International Civil Aviation Organization

Eighteenth Meeting of the ICAO Aeronautical Information Services − Aeronautical Information Management Implementation Task Force (AAITF/18)

Bangkok, Thailand, 19 – 23 June 2023

Agenda Item 4: AIS-AIM Updates

AIRLINE FEEDBACK ON AIS

(Presented by IATA)

SUMMARY

This paper presents a summary of airline observations of Aeronautical Information Services (AIS) issues or improvements primarily in the Asia and Pacific (APAC) region.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Each year for AAITF meeting IATA seeks feedback from airlines on issues and improvements identified with AIS quality in the region and collates into this summary paper. It includes ongoing long-term issues that are taking longer to fully rectify.

1.2 IATA supports the overall transition from AIS to AIM as soon as practicable with a focus on ensuring quality management is established prior and maintained throughout the transition.

1.3 This paper does not seek to specifically name any State for apportioning blame. History has shown that many issues are quickly resolved once identified and discussed in and outside of this forum.

2. DISCUSSION

Notifications

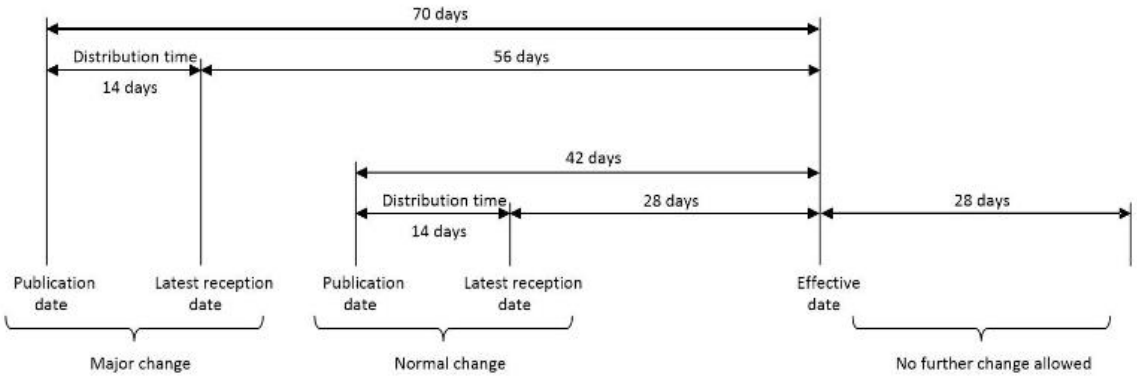
2.1 IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) requires operators to have a system to maintain updated AIP and NOTAMS. AIS, in the form of Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) and NOTAMs, is the essential source for airlines to ensure their system for the management and control of flight operations documentation meets the IOSA requirement.

2.2 Operators continue to face challenges in knowing when aeronautical publications are released, especially those related to non-AIRAC products. Observations are that non-AIRAC publications may sometimes contain actual AIRAC related data / information that includes an effective date. Examples include (next page):

NOTAM	SUP Type	Remarks
Trigger NOTAM	AIRAC SUP	Many States don't issue a Trigger NOTAM to notify when a key change or major change becomes effective and is detailed in an AIP change or AIP SUP.
No official notification procedure	Non-AIRAC SUP	1. No notification to end user. 2. States - No AIP published on website 3. Publication delivered via email, a. If not on distribution list then user won't receive b. File size, many companies limit receipt of file size c. Many States use drop-box and other cloud apps to deliver AMDTs
NOTAM Checklist	AIRAC SUP & Non AIRAC SUP	1. Issued not more than 1 month apart, therefore large time gap between checklist publications 2. Not all States list valid AIP SUPs 3. States only include "latest" publication Note: Several states in Middle East currently issue Monthly NOTAM checklist every 15 days
NOTAM Summary	N/a	How to access if continues to be published by States

2.3 Airlines have reported receiving late or nil publications for major infrastructure projects. When there will be a major event, works program or change that will affect the capacity or operations of an airspace volume or airport, adequate advance notice is required so that airline commercial teams can make the best scheduling plans for the business. Sometimes when first notification is when the AIP SUP comes out, even if it is one AIRAC prior, it can already be too late.

2.4 ICAO's Aeronautical Information Regulation and Control (AIRAC) cycle specifies that important changes should be maintained by a predetermined production schedule and clearly sets out the timeframes and dates by which those changes should be managed.



2.5 For a major change, such as an infrastructure project, the information should begin being distributed by the 'Publication date' which ideally is at least 14 days prior to the 'Latest reception date' which is two AIRAC cycles (56 days) prior to the 'Effective date' of the change. This provides up to 70 days prior warning to affected stakeholders.

