trip to the region, consider EGPF/Glasgow instead!**

There's a rule in the UK that means outbound security screening is required for commercial flights over 10 tonnes MTOW, and all flights over 45.5 tonnes whether commercial or private.

But at **EGPH/Edinburgh**, outbound screening is required for all flights, regardless of weight or type of flight.

This means all crew and pax must pass through security, and abide by the 100ml liquid rule for carry-on luggage.

A recent Airport Spy report says that this **whole process took around an hour**, and they were the only crew there at the time!

Another Airport Spy report says to consider using **EGPF/Glasgow** instead, where they just have the standard UK rules for screening, and also don't have arrival or departure slots.



## Airport Spy

### Edinburgh, United Kingdom

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Rated 3.5 from 17 reviews

Large International Airport | Longest Rwy: 2,560 m / 8,397 ft (06/24) | Elev: 135

Nothing unusual about flight ops in and out of Edinburgh. Great ATC handling, slots valid +/- 15 minutes and ample parking available on the GA Apron when we arrived. Signature rep was a one-man show, but he was doing a great job covering. We decided to fuel on arrival. So Signature coordinated to have us spun 180 degrees and fueled us after moving. It's a good thing we did, because like others have reported, security on departure was a VERY lengthy process.

We were scheduled to depart at 0830. So we arrived at Signature just after 0600 from the Dakota Hotel (great place, BTW...very similar to the Aviator in Farnborough). The screeners arrived from the main terminal at the same time and then took quite a while to calibrate their equipment. They took all crew luggage through and conducted a full search on at least one bag while we waited in the lounge area. We weren't called over for personal screening until 45 minutes after our arrival. It took an additional 15 minutes to get the three of us through after a very thorough screening. We finally got planeside about an hour after we showed up at the airport. We were the only crew there at the time. I would plan AT LEAST an hour for the whole process. I submit that having another crew show up at the same time to clear would extend that quite a bit.

Painful.



## Airport Spy

### Glasgow, United Kingdom

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Rated 4.5 from 8 reviews

Large International Airport | Longest Rwy: 2,658 m / 8,718 ft (05/23) | Elev: 26

We came to Glasgow for a four night stay in Scotland. Although our final destination was Edinburgh we were informed that there was no parking available for GA at EGPH/Edinburgh so we shifted our plans to EGPF.

On approach into EGPF we received a few delay vectors as the airport was having some traffic issues however the arrival, approach, and landing itself was simple and uneventful. There is some terrain on the north side of the terminal area as well as on the south western side however this is all easy to manage.

Upon landing we were given instructions to taxi to the ramp and our handlers informed us that UKBF had pre-cleared our flight and that no passport checks were required.

On departure the we called the FBO that we were one hour out and they were ready for us on arrival. No need to clear security as we are below the UK threshold (though not the EGPH/Edinburgh threshold apparently.) We drove our hire car to our aircraft, loaded the bags into the hold and proceeded to get the aircraft ready. Additionally there are no arrival or departure slots required here which significantly eases the mental stress for arrival or departure.

Gama was excellent, though their passenger facilities need an update the staff is incredibly friendly, accommodating, and competent. We had some complexities on departure and they were very accommodating with ramp movements which significantly eased the stress for us.

I can highly recommend this as an alternative to EGPH/Edinburgh, it is cheaper and more efficient both for crew and passengers. Would you rather drive an extra 30-45min to a relaxed yet competent airport or stand with your passengers for 20-30min to go through an invasive security procedure before being driven to a remote stand? If you can convince your pax I think they too will appreciate the relaxed atmosphere at EGPF and Gama!

Less painful.

The reason that EGPH/Edinburgh has this strange rule is something to do with it being a **“Critical Part” airport**.

## What is a “Critical Part” airport?

Some folks we spoke to called this term “*Critical Park*”, others “*Critical Path*”, but we think it’s “*Critical Part*”.

Either way, there’s nothing about it in the UK AIP or seemingly anywhere else online.

It’s apparently something to do with how the *specific layout of the airport affects zoning for security purposes*.

And that’s all we know.

## Are there any other UK airports that do this?

Yes. **EGLL/Heathrow** and **EGKK/Gatwick** are both “Critical Part” airports, so both have the same rule: all outbound flights must have security screening here.

