



International Civil Aviation Organization

**The Fourth Meeting of the Asia/Pacific ICAO Flight Plan and ATS Messages
Implementation Task Force (FPL&AM/TF/4)**

Bangkok, Thailand, 2 – 3 June 2011

Agenda Item 5: Aspects of implementation in Asia/Pacific region

Use of the new Reasons for Special Handling

(Presented by the United States of America)

SUMMARY

This paper presents several questions regarding use of “Reasons for Special Handling”.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Items under “Reasons for Special Handling” (STS/) in the Amendment are described, but their intended use is not fully defined. There is a risk that States may interpret these differently, and provide inconsistent guidance to filers. In the worst case Air Traffic Control personnel may make incorrect decisions based on the information filed.
- 1.2 Additionally, there is no crisp definition of what a “Reason for Special Handling” is. This is important in light of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) interpretation that all reasons for special handling not in STS/ must be in RMK/.

2. DISCUSSION

ATFMX

- 2.1 Filing ATFMX is supposed to mean that the flight is exempt from Air Traffic Flow Measures (ATFM) by “the appropriate ATS authority”. The problem is that for a flight through several FIRs, it is impossible to know whose ATFM measures the flight is exempt from. It is similar to the existing problems (pre Amendment 1) with the definition of “R” in Field 10a.
- 2.2 At this time the United States will not use this indicator for any operations.

FLTCK, HAZMAT

- 2.3 In the United States there are existing procedures for Flight Check flights and for flights carrying hazardous materials. In each case, specific information relevant to that flight may be filed. The new indicators do not allow for any additional information to be filed.
- 2.4 It appears that we may have to require the filing of redundant information in RMK/ in order to support all required filed information.

MARSA

- 2.5 In the United States there are procedures for military flights to assume responsibility for separation (MARSA). These procedures do not require filing of flight plan information, although the intention to declare MARSA is sometimes filed in Remarks.
- 2.6 The Amendment is ambiguous in that it could be interpreted as an item to file when a military flight intends to declare MARSA at some point in the flight. Alternatively, it could be interpreted as meaning that MARSA has been declared, in which case only an Air Traffic Controller should enter the information.
- 2.7 The United States plans to interpret MARSA as an intention to declare MARSA at some point, but not an indication of the flights status and would like to establish whether all countries that plan to use this feature have the same interpretation.

NONRVSM

- 2.8 The United States has current procedures that allow certain classes of Non-RVSM aircraft to fly in RVSM airspace. These aircraft are instructed to file APVD NONRVSM to indicate they have completed coordination requirements and are approved for Non-RVSM operations in RVSM airspace.
- 2.9 The new STS/ item NONRVSM indicates that this should be filed when a Non-RVSM flight intends to operate in RVSM airspace; it does not address approval.
- 2.10 The United States plans to interpret STS/NONRVSM as a request for a Non-RVSM flight to operate in RVSM airspace; not an approval.

Definition of “Reason for Special Handling”

- 2.11 Many items in the flight plan, e.g. equipment and capability in Field 10, influence how a flight is handled by ATC. For example, flights without a transponder are handled differently from those with a transponder, and flights with certain navigation capability may receive different routing from those without that capability. These differences do not constitute “special handling”.
- 2.12 Special handling would therefore appear to reflect (1) Procedures that apply to only a special class of flights and (2) The need for some type of operational priority by those flights.
- 2.13 Equating special handling with operational priority would provide a means to distinguish information filed to receive different services that do not constitute “special handling”.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

- 3.1 The meeting is invited to
 - a) Note the information provided, and
 - b) Identify any inconsistent interpretations or uses of the Reasons for Special Handling.

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