2.6 There have been cases alerting of new obstacles along the departure path by other than AIS channels (eg: Airport authorities' information). In most performance tool vendors' processes, they only provide obstacle performance guidance if it is published in NOTAMs or AIP. Without it, the airline struggles to source the data which adds planning workload and can also affect payload planning.

2.7 Globally, many states continue to omit ICAO codes to identify either an aerodrome or Flight Information Region (FIR) in published AIP Supplements. Instead, commercial or local names (or related abbreviations) are used as identifiers. This results in additional workload for users to search and retrieve correct codes in order to handle the publication. We request consistent use of ICAO designators at a minimum.

2.8 Some States' providing Electronic AIPs (eAIPs) and AIS websites, while thorough and accessible, do not strictly follow AIP format and structure which can make it take longer to locate relevant information. All States are encouraged to fully adopt ICAO AIS/AIP format and structure to maintain standardisation in aeronautical information sharing.

AIS websites

2.9 eAIPs generally provide easy access to information required; however, firewalls, special browsers or other security measures can create obstacles to access. In general, eAIP is becoming more common in APAC but sometimes users cannot access the URL provided by the States. It would be preferred if States used a common browser for permitting access.

2.10 Also, website security being implemented globally to access eAIPs is proving sometimes challenging. States using QR codes, complex access requirements, and 2FA options are impacting accessibility and usability of the website. While security is of importance for aeronautical publications, too many layers of security to access the information is not recommended. Consideration should be given to simplifying access for approved users.

2.11 Some states AIP have web versions where the user has to navigate through a series of links. In circumstances where internet signal is weak, it is inefficient and time consuming. One solution proposed is to make full downloadable copies available (some already do).

2.12 There are times when States have taken their website offline without prior notification or any indication that the website is offline for maintenance or other reason. Prior notification for intentional outages is important as access to aeronautical information is critical to operators to support continuous operation.

2.13 There is a repeat of feedback regarding publications on AIS websites not being maintained. As per quality management processes, a regular review and update program is supported to ensure all available information remains accurate and timely. The feedback has also reiterated the request that AIS offices ensure sufficient qualified staff are retained to produce and amend products, particularly with respect to aviation charts.

2.14 Improvements to access AIS websites for automated checking of changes is of great value to the users. There are some States that send email notification on all AIP publications when changes take place, which users are grateful for, but it is limited to a small number of countries. Web-watcher software is still used by some to gain updates however issues with setting up connections due firewalls and site designs still exist.

2.15 In some cases, despite an AIS website existing, some States do not provide access to valid NOTAMs resulting in no alternative when NOTAMs aren't reaching intended users and/or received late.

2.16 AFTN line outages have been occurring more frequently recently between some locations, meaning sharing of NOTAMs and FPLs is disrupted. It is convenient when authorities offer NOTAM lists online as it provides a backup solution to such outages. Pakistan is a good example of having a website to offer all valid NOTAMs.

2.17 It is suggested that AIS websites include a function where a user can be added to a distribution list and notified via email anytime a new publication is posted to the website. Singapore, Vietnam, and Hong Kong China all currently employ such notifications which works well. This helps end users avoid missing updates from their respective libraries.

Aeronautical data absent from publications

2.18 Both AIP and NOTAM regularly omit PCN values from the publications. The omission is normally related to both taxiways and parking stands.

2.19 Without such information, both aircraft and airport operator's consequences include aircraft damage, surface damage resulting in costly repairs for airport operator, and taxiway closures resulting in arrival and departing traffic delays or, aircraft operator implementing unnecessary ground maneuvering limitations resulting in traffic flow disruption.

2.20 Both AIP and NOTAM regularly omit aircraft type or wingspan limitations that impact ground maneuvering and parking stands available. As a result, aircraft operators assume no limitation published and therefore conduct an operation as normal. There are occasions where maximum wingspan marking is displayed on taxiway surface but there is no related information in AIP publications.

2.21 Many airports globally do not publish intersection take-off distances and therefore traffic movement is not maximized. Both CO2 and fuel burn reduction opportunities are missed and delays due traffic congestion may occur.

2.22 In some cases, the TWR offers pilots an intersection departure, but pilots are unable to accept due lack of data to generate the take-off performance calculation.

2.23 In the following example, the TWY link was included in the aerodrome diagram, however there was no other data available in either the NOTAM, AIP AD 2.8 or the diagram. If all applicable details are in AIP or SUP, then an announcement that it is operational is sufficient.

A----/23 NOTAMR A0299/23
Q) ---- /QMXXX/IV/M/A/000/999/----N-----E005
A) ----
B) 2304281415 C) 2307312359
E) TWY LINK D10 OPEN. REF AIP ---- AD2------10 PARAGRAPH 2.20.2.1 (L) 14 JUL 2022.

