My first North Atlantic Flight is tomorrow – NAT Ops Guide (Updated 2018)

Declan Selleck
1 March, 2018
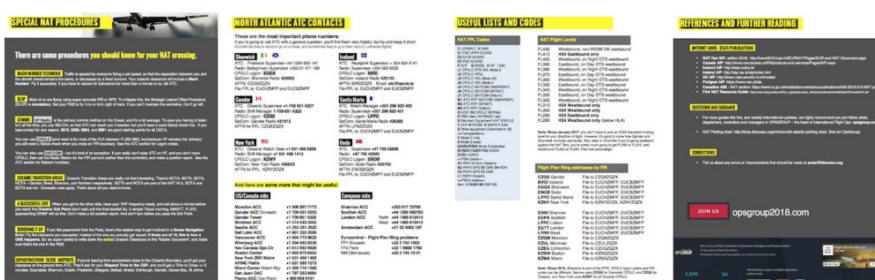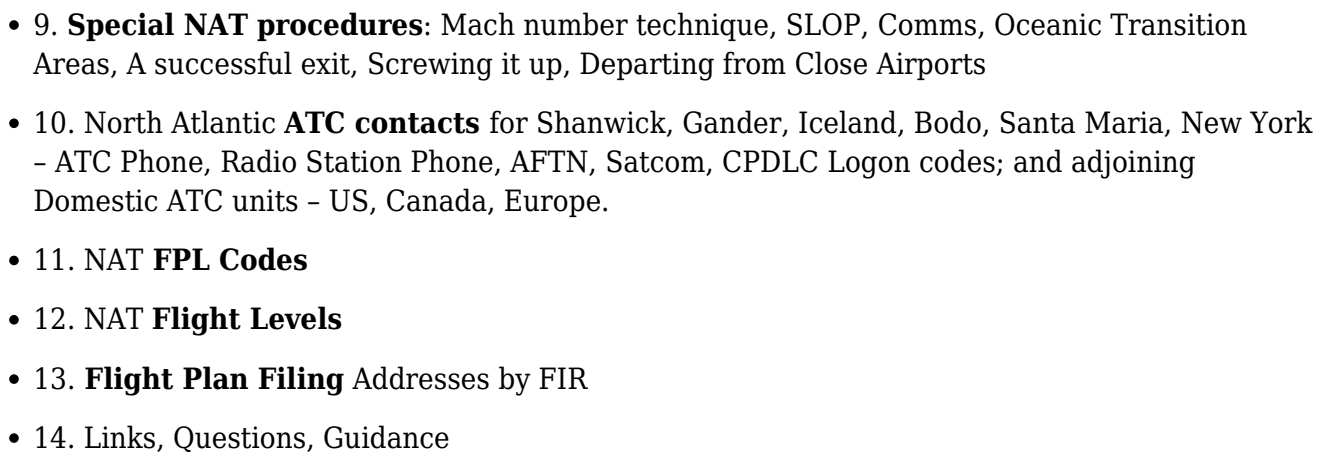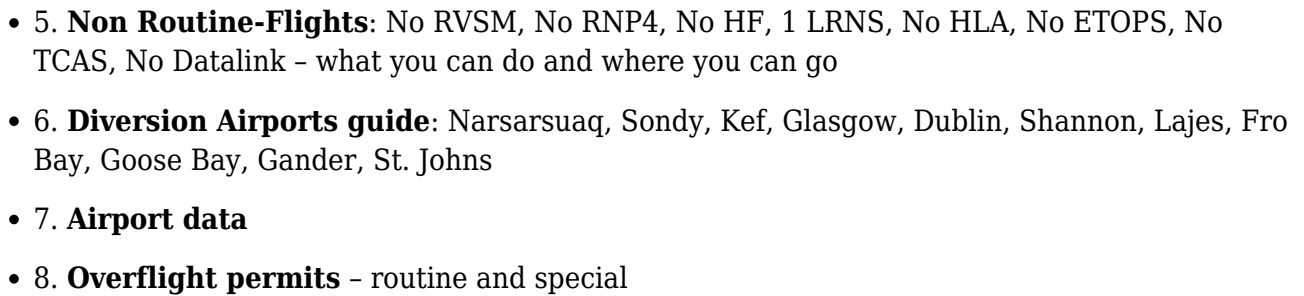

> For the **latest changes and updates on the North Atlantic**, including our most recent **Guides and Charts**, use our NAT reference page at **flightservicebureau.org/NAT**.

