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INFORMATION PAPER

Asia and Pacific (APAC)

**Twelfth Meeting of the Meteorological Services
Working Group (MET/S WG/12)**

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Conjoint session of MET/IE SG/20 and MET/S WG/12

Agenda Item 1: Volcanic ash advisory centre (VAAC) backup tests

UPDATE TO WASHINGTON VAAC BACKUP PROCEDURES

(Presented by the United States of America)

SUMMARY

This paper presents an update on the changes to the backup procedures for the Washington VAAC.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Section 3.5.3, Chapter 3, Amendment 79 to Annex 3 - *Meteorological Service for International Air Navigation* states that “In case of interruption of the operation of a VAAC, its functions shall be carried out by another VAAC or another meteorological centre, as designated by the VAAC Provider State concerned.”

1.2 Additionally, Section 4.6.3 of the Handbook on the International Airways Volcano Watch (IAVW) - Operational Procedures and Contact List (Doc 9766) states similarly, “*In the event of interruption of operation of one VAAC, its functions should be carried out by another VAAC or another meteorological centre, as designated by the VAAC Provider State concerned. The back-up procedures agreed by the VAACs given in Appendix D should be applied in order to provide the VAAC services as needed.*”

1.3 And finally, the IAVW Handbook Appendix D states, “*The following guidelines on back-up procedures should be followed by VAACs:*

- a) a back-up site should be established;*
- b) back-up sites should have the full capability of the primary site, i.e. the ability to monitor ash dispersal, run atmospheric dispersion models, produce and distribute the volcanic ash advisory;*
- c) the back-up site should be chosen as to maximize efficiency, e.g. this will normally be at an alternative 24/7 production facility with pre-existing facilities for the VAAC capability;*
- d) back-up sites should maintain up-to-date contact lists as per the VAAC;*

*e) in the event of the back-up site becoming operational, volcanic ash advisories issued by the back-up VAAC will contain information giving the origin of the message; and
f) the back-up arrangements should be tested at least annually.*

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 November 1, 2021, the Washington VAAC changed its back-up procedures to be in better alignment with the requirements and recommendations listed in the Introduction portion of this document.

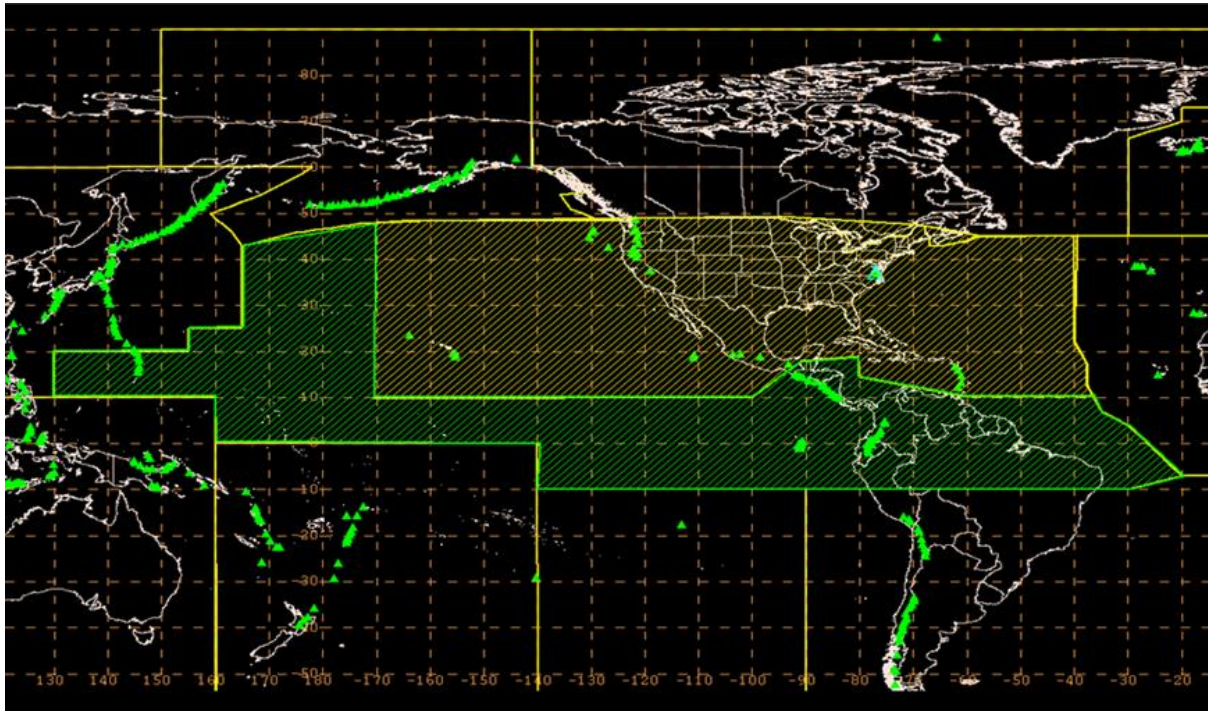
2.2 The Montreal and Darwin VAACs are now the primary back-up centres for the Washington VAAC. During back-up operations, the Montreal VAAC will monitor the U.S.(except for Alaska) , , Mexico, the Caribbean, and parts of the Pacific and the Atlantic Ocean (areas hatched in yellow in Attachment A); the Darwin VAAC will monitor Central America, northern South America including the Galapagos Islands, parts of the Pacific Ocean, and the Marianas Islands (areas hatched in green in Attachment A).

2.3 In the event that the Montreal or Darwin VAACs could not provide back-up support, the U.S. Air Force 557th Weather Wing (557WW) would take over back-up operations for the Washington VAAC following the procedures defined in Appendix D of the IAVW Handbook (*Doc 9766*).

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 Note the information contained in this paper.

APPENDIX A - Back-up Boundary Map for the Washington VAAC



- Area hatched in yellow - Montreal VAAC area of responsibility during backup of the Washington VAAC
- Area hatched in green - Darwin VAAC area of responsibility during backup of the Washington VAAC