International Civil Aviation Organization

WORKING PAPER (FL/03)

ICAO ASIA AND PACIFIC (APAC)
THIRTIETH MEETING OF THE METEOROLOGY
SUB-GROUP (MET SG/30)

Bangkok, Thailand, 20 - 24 July 2026

Agenda Item 4: Regional Guidance Material

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE REGIONAL APAC SIGMET GUIDE TO ADDRESS WP/13

(Presented by New Zealand)

SUMMARY

This Flimsy is provided by VAAC Wellington to provide an alternative approach to the guidance presented in paragraphs 2.3–2.6 of WP/13. The proposal relates to the issuance of volcanic ash (VA) SIGMETs by MWOs when the relevant VAAC's volcanic ash advisory (VAA) includes the phrase "VA NOT IDENTIFIABLE FM SATELLITE DATA" in the VA OBS/EST section.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 VAACs Wellington, with the coordination and support of the APAC VAACs Darwin, Tokyo and Washington have reviewed the proposal contained in WP/13 and consider that the proposed guidance may not adequately reflect the operational intent of the VAA and could lead to inconsistent interpretation by MWOs.

1.2 The APAC VAACs have therefore developed an alternative proposal that they consider provides clearer guidance for MWOs when issuing VA SIGMETs under these circumstances.

2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Following the review of the guidance proposed in WP/13, the APAC VAACs consider that the proposed text does not fully reflect the operational use of the phrase "VA NOT IDENTIFIABLE FM SATELLITE DATA" within VAAs. Consequently, the guidance may result in inconsistent interpretation by MWOs and the issuance of inappropriate VA SIGMETs in some circumstances.

2.2 The APAC VAACs have developed alternative text to replace the guidance proposed in WP/13. The proposed replacement text, together with supporting examples, is provided in Appendix A.

2.3 In addition, the proposal introduces guidance for situations where the volcanic ash cloud is estimated (EST) in the observation DTG and cloud sections of a VAA. This addresses cases where reliable observation reports confirm the presence of volcanic ash, but the ash cloud cannot be identified on satellite imagery (e.g. due to meteorological cloud or darkness). The VAAC will issue a VAA with estimated observation field based on the guidance from the observation reports and ash

dispersion modelling. In these cases, the proposed guidance recommends that MWOs issue a forecast (FCST) VA SIGMET rather than an observed (OBS) VA SIGMET.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

a) note the information contained in this paper; and

b) endorse the proposed amendments contained in Appendix A for inclusion in the next revision of the Regional SIGMET Guide.

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APPENDIX A: Additional guidance for VA SIGMET

Proposed additional guidance on SIGMET for volcanic ash not identifiable from satellite data for addition to the APAC Regional SIGMET Guide Appendix B SIGMET EXAMPLES 7 following the current description:

7) Additional examples using volcanic ash references applicable to volcanic ash SIGMET only
When the Volcanic Ash Advisory (VAA) contains the phrase "VA NOT IDENTIFIABLE FM SATELLITE DATA" in the 'OBS/EST VA CLD' field.
The phrase "VA NOT IDENTIFIABLE FM SATELLITE DATA" can be used by VAACs under the following scenarios:

i. ~~Volcanic ash cloud is not identifiable from satellite imagery due to too small an area and/or obscuration from meteorological clouds, and there is no reliable observation report providing the extent of ash cloud;~~
When a VAAC receives a report of volcanic ash but is unable to confirm its presence using multiple observation methods, including satellite imagery under clear-sky conditions (i.e. volcanic ash is not *discernible*);
    a. Recommendation – MWO does not issue a SIGMET

ii. ~~Volcanic ash cloud is not identifiable from satellite imagery due to too small an area and/or obscuration from meteorological clouds. However, there are reliable observation reports providing the extent of ash cloud (such as via VONA etc) and VA emission is expected to persist with no indication of VA cloud dissipation; and~~
When a VAAC receives a report of volcanic ash that cannot be identified on satellite imagery due to obscuration by meteorological cloud, and there is insufficient information available to determine or provide an estimated area.
    a. Recommendation – MWO issues a point SIGMET with the best available information.

