

The Bahamas wants your cash

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The Bahamas wants your cash! And they're finding plenty of ways to get it. So far, we've got:

- **backdated invoices for increased landing and overflight fees**
- **a proposed overflight charge**
- **rising airport fees**

So here's a look at each...

Backdated fees

The Bahamas Air Navigation Services Authority (BANSAs) is retroactively charging landing and overflight fees for flights dating back to May 2021!

The charges apply to private and commercial ops alike. They are based on your aircraft's maximum take-off weight (MTOW) and are reported to be around **300% to almost 700% higher than the previous rates.**

They also come on top of customs, airport authority and FBO fees. So even if you paid BANSAs at the time, you may now be asked to pay the difference between the original charge and the new rate.

The following ops are exempt:

- *Search-and-rescue or emergency medical services flights.*
- *Aircraft making an emergency landing at an airport other than their intended destination.*
- *Private flights in single-engine piston aircraft.*
- *Aircraft owned or chartered by the Bahamas government.*

- *Aircraft belonging to the armed forces or governments of ICAO member states.*

So basically no one. **If you've operated a twin piston, turboprop or jet aircraft to/over the Bahamas since May 2021, expect an invoice.**

BANSA has also indicated that an **aircraft with an unpaid debt may be seized or detained** by the Bahamas government if the operator refuses to pay.

Invoices were initially coordinated through IATA's Simplified Invoicing and Settlement (SIS) system. However, communication with BANSA appears to have stopped (reportedly on government instructions), and IATA is also understood to no longer be participating in the process.

If you do receive a retroactive invoice, NBAA wants to hear from you. The association is working with affected operators and the US government to **challenge these charges**. NBAA also questions their basis, pointing out that the FAA provides most air traffic services for the Bahamas while charging only a nominal annual fee!

A proposed USD 775 overflight fee

As if the retroactive BANSA invoices were not enough, another proposal could make flights between the southeast US, the Caribbean and South America **significantly more expensive**.

The Bahamas Aviation, Climate and Severe Weather Network Ltd (BACSWN) is **seeking ICAO approval for a USD 775 overflight fee**. USD 500 would go to the Bahamas government and USD 225 to BACSWN.

If applied across the current BANSA charging area, that could **add USD 775 per flight**. This would be separate from the existing BANSA fee, although it is still unclear whether it would eventually replace it or be charged on top.

There are other major unknowns: Which aircraft would be affected? Would the charge would apply only to overflights or also to flights to/from/within the Bahamas? Would the BANSA charging area would be used for the new fee? etc!



A new pricing schedule is proposed for these three airports from Jan 2027, although it is still under review by the Bahamas government. **If approved, passenger fees would be USD 66 per international pax and USD 33 per domestic pax.** Landing and parking fees would also increase.

CST Flight Services compared 2026 charges with the proposed 2027 rates for a 4-night international stay at MYEM with four passengers. Total airport costs would increase by 84% for a Pilatus PC-12 and 92% for a Hawker 800.

The full impact on FBOs is still unclear. If the new airport charges apply to FBO terminals and ramps, they are likely to be passed on to you. And if airport rents for FBOs increase, handling costs could rise again. More airport handovers may follow, so the impact may extend beyond general aviation and eventually feed through to commercial fares too.

Watch this space...

So if you're heading to the Bahamas, expect to pay more! And in some cases, you may not even know exactly how much until the bill arrives. The BANSAs charges are already happening, the new overflight fee is still being worked on, and airport fees are going up too. We'll keep an eye on all of this and update you as things become clearer.

Thanks to Rick Gardner and CST Flight Services for their help in putting this article together. If you need support with your Bahamas ops, you can contact them at info@cstflightservices.com.