Of all the hundreds of questions we see in OPSGROUP, one region stands out as the most asked about – the NAT/North Atlantic. So, we made one of our legendary guides, to get everything into one PDF. It's called "My first North Atlantic Flight is tomorrow" – **and now we've updated it for 2018!**
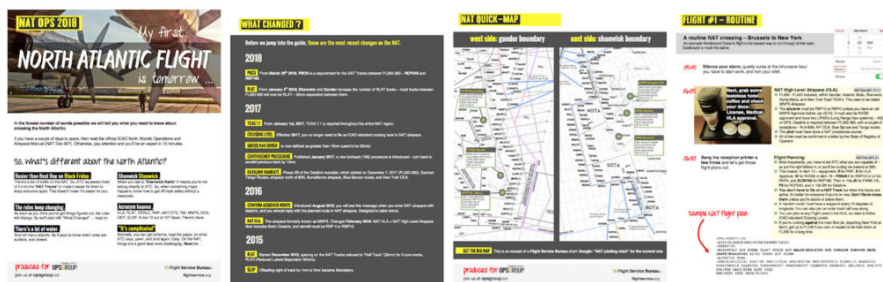
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- 3. NAT Quick Map – Gander boundary, Shanwick boundary
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Excerpt from the Routine Flight #1:

09:01 — Time to get an **Oceanic Clearance**

Oceanic Clearance NAT Doc 007, 4.1
- You need a specific clearance to enter Oceanic Airspace.
- Request it about 60 mins before entering, on CPDLC, VHF, or HF.
- When you get your clearance, **don't be a chump** and climb to your ocean level *without* a clearance from Domestic ATC. This happens pretty often, and will make you immediately unpopular. Your Oceanic Clearance is valid from the Oceanic Entry Point (OEP) only.

09:34 — I'm approaching the boundary, and a couple of things have stopped working. **What now?**
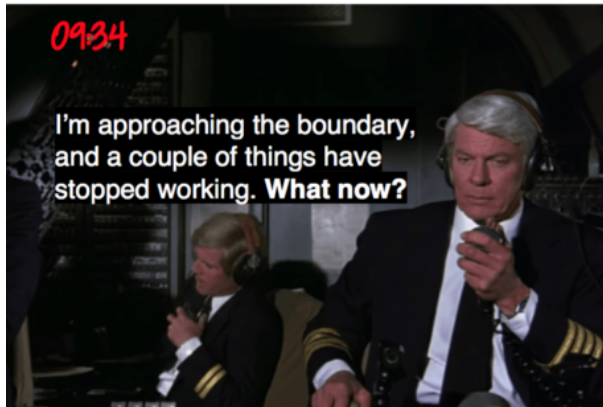
Equipment Failure before the boundary NAT Doc 007, 6.6
- **HF fail**: Oceanic Clearance received – **fly the clearance**. Tell Domestic ATC. Use Satcom Voice, CPDLC, or VHF relay with other aircraft. **Don't revert to the filed flight plan**.
- **HF fail**: No Oceanic Clearance received, and no contact with Domestic ATC: You should enter the OCA **at the FPL requested Oceanic level and speed** but **not** execute any subsequent step climbs in the Flight Plan.
- **Datalink – affecting CPDLC or ADS-C**. Tell ATC. They will try to accommodate you within the Datalink mandated area (FL350-390), but you may be rerouted.
- **One LRNS failure** (of two) – request a reclearance below or above NAT HLA, or land and get it fixed.

10:07 — You've reached the Oceanic Entry Point MALOT. No more RADAR.

Entering the Ocean NAT Doc 007, 4.1
- Say goodbye to the radar controller, you're on your own now.
- Select an offset for **SLOP** – 1nm or 2nm right of track, your call.
- Logon to **EGGX**, and call Shanwick on HF for a radio check.
- Expect a "Confirm Assigned Route" message on CPDLC .
- Check next waypoint is correct, and that you're going there.
- Set 123.45 for turbulence complaints + baseball scores, and 121.5.
- **Squawk 2000**, 30 minutes after passing the OEP.

If you do have to make a voice position report, then do it like this:
Position, Swissair 100, RESNO at 1235, Flight Level 330, Estimating 56 North 020 West at 1310, 56 North 030 West Next.

10:17 — Big CB ahead. Can I go off track without talking to ATC?

Going around Weather NAT Doc 007, 13.4
- Unless you've spotted the CB late, request a deviation from ATC. Otherwise, follow the **contingency deviation procedure**:
- Turn away from the tracks, turn on your lights
- Call on 121.5 and 123.45 to tell others
- If deviating >10nm, if **north of track** descend 300 feet; if **south of track** climb 300 feet, but only once you are 10nm off track.
- Once clear, and back within 10nm of track, return to level.