**EGWU/Northolt** is the only other airport in the UK that we know of which has mandatory outbound security screening for all outbound flights, but that’s due to some kind of requirement in place from the military there, as the airport is a joint civil/military field.

We contacted a whole bunch of other airports (EGSS/Stansted, EGGW/Luton, EGMC/Southend, EGLC/London City, EGTK/Oxford, EGLF/Farnborough, EGKB/Biggin Hill), and they all said the same thing: no weird “Critical Part” stuff here – the normal UK rules apply.

## So tell me the rules again?

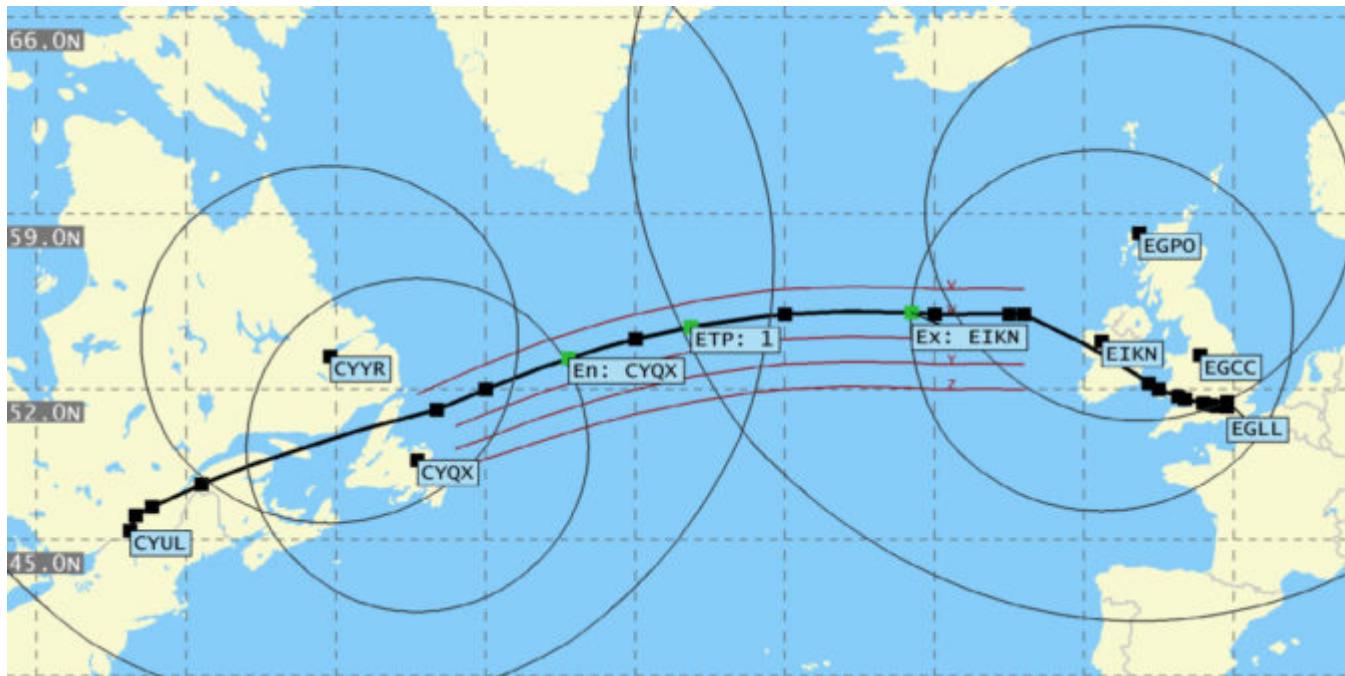
**EGPH/EGLL/EGKK/EGWU:** Outbound screening is required for all flights, regardless of weight or type of flight.

**All other UK airports:** Outbound screening only required for commercial flights over 10 tonnes MTOW, and all flights over 45.5 tonnes whether commercial or private. You can read more about this [here](#).

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# Covid impact on North Atlantic diversion airports

Chris Shieff  
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Planning diversion alternates is always fun – particularly when flying across **vast tracts of open ocean like the North Atlantic**. Check a few Notams, google some airport pics to work out just how scary the runway is, stick a couple of en-route alternates into your flight plan, and away you go...

The reality is it's a bit more complicated than that. For use as a diversion alternate, an aircraft operator must ensure that the airport concerned meets basic criteria to be classified as 'adequate'. In other words, **just a runway is not enough** – if only it were that simple!

