



MEETING OF THE METEOROLOGY PANEL (METP) METEOROLOGICAL OPERATIONS GROUP (MOG)

SECOND MEETING

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 16 to 19 April 2016

Agenda Item 5: Identification of New and Additional Tasks

Aircraft reporting NO ASH

(Presented by IATA)

SUMMARY

The value of Flight Crew reporting NO ASH while in close proximity to areas where ash is forecast has been under discussion for a long time. There is now consensus amongst operators and VAAC's that the reporting of NO ASH can be just as important as the reporting of ash via Special Air-report. This IP suggests one way with which to increase the value and therefore the benefit to operators and Air Traffic Control when Flight Crew report NO ASH

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The reporting by Flight Crew of observed NO ASH when in close proximity to areas of forecast volcanic ash has been recognised as having merit for the evidence based risk assessment. It is advocated and practiced by a number of operators but not in an organised or collaborative way. It is also accepted that the information received can be limited to what the Flight Crew observe given their height, visibility and conditions at the time

1.2 The reporting of NIL TURBULENCE and NIL ICING has proven invaluable as a way to determine the dynamic changes in the volumetric extents of these two aviation hazards, to assist the WAFCs with the verification of their forecasts of these phenomena, and to provide input to research organizations which develop the models for turbulence and icing.

1.3 There is currently no provision in ICAO Annex 3 or 11 for the reporting of NO ASH by Special Air Report. In this instance the reporting of NO ASH (as opposed to a report of visible ash) may have less value for Air Traffic Control (ATC) than the operators who are responsible for flight planning in areas of volcanic ash and for Air Traffic Managers.

2. **DISCUSSION**

2.1 Given NO ASH is not reported by Special Air Report, it is the decision of operators to communicate the need to Flight Crew for this information and then include as part of their planning for operation in areas of volcanic ash

2.2 Many, if not most operators have the ability to receive Flight Crew reports passed to the Airline Operations Centre (AOC) either by ACARS or SatCom/HF/VHF voice

2.3 The reporting of NO ASH is currently problematic in that insufficient operators practice it and of those who do, some either do not use the information properly, have insufficient reports to be used intelligently or do not forward to the appropriate VAAC

2.4 The operational culture of reporting NO ASH needs to be adopted by operators and instilled in their procedures as an integral part of their volcanic ash planning

2.5 Reports of NO ASH received by an individual AOC has limited value so these reports must be forwarded immediately to the appropriate VAAC

2.6 The information associated with the NO ASH report is just as important as reports of ASH because knowing these conditions can determine the value of the information. The information received should include: flight level, heading, the visible arc in degrees and weather conditions

2.7 The IATA proposal is for this information to be received by the AOC, timely forwarded to the VAAC and given sufficient reports, the VAAC can form a grid of information with which will assist them to more accurately determine the veracity of the ash forecast. It will also assist in identifying areas in the grid where more information may be needed

2.8 The VAAC will add value by improving confidence in the VAA for operators to use in their evidence based risk assessment

2.9 This must be a global initiative and feature in ICAO Doc 9974 Flight Safety and Volcanic Ash. Concurrently, the VAAC Best Practices Group should develop the means by which all VAACs will use the information received in a speedy and intelligent way adding benefit for both the operators and ATC

3. **CONCLUSION**

3.1 In view of the foregoing the group is invited to consider the following conclusion:

3.2 An ad hoc group be formed to consider this proposal, decide if appropriate and achievable and if so, put forward an implementation plan for consideration

4. **ACTION BY THE METP-WG/MOG VOLCANIC ASH WORK STREAM**

4.1 The METP-WG/MOG Volcanic Ash Work Stream is invited to:

a) Note the information in the Study Note, and

- b) Agree on an action for the group's consideration