To get your copy – there are three options:

1. **OPSGROUP Members**, login to the Dashboard and find it under "Publications > Guides". All

FSB content like this is included in your membership, **or**

2. **Join OPSGROUP** with an individual, team, or department/airline plan, and get it free on joining (along with a whole bunch of other stuff), **or**

3. **Purchase a copy** in the Flight Service Store!

Europe now requires 8.33 VHF radios (almost) everywhere

David Mumford
1 March, 2018
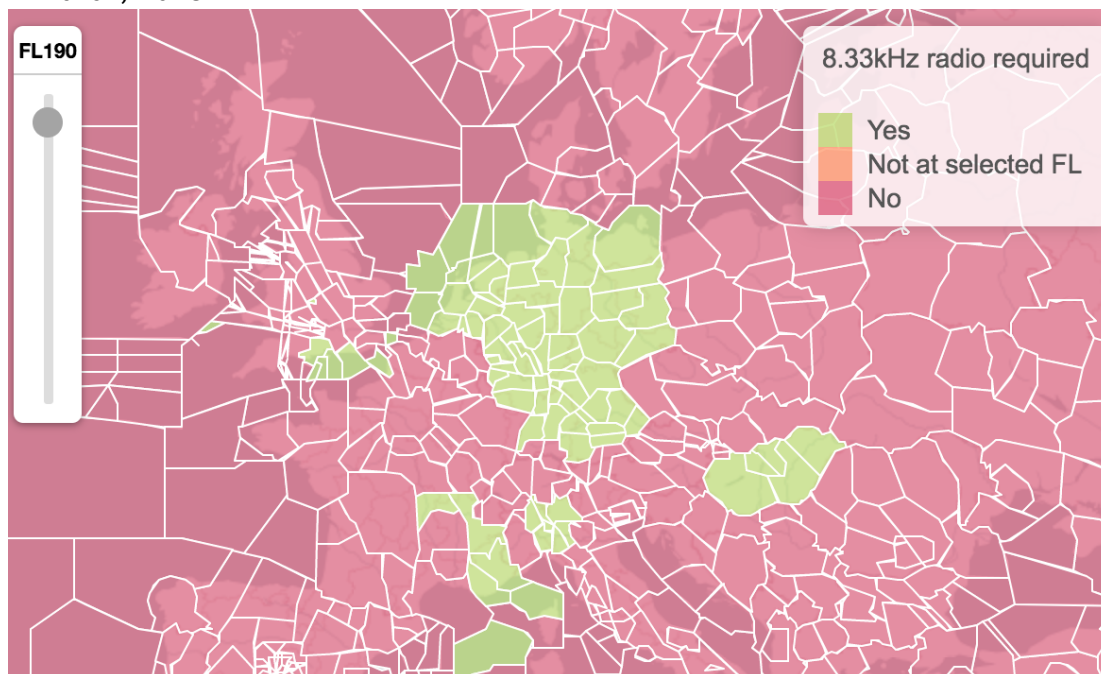
Effective January 1st, 2018, the official line is that you need an 8.33 VHF Radio to operate anywhere in Europe. If you're heading to Europe without one, expect problems.

Until now, it's really only been a requirement above FL195 – 8.33 has been around at the higher levels since 2007. However, Europe is keen to get everyone on the same page and make sure new frequencies can be used by all aircraft at the lower levels also.

However, not everywhere is actually requiring 8.33 just yet. Eurocontrol have built a handy tool that shows each the requirements for each airspace sector. Click on the image below to check it out.

