

US Grounds All Flights After NOTAM System Failure

David Mumford
12 January, 2023



Update 12Jan 1100z:

The Misery Map of flight delays in the US isn't looking too bad today, following yesterday's Notam system meltdown that resulted in a nationwide ground stop and the cancellation of more than 10,000 flights according to FlightAware. The FAA has said the Notam system "continues to remain operational and stable" today. For ops to/within the US today, keep an eye on the latest FAA Advisories here.

The US grounded all flights on the morning of Jan 11, due to a glitch with the Notam system.

Here's the ATCSCC advisory giving the order:

ATCSCC Advisory	
ATCSCC ADVZY 028 DCC 01/11/2023 NATIONWIDE GROUND STOP	
MESSAGE:	EVENT TIME: 11/1220 - 1430 GROUND STOP ALL FLIGHTS / ALL DESTINATIONS EXCLUDES MILITARY AC AND MEDEVAC FLIGHTS DESTINATION AIRPORT; ALL FACILITIES INCLUDED: ALL GROUND STOP PERIOD: UNTIL 1430Z REASON: EQUIPMENT OUTAGE REMARKS: US NOTAMS SYSTEM DOWN
EFFECTIVE TIME:	111221 - 111500
SIGNATURE:	23/01/11 12:21

The Notam system failed at 2028 UTC on Jan 10, after which time no new Notams or amendments were processed.

The FAA lifted the ground stop shortly before 9am EST on Jan 11, saying that “normal air traffic operations are resuming gradually”. Later that night, they announced that the outage was **likely due to a software issue**.

Update 6: We are continuing a thorough review to determine the root cause of the Notice to Air Missions (NOTAM) system outage. Our preliminary work has traced the outage to a damaged database file. At this time, there is no evidence of a cyber attack. (1/2)

— The FAA ✈ (@FAANews) January 11, 2023

Springer's Final Thought

We all hate Notams.

Let's qualify that. *A significant number of pilots and dispatchers have told us that they are concerned about Notams, and would like to see an improved system.*

The FAA has said last week's meltdown was due to a damaged database file. Our focus has never really been on the software on the back-end of the Notam system, but on the impact of Notams on pilots and operators.

We've been campaigning for changes to the current Notam system for a long time – **not because the system might crash, but because of the daily impact to pilots who are forced to use an archaic briefing system from the 1920's that causes critical flight information to be missed.**

If you've read the news today about this mysterious “Notam system” causing widespread travel misery, and you want to learn more about this ongoing issue, you can start your adventure here.