



International Civil Aviation Organization

INFORMATION PAPER

EIGHTH MEETING OF THE ASIA/PACIFIC METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES WORKING GROUP (MET/S WG/8)

Bangkok, Thailand, 21 – 23 March 2018

Agenda Item 3: Planning and implementation of meteorological services

PROVISION OF 3-HOURLY TAF FOR VHHH

(Presented by Hong Kong, China)

SUMMARY

Hong Kong, China plans to increase the frequency of TAF issuance for the Hong Kong International Airport (VHHH) from 6 hourly intervals to 3 hourly intervals in the second half of 2018. The paper informs the meeting of its plan.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Hong Kong, China issues routine TAF valid for 30 hours at 6 hourly intervals. From time to time, in the annual customer surveys, airline pilots requested to bring back the short 9 hours TAF despite ICAO Annex 3 requirement was for not more than one TAF to be valid at an aerodrome at any given time.

ICAO Annex 3 Chapter 6:

6.2.7 When issuing TAF, aerodrome meteorological offices shall ensure that not more than one TAF is valid at an aerodrome at any given time.

1.2 To meet the needs of airline pilots while complying with ICAO Standards, this paper informs the meeting of our plan to provide TAF at 3 hourly intervals.

1.3 The proposed move to have 3 hourly update of TAF for VHHH has been discussed and agreed locally with airlines representatives and the Civil Aviation Department (ATS service). To communicate the availability of 3 hourly TAF to users before implementation, local agreement and Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) will be updated. It was tentatively planned that the provision of 3 hourly TAF for VHHH will come to effect in the second half of 2018.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 While aviation forecasters would keep the TAFs under continuous review and issue amend TAF should the weather evolution is expected to change in accordance with ICAO Annex 3 clause 6.2.4, the issuance of amend TAF is subject to the amendment criteria stipulated in ICAO Annex 3 Appendix 5. The criteria however might not be sufficient to meet the needs of a high density airport. E.g. a wind direction change of 60 degrees when the wind speed is 10 knot or more would lead to a significant difference in the head wind. Furthermore, aviation forecasters might tend to wait for more data and the next update, especially if the change is expected to occur after the next routine issue time.

2.2 Having TAF issued every 3 hours could better reflect the expected evolution of weather condition. Even for situations where the existing TAF is still valid, updating the TAF routinely at intermediate synoptic hours (i.e. 03/09/15/21Z) can still provide the users with the latest aerodrome forecast based on more recent information.

2.3 To meet users' need of early preparedness, provision of 3 hourly updated TAF is considered a viable solution despite the recommended practice of ICAO Annex 3 was for TAF valid for 12 to 30 hours to be issued every 6 hours.

ICAO Annex 3 Chapter 6:

6.2.6 Recommendation. — The period of validity of a routine TAF should be not less than 6 hours and not more than 30 hours; the period of validity should be determined by regional air navigation agreement. Routine TAF valid for less than 12 hours should be issued every 3 hours and those valid for 12 to 30 hours should be issued every 6 hours.

2.4 Hong Kong, China is not the first to consider introduction of 3-hourly updated TAFs. Examination of TAF issued by other meteorological services revealed two practises:

- a) Issue a routine AMD TAF valid for 27 hours at the intermediate synoptic hours (e.g. SFO, San Francisco International Airport);
- b) Issue a routine TAF valid for 30 hours at the intermediate synoptic hours (e.g. PKC, Yelisovo Airport)

Having considered the merits of the two different implementations, for VHHH, issuance of a full 30 hour TAF at the intermediate synoptic hours is preferred to respect the TAF amendment criteria.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 Note the information contained in this paper.