8.33kHz Voice Channel Spacing Implementation

Airspace Classification below FL195

FL190

8.33kHz radio required

Yes
Not at selected FL
No
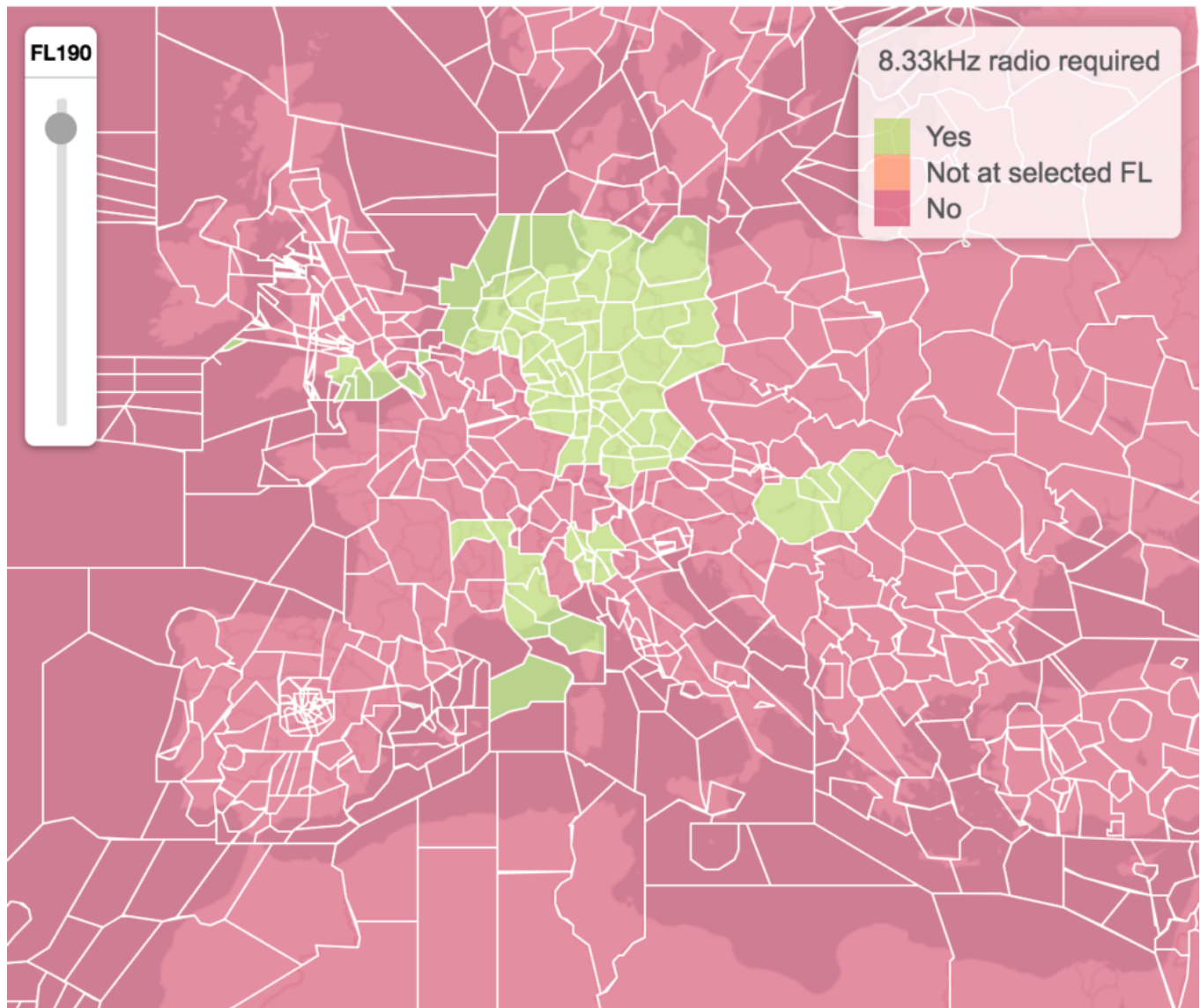
Can I get an exemption? If you're operating a ferry, delivery, or some other flight where you don't have 8.33, then you should be able to get an exemption to operate without 8.33 – but it will vary state to state. Write to the Ministry of Transport for the particular state.

Eurocontrol have published all the details on this as follows:

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Above FL195, in the IFPZ, not equipped aircraft may be exempted from the
carriage of the 8.33 kHz radios (refer to the national AIP of the state
concerned to see if the flight is eligible) in which case the letter Y shall
not be inserted in Item 10a (Equipment), but the letter Z shall be inserted
in Item 10a as well as COM/EXM833 in the Item 18 (Other Information) of the
filed flight plan.
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Below FL195, in the airspace of the EU member states (plus Switzerland and
Norway) some airspaces may be exempted from the carriage of the 8.33 kHz
radios (refer to the national AIP of the state concerned) in which case the
airspace is not inserted in the area where the mandatory carriage check takes
place. Such exemption will permit a non-equipped aircraft to fly but only if
the flight trajectory remains exclusively in airspaces where 8.33 kHz is not
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mandatory.

Below FL195, in the airspaces of the EU member states (plus Switzerland and Norway), state aircraft non-UHF and non-833 are exempted. The letters Y and U shall not be inserted in Item 10 (Equipment), but STS/STATE shall be inserted in the Item 18 (Other Information) of the filed flight plan.

In the IFPZ, State aircraft that are not equipped with 8.33 kHz capable radios but are equipped with UHF shall be permitted to fly in 8.33 kHz airspace where UHF coverage is provided or special procedures are implemented (see the national AIP of the State concerned). To indicate such, the letters U and Z shall be inserted in Item 10a (Equipment) and 'COM/EXM833' shall be inserted in Item 18 (Other Information) of the filed flight plan.

