

US FAA Improves Flight Tracking Privacy

OPSGROUP Team
11 December, 2024



Dec 2024 Update:

- The FAA's Privacy ICAO Address Program (PIA) has been updated. **CPDLC services are now available for flights using a PIA.** To receive it, pilots must file the PIA ICAO 24-bit address and N-reg in the flight plan.
- Two other important changes - aircraft info held by the FAA and associated with a PIA are **exempt from the Freedom of Information Act**, and pilots can now **request a new PIA every twenty days** if they want. You view the updated FAA Privacy page [here](#).

Feb 2024 Update:

- The FAA's Privacy ICAO Address program has been **expanded to include some new oceanic and Gulf of Mexico routes.**
- Check below for exactly which routes this program now applies to, and our **Opsicle with steps on how to register.**

If you're not familiar with this program, it prevents users' aircraft registration from being tracked by third parties using ADS-B output during US domestic flights. We wrote about it before [here](#). But to explain what this program is and how it works in two sentences:

All Mode S equipped aircraft are assigned a unique ICAO 24-bit address - this is uniquely identifiable to your aircraft's registration. The FAA's PIA program assigns you another one to use that renders you secret-squirrel.

To participate, you must tick all three of these boxes:

1. Operating an **US-registered aircraft which is ADS-B equipped**
2. Using a **third-party call sign**
3. Flying in **US territorial airspace** (the mainland, Alaska, Hawaii, and other US territories).
Additionally, the PIA has been expanded to include US oceanic FIRs too – those more than 12nm from shore.

After news broke the program had been improved, we struggled to find a summary of the changes and got in touch with the FAA directly.

They advised while there is no 'master list' of the newly included routes, they have updated their website to include some valid examples including:

- **NYC to LA**
- **Miami to Houston (via the Gulf of Mexico)**
- **LA to Hawaii**
- **Boston to Miami (with offshore routes more than 12nm from shore).**

If you have an enquiry about a specific route, you can reach them on adsbprivacyicao@faa.gov. Chances are, as long as you stay **within US jurisdiction**, your route will be valid.

How to apply?

So, you want in? We've put together this little Opsicle with steps on how to register.



CLASSIFIED

OPSICLES

HOW TO ENROL IN THE FAA PRIVACY PROGRAM

Before you begin - Is your aircraft ADS-B equipped, US-registered and using a third-party call sign?

Apply in five steps:

1. Obtain an initial ADS-B report (aka PAPR) [here](#).
2. Apply for the PIA program [here](#) (expect 10 day wait).
3. Email adsbprivacyicao@faa.gov with proof of your third-party flight ID provider.
4. Install your new PIA into your ADS-B transmitter.
5. Within 30 days, do another ADS-B report (using your new PIA). Verify it [here](#).

Whatever you do, don't:

- Use an unassigned PIA or one assigned to another aircraft.
- Use your PIA outside of US-managed airspace.
- Change your PIA during your flight.



Click to open PDF.

More questions?

The FAA has quite a good FAQ section on the PIA which you can access [here](#).