International Civil Aviation Organization

FIRST MEETING OF THE ASIA/PACIFIC METEOROLOGICAL ADVISORIES AND WARNINGS IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE (METWARN/1 TF/1)

Bangkok, Thailand, 23 – 25 March 2011

Agenda Item Dual c): Review SIGMET Guide

REVIEW UPDATES TO THE SIGMET GUIDE

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

SUMMARY

This paper provides proposed updates to the SIGMET Guide and invites the meeting to make additional proposals.

This paper relates to:

Strategic Objectives:
A. Safety
C. Sustainability

Global Plan Initiatives:
GPI-18 Aeronautical Information
GPI-19 Meteorological Systems

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Asia/Pacific Regional SIGMET Guide was last amended in September 2010 which mainly included changes associated with Amendment 75 to Annex 3, such as what the time represents of a forecasted element (FCST AT), and how a State should treat moderate-severe reports of icing or turbulence. In addition, the FASID Tables MET 1B, 3A, and 3B associated with amendment proposal APAC 09/21 (MET) were included (though not officially approved yet, they were marked as they were in the amendment proposal). To keep in line with the yearly cycle of updates as proposed with the ROBEX Handbook, the SIGMET Guide should also be examined for possible updates annually. The SIGMET Guide can be accessed at http://www.bangkok.icao.int/edocs/sigmet_guide4.pdf.

2. PROPOSED SIGMET GUIDE UPDATES

2.1 There is one item from the CNS/MET SG/14 meeting that the group should consider and that is the use of a unique SIGMET designator (Z99) for SIGMET tests. The purpose of using this designation is to avoid the need for reissuing a real SIGMET after the test SIGMET is issued.

Currently, the original SIGMET is reissued with a new time and designator using the original attributes after the test SIGMET is issued. However, the weather event and/or geographical extent during the time elapsed from the issuance of the real SIGMET to the issuance of the test SIGMET may have changed. Therefore, the issuance of the original SIGMET after the test SIGMET may be misleading. Section 3.2.3 of Appendix J to the SIGMET Guide is provided in the **Attachment** for the meeting to review and comment.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to

a) review the SIGMET Guide, and in particular Appendix J with reference to the possible use of a unique designator for SIGMET tests, and

b) provide necessary changes to be included in the next amendment.

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3.2.2 Test SIGMET

3.2.2.1 The MWOs should issue a TEST SIGMET during the 10-minute period between **0200 and 0210 UTC** (if not otherwise advised by the Regional Office) on the date agreed for the test.

3.2.2.2 The WMO heading and the first line of the SIGMET bulletin should be valid ones, while the body of the message should contain an explanatory text on the tests as shown on pages J-7 and J-8. The period of validity of the TEST SIGMET should be very short, e.g., 10 minutes.

3.2.3 Special procedure to avoid overwriting of a valid SIGMET

3.2.3.1 It is vital to ensure that TEST SIGMET is not confused with operational SIGMET and avoid overwriting a valid operational SIGMET in an automated system. In order to prevent this it is suggested that:

a) If at the time of the SIGMET test NO SIGMET is current for the FIR, the number of the Test SIGMET should follow the normal numbering sequence; e.g. if the last "normal" SIGMET before the test was number "03", the TEST SIGMET should be number "04", and the first "normal" SIGMET after the test should be number "05".

b) If a SIGMET is VALID at the time of the test then the TEST SIGMET should be issued and the valid SIGMET should be repeated immediately after the TEST SIGMET. E.g., if the following SIGMET is issued at 0100 on the date of the test:

WSAU01 YBRF 290100
YBBB SIGMET 1 VALID 290100/290500 YBRF-
BRISBANE FIR SEV TURB FCST AT 0100Z WI ....=

A SIGMET test is scheduled for 0200 UTC on the 29th. The TEST SIGMET is issued with the next consecutive sequence number as follows:

WSAU01 YBRF 290200
YBBB SIGMET 2 VALID 290200/290210 YBRF-
TEST SIGMET PLEASE DISREGARD=

The original SIGMET is then retransmitted immediately after this with the next consecutive sequence number and the validity period is amended accordingly:

WSAU01 YBRF 290200
YBBB SIGMET 3 VALID 290200/290500
BRISBANE FIR SEV TURB FCST AT 0200Z WI ... =

c) If b) is not selected due to safety concerns and no SIGMET test message issued due to active SIGMET, please notify the SIGMET tests focal points below and the ICAO Regional Office, Bangkok

Note that the CNS/MET SG/14 considered changing part b) such that a unique SIGMET number be used (that would not typically be used) to eliminate the need for reissuing SIGMET after a SIGMET test message is issued. This will be further

investigated during 2010/2011 and discussed at the OPMET/M TF/9 meeting. ***Therefore, for this test (November 2010), please follow the guidelines a) through c) above.***

3.3 Common procedures

3.3.1 The test date and time

3.3.1.1 ICAO Regional Office will set a date and time for each SIGMET test after consultation with the participating VAACs, TCACs and RODBs. The information about the agreed date and time will be sent to all States concerned by a State letter and copied to the States' SIGMET Tests Focal Points.

3.3.1.2 Tests for different types of SIGMET should preferably be conducted on separate dates.

3.3.1.3 At least two SIGMET tests per year should be conducted.

3.3.2 Dissemination of test SIGMETs and advisories

3.3.2.1 All TEST SIGMETs and TC/VA advisories should be sent to the five ASIA/PAC RODBs. The AFTN addresses to be used by the MWOs, TCACs and VAACs are as follows:

Bangkok	VTBBYPYX
Brisbane	YBBBYPYX
Nadi	NFZZRFXX
Singapore	WSZZYPYM
Tokyo	RJTDYPYX

Note: To avoid duplicate advisories being counted in the TC and VA SIGMET test analysis, only FK and FV messages received by AFTN (not GTS and WAFS) are counted in the analysis.

3.3.2.2 RODB/IROG Singapore will relay the test bulletins to the corresponding IROG in the European Region where additional monitoring of those bulletins will be performed.

3.3.2.3 SIGMET tests should be terminated within 2 hours of the test start time (from 0200 to 0400 UTC).

3.3.3 Coordination with the ATS units

3.3.3.1 MWOs should inform the associated ATS units of the forthcoming SIGMET tests by a suitable advanced notice.

3.4 Processing of the test messages and results

3.4.1 The RODBs should file all incoming TEST advisories and SIGMETs and perform an analysis of the availability, timeliness of arrival and the correctness of the WMO bulletin headings. A SIGMET TEST Summary Table, as shown on page J-9, should be prepared by each RODB and sent to the Rapporteur of the VA/TC Implementation TF, and the contact given for WS test SIGMET in section 3.4.3, with a copy to the ICAO Bangkok Regional Office.