Confused? Here's a quick crib-sheet of what to do:
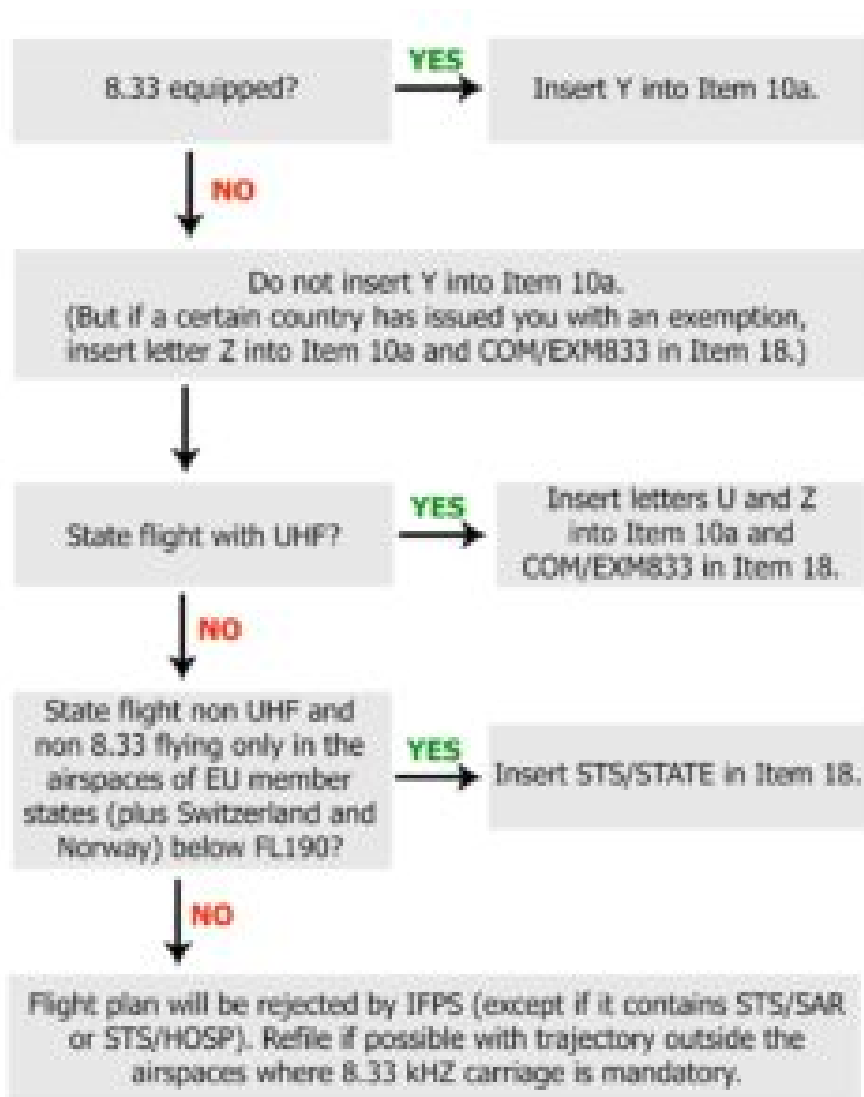
When you file a flight plan in Europe, it goes through the automated IFPS system, which is now quite clever at checking for 8.33 kHz radio compliance.

The IFPS system will crosscheck between the concerned airspaces crossed by the flight plan and the radio

communication equipment indicated in Item 10: (Equipment) and Item 18 (Other information) provided in the submitted message.

Here's what will happen, depending on what you put in your flight plan:

- If Item 10 (Equipment) of the submitted message contains Y, then that flight is considered to be compliant.

- If Item 10 (Equipment), of the submitted message does not contain Y, but contains Z and U and the exemption indicator COM/EXM833 is present in Item 18 (Other Information), and the flight is a STATE flight, then that flight shall be considered compliant.

- If Item 10 (Equipment) of the submitted message does not contain Y but contains the exemption indicator COM/EXM833 and the flight is not penetrating the 833_UHF_VHF region and is entirely within the 833_EUR_IFPS, then that flight shall be considered compliant.

- If Item 10 (Equipment) of the submitted message does not contain Y, neither U and Item 18 (Other Information) contains STS/STATE and the flight is exclusively in the airspace of the EU member states (plus Switzerland and Norway) below FL195 then that flight shall be considered compliant.

In all the other cases, the flight shall be considered not compliant and shall fail automatic processing!