



ICAO

*International Civil Aviation Organization*

**Fifteenth Meeting of the ICAO Aeronautical Information Services – Aeronautical Information Management Implementation Task Force (AAITF/15)**

Video Teleconference, 01 – 05 June 2020

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**Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business**

**COVID-19 CONTINGENCY NOTAMS**

(Presented by the Secretariat)

**SUMMARY**

This paper presents information on content of NOTAMs that may be issued to promulgate information on COVID-19-related State entry requirements, aerodrome availability and ATS contingency operations.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in some cases of less than optimal promulgation of operational information relating to entry requirements and aerodrome availability. The promulgation of NOTAM for ATS contingency operations has also been a matter of regional discussion.

**2. DISCUSSION**

Relevant ICAO Provisions for NOTAMs

2.1 Annex 15 Aeronautical Information Services States:

6.3.2.3 A NOTAM shall be originated and issued concerning the following information:

a) establishment, closure or significant changes in operation of aerodrome(s) or heliport(s) or runways;

b) establishment, withdrawal or significant changes in operation of aeronautical services (aerodromes, AIS, ATS, communications, navigation and surveillance (CNS), meteorology (MET), search and rescue (SAR), etc.);

...

u) outbreaks of epidemics necessitating changes in notified requirements for inoculations and quarantine measures; and

...

z) implementation of short-term contingency measures in cases of disruption, or partial disruption, of ATS and related supporting services.

6.3.2.3 The following information shall not be notified by NOTAM:

k) limitations to airport facilities or general services with no operational impact;

l) national regulations not affecting general aviation;

m) announcements or warnings about possible/potential limitations, without any operational impact.

ICAO Provisions for Inclusion of Entry, Transit and Departure Information in AIP

2.2 ICAO Doc 10066 *Procedures for Air Navigation Services – Aeronautical Information Management* (PANS-AIM) Appendix 2 specifies the arrangement of information in Aeronautical Information Publications (AIP). It specifies that AIP GEN 1 (National Regulations and Requirements) shall include sub-sections as follows:

**GEN 1.2 – Entry, transit and departure of aircraft** – Regulations and requirements for advance notification and applications for permission concerning entry, transit and departure of aircraft on international flights;

**GEN 1.3 – Entry, transit and departure of passengers and crew** – Regulations (including customs, immigration and quarantine, and requirements for advance notification and applications for permission) concerning entry, transit and departure of non-immigrant passengers and crew; and

**GEN 1.4 – Entry, transit and departure of cargo** – Regulations (including customs, and requirements for advance notification and applications for permission) concerning entry, transit and departure of cargo.

2.3 There have been a number of cases of States making public declarations of COVID-19 pandemic-related changes to requirements for entry of persons (entry disallowed, changed quarantine requirements, etc.) which have been published on government websites or in other government instruments but were not also promulgated by NOTAM.

2.4 Conversely, there have also been instances of NOTAMs being issued to promulgate government declarations that do not have any operational impact.

2.5 Noting the Annex 15 and PANS-AIM provisions, and also noting that aeronautical information products published by the State AIS, including NOTAM, are the primary source of operational information for flight planning, the meeting is reminded that all cases of operationally significant changes to the information that is required to be specified in AIP GEN 1.2, GEN 1.3 and/or GEN 1.4 shall be promulgated by NOTAM. In cases where the condition promulgated in NOTAM is temporary, but is planned or expected to exceed three months, AIP Supplements (AIP SUP) should be issued to replace related NOTAMs.

NOTAMs Relating to Aerodrome Availability and/or ATS Contingency Operations.

2.6 In response to global concerns about the quality of NOTAMs promulgating information on COVID-19-related aerodrome and/or ATS contingency operations, ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office issued State Letter AP086/20 (ATM) on 26 March 2020 (**Attachment A**). The State Letter discussed limited availability or non-availability of aerodromes, and contingency Air Traffic Management. It also included guidance, in the form of NOTAM templates, on items of information that should be considered for inclusion in NOTAMs promulgating information on operational limitations at aerodromes, or on Air Traffic Services (ATS) contingency operations.

