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North American, Central American and Caribbean Office

INFORMATION PAPER

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**Eighth North American, Central American and Caribbean Working Group Meeting (NACC/WG/8)**  
Mexico City, 29 August - 1 September 2023

- Agenda Item 3: Follow-up of NACC/WG 2022-2023 Action Plan**  
**3.6 NACC/WG progress in operations: AO, Air Traffic Management (ATM), Search and Rescue (SAR), ATFM and Aerodromes and Ground Aids (AGA)**

**THE FAA'S IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE 23 NM LATERAL SEPARATION STANDARD**

(Presented by United States)

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	
Introduction of the 23 NM lateral separation standard in the FAA's Oceanic Control Areas (OCAs) will achieve harmonization with States providing air traffic services where the 23 NM lateral separation standard is or will be implemented in an adjacent FIR by effecting efficient and handoff of aircraft transiting between adjacent air traffic control centers.	
<i>Strategic Objectives:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safety</li><li>• Air Navigation Capacity and Efficiency</li><li>• Economic Development of Air Transport</li><li>• Environmental Protection</li></ul>
<i>References:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ICAO Doc 4444, Procedures for Navigation Services – Air Traffic Management (PANS-ATM)</li></ul>

**1. Introduction**

1.1 In November 2016, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) published the sixteenth edition of the ICAO Doc 4444, Procedures for Navigation Services – Air Traffic Management (PANS-ATM). The amendments included the addition of the performance-based 23 NM lateral separation standard. The safety benefit “enable[s] States to ensure that safe application of air traffic management (ATM) operations predicated on communication and/or surveillance performance to eligible operators and that non-compliance is detected and corrected in a timely manner” (ICAO State letter AN 11/1.3.29-16/12, 8 April 2016).

1.2 A 23 NM lateral separation standard will be applied at or above the floor of FAA controlled airspace in the three Oceanic OCA/FIRs, excluding the Arctic.

1.3 In U.S. oceanic airspace, performance-based separation standards are enabled using the Advanced Technologies and Oceanic Procedures (ATOP) system, an upgradable flight data processing system used by the FAA to support oceanic air traffic control.

## 2. Discussion

2.1 The PBCS concept characterizes the communication and surveillance capability, through required communication performance (RCP) and required surveillance performance (RSP) specifications associated with application of reduced lateral and longitudinal separation standards.

2.2 Performance-based separation standards, including 23 NM lateral, will only be authorized for turbojet aircraft that are certified and approved for Reduced Vertical Separation Minima (RVSM); relevant Required Navigational Performance (RNP); Automatic Dependent Surveillance Contract (ADS-C) the appropriate RSP and RCP approvals; and Controller Pilot Data Link Communication (CPDLC). Aircraft not authorized for RCP240 and RSP180, and those not communicating with ADS-C and CPDLC will still be allowed to fly within the OCAs. The 23 NM lateral separation standard will not be applied between pairs of such aircraft nor between pairs in which only one aircraft is approved for application of the 23 NM standard.

2.3 The appropriate codes for PBCS certification in the ICAO flight plan inform the FAA's oceanic automation system, ATOP, that an aircraft is approved and eligible for the application of the 23 NM lateral separation standard.

2.4 As specified by ICAO Doc 4444, for a minimum spacing between tracks of 23 NM, a navigational performance of RNP4 or RNP2 is prescribed. The communication system shall satisfy RCP240 and the surveillance system shall satisfy RSP180.

2.5 The ATOP system will only allow controllers to apply reduced separation to aircraft that are logged on and indicate proper equipage in their flight plan. A logon attempt will be rejected by the New York ATOP system, if the ICAO flight plan does not contain at least one of the J-codes indicating satellite communications (SATCOM) capability (J5 or J7).

2.6 To be eligible for application of the 23 NM lateral separation standard, the most recently received ADS position report for the flight, must contain a Figure of Merit (FOM) that meets or exceeds the adapted minimum RNP4 threshold.

2.7 The following should be noted in association with implementation of the 23 NM lateral standard:

- a) No changes resulting from this implementation will be required by adjacent air traffic service providers.
- b) No changes resulting from this implementation will be required by aircraft operating in airspace adjacent to the FAA oceanic OCAs.

2.8 Implementation of the 23 NM Lateral Separation will be available after the latest ATOP update scheduled for release in October of 2023.