



International Civil Aviation Organization

MIDANPIRG Air Traffic Management Sub-Group

Eighth Meeting (ATM SG/8)
(Amman, Jordan, 7 – 10 November 2022)

Agenda Item 8: Any other Business

CALLSIGN CONFUSION – ALPHANUMERIC CALL SIGN

(Presented by IATA)

SUMMARY

The aim of this paper is to address regional Call Sign Confusion/Similarity as it relates to commercial flights.

Action by the meeting is at paragraph 3.

REFERENCE(S)

- RASG-MID SAFETY ADVISORY – 04
- ICAO State Letter Ref.: AN 6/34-16/173
- MIDANPIRG/15 Report
- MIDANPIRG Steering Group/ 4
- MIDANPIRG/16 Report
- MIDANPIRG/17 Report
- ATM SG 5

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The use of similar call signs by aircraft operating in the same area and on the same radio frequency has the potential to cause flight safety incidents, with potential for hearback/readback errors leading to level busts, and runway incursions, as well as general confusion and increased workload for both pilots and controllers.

1.2 The risk of an aircraft taking and acting on a clearance intended for another aircraft due to call sign confusion is a common occurrence.

1.3 Studies have indicated to eliminate or reduce callsign confusion is through the application of Alphanumeric Call Signs.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Call Sign Similarity and confusion have been identified as a safety issue in the MID Region by the Second Meeting of the Middle East Regional Aviation Safety Group (RASG-MID/2), November 2012.

2.2 The MIDANPIRG Steering Group/4 meeting recognized that many mitigation measures could be investigated to eliminate the risks associated with the call sign confusion, and agreed to the following conclusion:

- Conclusion 4/22 invited States that had not yet done so to take necessary measures

to comply with ICAO Annex 10 and Doc 4444 provisions related to the acceptance of the alphanumeric call signs

2.3 RASG-MID/4 meeting endorsed the RASG-MID Safety Advisory on Guidance material related to callsign similarity, which provides a set of guidelines and similarity rules for use by airline operators and air traffic controllers. The RASG Safety Advisory RSA-04 was issued by the ICAO MID Regional Office through State Letter Ref.: ME 4-15/152 dated 26 May 2015.

2.4 MIDANPIRG 15, Conclusion 15/2: CALL SIGN SIMILARITY PROVISIONS AND GUIDELINES That, urged States to:

- take necessary measures to ensure that their Aircraft Operators (AOs) implement a mechanism to de-conflict call similarity between the same AO flights and thereafter between their local AOs and other Middle East AOs flights
- report call sign similarity/confusion cases using the template at Appendix 4.1C; and c) develop a simplified mechanism to trigger the reporting of call sign similarity/confusion by ATCOs

2.5 ICAO issued State Letter Ref.: AN 6/34-16/173 dated 26 June 2016, requesting States to implement MIDANPIRG Conclusion 15/2 and report call sign similarity/confusion cases to ICAO and IATA.

2.6 MIDANPIRG 17/RASG 7 meeting, urged States to take necessary actions to ensure that their relevant authorities, including the airport operators, accept ANCS and to follow up with their air operators to implement the procedures for the de-conflicting of call sign similarities in coordination with the CSC Initiative Team.

2.7 Airlines have experienced challenges when filing Flight Plans with alpha Numerics in State(s) where they were previously approved. With an individual State or airport denial, the airline will be unable to use the callsign for the entirety of the flight.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) undertake a survey for MID Region States to ascertain the status of capability to accept/process alphanumeric call signs for scheduled airline operations;
- c) support the Alphanumeric Callsign initiatives through acceptance of coordinated trials to full implementation per State across the entire region;
- d) invite States to brief their internal teams responsible for the provision of flight plan approval on acceptance or otherwise of Alpha Numerics within the State; and
- e) report Call Sign Similarity to the following email addresses: MIDCSC@icao.int and IATA_AME@IATA.ORG with the subject header: Callsign Conflict | Flights ID | xxxx FIR.

- END -