2.7 Some aerodrome NOTAMs originated by Asia/Pacific Administrations have indicated that, while the aerodrome is not available for scheduled passenger flights, it may available for aircraft in a state of emergency, cargo flights, technical stops/landings without disembarking passengers, humanitarian/medevac/repatriation flights, and/or United Nations flights. However, several such NOTAMs also include the requirement for prior permission from the Civil Aviation Authority. APAC Administrations, and their International NOTAM Offices (NOFs), should note that, in the case of aircraft in a state of emergency, obtaining prior permission from the CAA is not feasible. Such NOTAMs should make a clear distinction between the prior permission requirements for normal operations, and those in a state of emergency.

### **3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper;
- b) ensure that all cases of changes to entry requirements specified in AIP GEN 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 that have an operational impact are promulgated by NOTAM or, where necessary, AIP SUP;
- c) Consider using the NOTAM templates provided in Attachment A; and
- d) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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Ref.: T 3/4.9, T 3/4.14, T 3/15.1 – AP086/20 (ATM)

26 March 2020

**Subject:** ATM and Aerodrome COVID-19 Contingency  
Response and Information Promulgation

**Actions:** 1) Review ATM and aerodrome COVID-19-  
related contingency NOTAMs; and  
2) Provide copies of current and future COVID-  
19-related NOTAMs to ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional  
Office.

Sir/Madam,

I wish to draw to your attention matters relating to Air Traffic Management (ATM) and aerodrome contingency operations, and the promulgation of related information, brought about by State response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, I also refer to ICAO State Letter AN 13/35 – 20/47, dated 20 March 2020 (**Attachment A**)

Limited Availability or Non-Availability of Aerodromes

While recognizing the need of States to take action to exclude or limit pandemic spread, it is also important that international aerodromes included among the regional requirements in the Asia/Pacific Air Navigation Plan Volume II Part II *Aerodromes/Aerodrome Operations* remain available for, as a minimum, in-flight emergency, technical stop, cargo, humanitarian, medical evacuation, repatriation and United Nations purposes. In that regard, I urge all Asia/Pacific Administrations to review any COVID-19 restrictions on operations at international aerodromes, and make necessary adjustments to ensure their availability for such limited operations.

**Attachment B** provides guidance on items that should be considered in NOTAMs promulgating information on operational limitations at aerodromes.

In that regard, I request that your State forwards copies of any current and future NOTAMs promulgated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by email to the ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office ([apac@icao.int](mailto:apac@icao.int)) and copy to [ssummer@icao.int](mailto:ssummer@icao.int).

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- 2 -

### Contingency Air Traffic Management

States are obliged to provide Air Traffic Services in accordance with the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the Regional Air Navigation Plan and Regional Supplementary Procedures. However, recognizing that Air Traffic Services (ATS) may also be impacted by the spread of the pandemic virus among key operational personnel, the need for social distancing and other mitigation measures in operational ATS facilities, and State-imposed restrictions on the movement and association of people, States should ensure that the continuance of air traffic services within the area of responsibility of the State is supported, where necessary, by robust contingency plans. Prior to implementation, ATM contingency plans should be coordinated as necessary with the authorities responsible for adjacent airspace, and promulgated by NOTAM.

Guidance on ATM contingency planning is available in the Asia/Pacific Regional ATM Contingency Plan, available on the ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office eDocuments web-page at <https://www.icao.int/APAC/Pages/eDocs.aspx>.

**Attachment B** also provides guidance on items that should be considered for inclusion in NOTAMs regarding ATC contingency operations, together with a sample NOTAM that may be used as a template. I further request that any NOTAMs promulgated for ATM contingency operations also be forwarded to the ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office, as mentioned above.

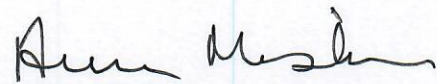
### Improved Flight Efficiencies

I also wish to mention the need for Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs) to support aircraft operators during these challenging times. The global aviation industry is currently operating under extreme cost pressures due to the substantial reduction in air traffic demand. The considerable reduction in air traffic presently operating may provide the opportunity for Air Navigation Service Providers to make further efficiencies safely available, to facilitate reduced fuel burn and, therefore, operating cost improvement.