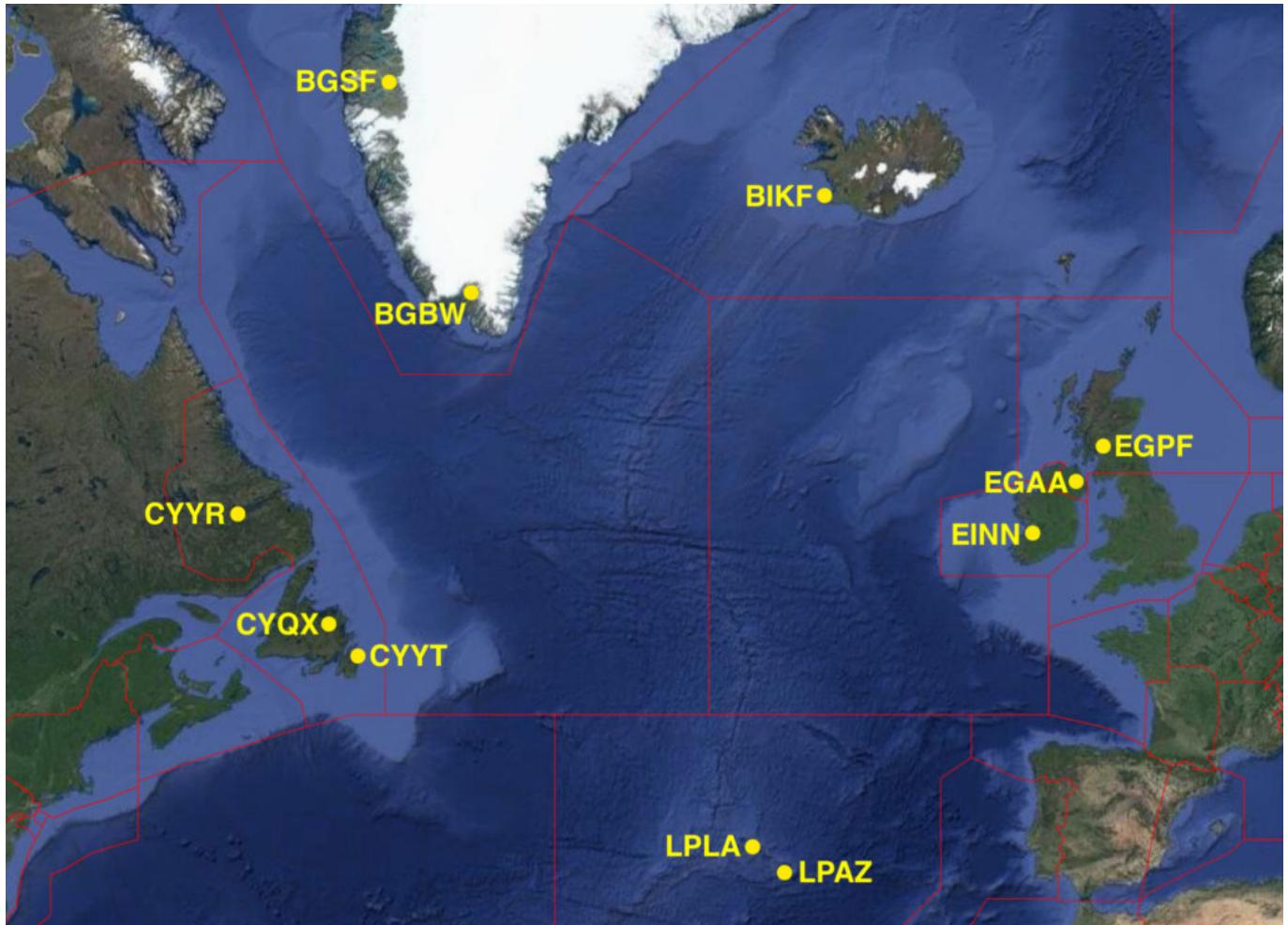
Here are the kinds of things we're interested in:

- Sufficient weather forecasting.
- ATC (or Flight Information Service) hours of operation.
- Runway availability.
- Instrument approach availability.
- Runway Lighting.
- Runway slope guidance (PAPI, VASI, Glideslope or similar).
- RFF (Rescue Fire) operational status.
- Status of facilities: refuelling, handling, parking bays etc.