2.24 Flights are sometimes cleared at lower than planned levels at particular points or early descent. ANSPs have advised that these restrictions are part of LOAs between ATC sectors and adjoining FIRs. Airlines cannot see those agreements so adjust flight planning based on experience and feedback. It would be helpful for ANSPs to publish any restrictions or requirements based on LOA between sectors or FIRs if they have impacts on airline flight planning.

Joint Military / Civil Aerodromes

2.25 Access to basic aeronautical information available for some joint Military / Civil aerodromes is often difficult. Many of these aerodromes have daily commercial civil operations.

2.26 There's a lack of documented procedure available in AIP on how operators can obtain information. Resources are wasted through multiple phone calls, emails and other means to try to secure the initial details but also to obtain amended details to maintain data validity.

Aerodrome Charting

2.27 Aerodrome data must be maintained for accuracy and updated as soon as new data is developed and approved. Updates are delayed where States still don't have the technical capability to manage the creation and updating of the data and the charts related to aerodrome.

2.28 There are occasions when the AIP text data is updated while same text in related AIP charts is not. This obviously creates error risks. All changes must be carried through fully. It may be appropriate to review the requirements for specific textual data to be included in the aerodrome diagram to potentially remove unnecessary clutter and risk of not completing an amendment.

Change Management

2.29 A schedule of regular AIP Book amendment dates should be clearly communicated and aligned to published AIRAC dates (e.g.: an AIP Book amendment every quarter or twice per year). For each amendment a summary list of the subject amendments should be made available along with historical AIP versions so that comparisons can be made.

2.30 AIS products must have logical numbering sequences for publication. There have been examples of numbering sequencing not coinciding with the order of release of the specific products.

Rocket Launches

2.31 With private space companies on the rise the issue will worsen if we don't standardize or create a global playbook on issuance/notification of a launch. It is equally as important to have effective communicating of delays or cancellations when weather conditions will not be suitable so that the restricted airspace doesn't remain active when not feasible to do so.

2.32 There remain numerous cases of rocket launch information for which no graphic of either the launch site or intended re-entry area is depicted. In most cases, the Airspace User must enter the NOTAM's Lat/Long coordinates into their flight planning systems in order to better identify the affected zones.

2.33 It should be incumbent upon the launch operators, NOTAM offices and approving government agencies to also supply a simple graphic depicting the launch and re-entry zones for easy compression by dispatchers and pilots. A convenient option to publish graphical information is on the AIS website.

2.34 The Airspace closure NOTAM should not just depict the closed airspace and timings, but it shall also provide necessary supporting information like affected airways, alternate route options, direct routings, and additional Conditional Routes made available during the launch. This is particularly important when pre-briefing crews who will be operating long haul flights either during the launch window or may be delayed into the launch window.

2.35 The affected FIRs need to ensure pre-co-ordination on airspace management plan during the launch window with neighbouring FIR than purely relying on tactical coordination. Sharing graphical depictions as detailed above will be helpful in this pre-co-ordination.

States charging for AIP subscriptions in APAC region

2.36 Currently at least five States within APAC are still charging airlines for AIP subscriptions.

2.37 AIS is a component of the cost-base used for calculating ANS charges by a State as part of the expected service delivery performance required by Airspace Users. That way, costs are transparent and negotiated under meaningful consultation as per ICAO guidelines which mitigates risk of the charges being over-inflated. Applying separate subscription costs to users is double-charging and should be ceased.

Miscellaneous

2.38 A priority in quality management should focus on ensuring standardised use of abbreviations and latitude/longitude conventions so that errors in interpretation are less likely to occur.

2.39 A common complaint is that published email addresses or contact phone numbers for AIS offices regularly go unanswered. It is imperative that States maintain accurate information for contacting AIS offices and ensure that response times are within acceptable parameters.

2.40 It is proposed that the region has a discussion on the possibility of a central AIS repository. To maintain recency, it would require a single administrator which is a difficult challenge in our region due absence of a single entity. Feedback from airlines suggests the Eurocontrol AIP website, currently providing access to 47 AIPS in e-AIP format, is a good benchmark as the Eurocontrol AIPs all conform to the same format.

Conclusion

2.41 Airspace Users appreciate the ongoing efforts by States to improve the quality and scope of AIS. IATA member airlines will continue to provide feedback to individual service providers and into forums such as this one as past history has shown good communication between all parties has been a successful catalyst for rapidly resolving issues and supporting continued improvement.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) note the information contained in this paper; and

b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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