In particular, opportunities for track-shortening through amended ATC clearances should be explored, provided they can be made available within current procedures, ATC coordination agreements and safety management processes. Examples include User-Preferred Routing (UPR) or direct tracking for flights operating within surveillance and direct voice communications coverage, or for flights approved for the appropriate Required Navigation Performance (RNP), Required Communications Performance (RCP) and Required Surveillance Performance (RSP) in appropriately enabled airspace.

The ICAO Asia/Pacific Regional Office remains available to provide any advice and assistance requested by States, on these or any other aviation matters.

Yours Sincerely,

  
Arun Mishra  
Regional Director

### **Enclosures:**

A – ICAO State Letter AN 13/35 – 20/47

B – Guidance for COVID-19-related NOTAMs



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Ref.: AN 13/35-20/47

20 March 2020

**Subject:** Implementation of contingency arrangements  
to reduce the risks of the spread of COVID-19

**Action required:** a) Review existing or planned air  
traffic services contingency arrangements; b) Note the  
importance of avoiding undue or inadvertent restrictions

Sir/Madam,

1. I have the honour to refer to the urgent need to reduce the risks of the spread of COVID-19 by air transport and to protect the health of air travellers and aviation personnel. In this respect, it has come to my attention that a few notices to airmen (NOTAM) do not provide sufficient information on the extent of restrictions to flight operations, the operational impact of aerodrome closures or the reduction of air traffic services.

2. In recalling the obligations of States contained in Annex 11 — *Air Traffic Services*, Section 2.32 – Contingency arrangements, concerning the development, promulgation and implementation of contingency plans, I encourage States to review all restrictions to flight operations, existing or planned, to ensure that they are appropriate, taking into account the need to facilitate operations to the extent possible.

3. Special attention should be given to the facilitation of entry, departure and transit of aircraft engaged in relief flights as per Annex 9 — *Facilitation* Standard 8.8, in light of the urgent need to ensure sustainability of the global air cargo supply chain enabling notably to maintain the availability of equipment such as ventilators, masks and other health and hygiene-related goods, which are necessary to assist in reducing the public health risk of the spread of COVID-19.

4. With these points in mind, your review should consider the provision of air traffic services (ATS) and aerodrome services to the following operations:

- a) aircraft in a state of emergency;
- b) overflights;
- c) operations related to humanitarian aid, medical and relief flights;

- 2 -

- d) alternate aerodromes identified in the flight plan (including those being used for extended diversion time operations (EDTOs));
- e) technical landings where passengers do not disembark;
- f) cargo flights; and
- g) other safety-related operations.

5. Once this review has been completed, and contingency arrangements are proven to be necessary, it is incumbent upon the air navigation services provider (ANSP) to ensure that information on exceptions such as those detailed in paragraph 4 are detailed in the subsequent promulgation of NOTAM.

6. Finally, your urgent attention is drawn to the need for contingency arrangements to manage the potential for reduced staffing across air navigation services personnel, but particularly in operational centres providing ATS and aerodrome services.

7. On any of these matters, should you require specific guidance, please contact your accredited ICAO Regional Office.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Fang Liu  
Secretary General

## ATTACHMENT B: Guidance for COVID-19-related NOTAMS

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### 1. NON-AVAILABILITY OR LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF AERODROMES

**TEMPLATE 1** provides guidance on information States should include in NOTAM restricting operations at an airport.

*Note: When planning flights, or when an in-flight emergency exists, aerodrome users will usually search for NOTAMs for the particular aerodromes of interest to their flight, whether they are destination, alternate, en-route alternate, emergency landing aerodrome, etc. A separate NOTAM should therefore be issued for each international aerodrome where non-normal restrictions are in place or planned.*

Axxxx/20 NOTAMN

Q) [FIR]/QFAXX/IV/NBO/A/000/999/ ddmm[N/S]dddmm[W/E]005

A) [AD] B) 20nnnnnnnnn C) 20nnnnnnnnn

E) AD NOT AVAILABLE [OR CLSD] DUE TO COVID-19 INFECTION PREVENTION.