During the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of airports have used the lull in traffic to undertake work that can affect their operational status. As a result, these changes may create additional **operational issues for pilots and flight planners** seeking diversion alternates that meet their requirements.

Also, due to the general chaos of Covid-19, **many airports have limited staff** which has an effect on how your aircraft, passengers and crew will be handled on the ground if you do need to divert.

Here's a summary of **changes to operational status** of airports commonly used as diversion alternates for aircraft crossing the **North Atlantic**. (Unless stated otherwise, airports listed below are open H24 for emergency diverts).



## The Biggies

**BGSF Kangerkussuaq Airport, Greenland** – Airport is open 1000-1900z Monday to Saturday. Closed on Sundays. If you want them to stay open for you outside their opening times, you have to request it in advance – watch out for hefty fees if doing this, which get charged even if you don't end up actually diverting there. Same applies if you just casually list BGSF as an en-route alternate on your flight plan if operating out of hours. More info on that [here](#).

However, until at least June 10 the airport is classified as 'non-instrumental.' Effectively you can only use it during daylight hours in good conditions (NOTAM A0283/20 refers).

**BGBW Narsarsuaq, Greenland** – Similar deal to BGSF – airport is only open 1000-1900z Monday to Saturday, and closed on Sundays. And again, extra fees which get charged if filing BGBW as an en-route alternate on flight plans. RFF category 5, but grab a coffee because it requires 3 hour's notice (NOTAM A0098/20 refers). Officially, the current rules for Greenland are that crew and pax will not be allowed to disembark, not even for diverts. Unofficially, the local handler says that if a divert was to happen, they'd "find a solution".

**LPLA Lajes, Azores** – Several restrictions apply due to Covid. Essentially you can go there if you really need somewhere to land but expect chaos once you do. The airport is currently closed to international arrivals unless it's an emergency. And even then you cannot disembark without permission and strict quarantine measures apply (NOTAM A1487/20 refers). Unscheduled arrivals of emergency aircraft can expect 'extensive handling delays' (NOTAM A1485/20 refers). All passengers and crew must wear face masks, and once you and your passengers leave the aircraft you will be quarantined in the local air force base (room service is unlikely).

**LPAZ Santa Maria, Azores.** If you have to divert there, no crew or pax are allowed to disembark. For

medical emergencies, they actually recommend you go to LPLA instead!

**EINN Shannon, Ireland** - Aerodrome is currently only operational from 0500-2100z due to the impact of Covid (NOTAM A1062/20 refers). The airport has confirmed they are not available outside of these hours for emergency diverts - so if you're operating overnight, the nearest available H24 airports are EGAA/Belfast and EIDW/Dublin.

### **And watch out for these potential 'gotchas'**

**CYYR Goose Bay, Canada** - Until June 29, runway 16/34 is closed. In strong northerly or southerly conditions, cross wind limitations may be reached - so keep an eye on your ETOPs alternate minima (NOTAM E3107/20 refers).

**CYQX Gander, Canada** - In case of divert, crew/pax all need to fill out a Government Declaration COVID form to stay overnight, and need to have proper PPR (Masks, Gloves and Sanitary Cleaner). RFF category 5 which requires at least 30 minutes notice.

**BIKF Keflavik, Iceland** - RFF category 8 from 0500-1900z, RFF category 7 from 1900-0500z (NOTAM A0123/20 refers).

**EGAA Belfast, Ireland** - Until June 13, RFF category 6 overnight between 1800-0600z (NOTAM A1968/20 refers). And until June 11, this is reduced to just RFF cat 4 between the daytime hours of 0600-1800z (NOTAM A1993/20 refers).

**EGPF Glasgow, Scotland.** Until June 16, available RFF category is 6 for the majority of the day due to staffing issues caused by Covid (NOTAM A1983/20 refers).

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In other NAT-related news, the datalink mandate rules have been relaxed until the end of June, due to the fact that there's now significantly less traffic because of all the COVID restrictions. **Non-datalink mandate compliant aircraft may therefore flight plan and operate between FL290-410 until June 30.** ICAO are saying that due to the decrease in traffic, there is a significantly higher chance of flights being cleared as requested, and are encouraging operators to file and request their optimal profiles at all stages of the flight. More info on the NAT Datalink Mandate can be found [here](#).