

Ops to Taiwan? You'll have to avoid China

David Mumford

27 September, 2022



- Can I fly between China and Taiwan?
- If I make a stop in Hong Kong, is that ok?
- What about overflights?
- Can I overfly China to get to Taiwan?

There's a **boring answer** to these questions, and there's a **fun answer**.

The Fun Answer

OPSGROUP members have all the fun - you guys get to play the game. We tested it out and managed to find the 'cheat mode', so we left the screen open for you. You can download this (along with all the other Opsicles we've made) via your Dashboard [here](#).



OPSGROUP members: [Click to download PDF.](#)

The Boring Answer

You can't fly between China and Taiwan in a foreign-registered aircraft.

The Chinese authorities are reluctant to provide any kind of official document stating any of this - we haven't been able to find any precise wording anywhere in their AIP which states these restrictions.

To test the theory, we applied to the Chinese authorities for a landing permit for a direct flight from Taiwan to China. After we applied, we received an immediate call from CAAC emphasising that they **will not deal with such applications** for foreign registered aircraft. They advised they will not process this application and **verbally rejected it**.

The Chinese authorities circulate an official document to Chinese handling agents about this issue, which sets out the rules quite clearly. For some reason, they don't like these to be distributed outside of China... so naturally, we got our hands on a translated copy:

Take off from	Tech stop at	Overfly	Tech stop at	Destination	Allowed?
Taiwan		Mainland China		Third countries	No
Taiwan	Third countries	Mainland China		Third countries	Yes
Taiwan		Sanya FIR		Third countries	Yes
Taiwan	Third countries	Sanya FIR		Third countries	Yes
Taiwan				Mainland China	No
Mainland China				Taiwan	No
Mainland China		Taiwan		Third countries	No
Third countries		Mainland China		Taiwan	No
Third countries		Mainland China	Third countries	Taiwan	Yes
Third countries		Sanya FIR		Taiwan	Yes

So, to summarize:

- **Foreign-registered aircraft are prohibited from operating direct between China and Taiwan.**
- **You've got to make a tech stop somewhere between the two countries - most choose to do so in either VHHH/Hong Kong or VMMC/Macau.**
- **Importantly, the same rules apply for China overflights - if you're flying to Taiwan from any third country, you can't overfly China. China allow some airline flights to Taiwan to overfly China, then the Hong Kong FIR. But they don't allow non-sched and private flights to do this.**
- **Only Chinese and Taiwanese registered aircraft are able to operate direct between China and Taiwan.**

There's one more scenario that is apparently also not allowed:

You can't overfly both China and Taiwan and then land in a third country. For example: you're departing from RPLL/Manilla in the Philippines, then overflying Taiwan (RCAA FIR), then overflying China (ZSHA FIR), and then landing in a third country like RKSI/Seoul in South Korea - according to the Chinese authorities, **this is not allowed**, and they won't issue an overflight permit!

Further reading:

- For some general **top tips on ops to China**, check here.
- Make sure you know about the **hidden permit costs** of operating to China here.
- Read about the latest goings on in the **South China Sea** here.
- OPSGROUP members can download a **Himalayan Routing Guide** here.