THIS RESTRICTION DOES NOT AFFECT THE FOLLOWING FLIGHTS [ADD, AMEND, DELETE AS NECESSARY]:

1. ACFT IN STATE OF EMERGENCY
2. CARGO FLIGHTS
3. TECHNICAL STOP/LANDING WITHOUT DISEMBARKING PASSENGERS
4. HUMANITARIAN/MEDEVAC/REPATRIATION FLIGHTS.
5. UNITED NATIONS FLIGHTS

PERSONS ON BOARD EXCEPT CREW SHALL NOT BE PERMITTED TO DISEMBARK WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION. CREW MEMBERS MAY DISEMBARK BUT SHALL UNDERGO STRICT MANDATORY QUARANTINE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE STATE DURING THEIR ROTATION/REST PERIOD.

EXCEPT ACFT IN EMERGENCY THE EXEMPTED FLIGHTS ARE TO SEEK PRE-AUTHORISATION FROM THE [name] AUTHORITIES (details) (or IN ACCORDANCE WITH [State Name] AIP GEN 1.2).

ENR ATS IS NORMAL AND AIR OPERATORS ARE ABLE TO FILE [ICAO AERODROME LOCATION INDICATORS] AS ALTERNATE AERODROMES [or ENR AND/OR TMA ATS LIMITED. NOTAM XXXXX/20 REFERS]

## 2. ATM/AIRSPACE CONTINGENCY MEASURES

**TEMPLATE 2** provides guidance on information States should include in relevant NOTAMs for ATM/airspace contingency measures.

Axxxx/20 NOTAMN

Q) [FIR OR ICAO NATIONALITY

LETTER+XX/XXX]/QAFXX/IV/NBO/E/000/999/ddmm[N/S]dddmm[W/E]xxx

A) [FIR(S)] B) 20nnnnnnnnn C) 20nnnnnnnnn

E) COVID-19 CONTINGENCY ATS

ATS LIMITED [OR NOT AVAILABLE] IN THE [ICAO LOCATION INDICATOR FOR FIR]  
DUE TO COVID-19 AS FOLLOWS

[AIRSPACE DESCRIPTION IF NOT ALL FIR – INCLUDE DESCRIPTION OF AFFECTED ATS  
ROUTE SEGMENTS]

[ATS AVAILABLE e.g. ATC, FIS, SAR ALERTING OR LIMITED OR NIL]

[ANY RECLASSIFICATION OF AIRSPACE]

[DESCRIPTION OF AVAILABLE ATS COMMUNICATIONS SURVEILLANCE AND  
NAVIGATION SERVICES]

[DESCRIPTION OF AVAILABLE ATS ROUTES AND FLIGHT LEVELS IF ACTIVATING  
DEFINED CONTINGENCY ROUTES AND FLAS]

[COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES INCLUDING ALTERNATE UNITS/FREQUENCIES FOR  
COMMUNICATION, OR TIBA ACTIVATION AND FREQUENCY]

[PROCEDURES TO CONTACT NEXT ATS UNIT FOR ONWARD CLEARANCE]

[APPLICABLE SEPARATION MINIMUM/S]

[PILOT ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN IF A REVISED ATC CLEARANCE CANNOT BE  
OBTAINED, e.g. IN THE EVENT THAT DEVIATION FROM TRACK IS REQUIRED IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH ANNEX 2 SECTION 2.3.1 THE PROCEDURES IN ICAO DOC 4444  
PANS-ATM SECTION 5.2.3.3 APPLY]

[AIR TRAFFIC FLOW MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES AND/OR CONTACT DETAILS FOR  
AIRSPACE ENTRY COORDINATION OR AUTHORIZATION]

[ANY OTHER RELEVANT MATTER]

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