iii. ~~Some~~ VAACs use~~d this~~ the phrase to ~~denote cessation of VA advisories~~ indicate that issuance of VAA has ceased. MWOs should ~~must~~ verify the **ERUPTION DETAILS**, **FCST VA CLD**, **RMK**, and **NXT ADVISORY** sections of the VA advisory to ~~ensure a SIGMET is not erroneously issued or maintained for an ash cloud that has already dissipated~~ confirm ash cloud has dissipated or the event otherwise terminated.
    a. Recommendation – MWO does not issue a new SIGMET and cancels the current SIGMET for that ash cloud.

[*Editorial note – new examples provided below]*

Example for Scenario i
VA ADVISORY
DTG: 20260518/0038Z
VAAC: WELLINGTON
VOLCANO: ASHVAL 000000
PSN: N4315 E02115
AREA: NEW ZEALAND
SOURCE ELEV: 294M AMSL
ADVISORY NR: 2026/18
INFO SOURCE: PIREP, WEBCAMS, H9 SATELLITE
ERUPTION DETAILS: PIREP AT 20260519/0018Z OF SMALL VOLCANIC ERUPTION
OBS VA DTG: 18/0038Z
OBS VA CLD: VA NOT IDENTIFIABLE FM SATELLITE DATA WIND
FL010/020 160/10KT
FCST VA CLD +6 HR: 18/0638Z NO VA EXP

FCST VA CLD +12 HR: 18/1238Z NO VA EXP
FCST VA CLD +18 HR: 18/1838Z NO VA EXP
RMK: PIREP RECEIVED REPORTING VA OBSERVATION VCY ASHVAL AT 0018Z. VA UNIDENTIFIABLE ON SATELLITE IMAGERY AND WEBCAM IMAGERY IN CLEAR CONDITIONS.
NXT ADVISORY: NO FURTHER ADVISORIES=

Example for Scenario ii
FVFE01 RJTD 131022
VA ADVISORY
DTG: 20260713/1022Z
VAAC: TOKYO
VOLCANO: ASHVAL 000000
PSN: N4315 E02115
AREA: PHILIPPINES
SOURCE ELEV: 2462M AMSL
ADVISORY NR: 2026/733
INFO SOURCE: HIMAWARI-9 PHIVOLCS
ERUPTION DETAILS: ERUPTION AT 20260713/0916Z FL110 EXTD NE REPORTED
OBS VA DTG: 13/1000Z
OBS VA CLD: VA NOT IDENTIFIABLE FM SATELLITE DATA WIND FL110 220/1KT
FCST VA CLD +6 HR: NOT AVBL
FCST VA CLD +12 HR: NOT AVBL
FCST VA CLD +18 HR: NOT AVBL
RMK: WE WILL ISSUE FURTHER ADVISORY IF VA IS DETECTED IN SATELLITE IMAGERY.
NXT ADVISORY: NO FURTHER ADVISORIES=

Example of Scenario iii
VA ADVISORY
DTG: 20260713/1749Z
VAAC: DARWIN
VOLCANO: ASHVAL 000000
PSN: N4315 E02115
AREA: INDONESIA
SOURCE ELEV: 1423M AMSL
ADVISORY NR: 2026/121
INFO SOURCE: CVGHM, HIMAWARI-9
ERUPTION DETAILS: VA TO FL060 REP FM GND AT 13/1053Z, MOV W
OBS VA DTG: 13/1730Z
OBS VA CLD: VA NOT IDENTIFIABLE FM SATELLITE DATA WIND SFC/FL060 090/10KT
FCST VA CLD +6 HR: 13/2330Z NO VA EXP
FCST VA CLD +12 HR: 14/0530Z NO VA EXP
FCST VA CLD +18 HR: 14/1130Z NO VA EXP
RMK: CURRENT SATELLITE IMAGERY INDICATES THAT ASH FROM VOLCANO ASHVAL HAS NOW DISSIPATED. NO FURTHER REPORTS OF NEW OR ONGOING ERUPTION. ADVISORY TERMINATED.
NXT ADVISORY: NO FURTHER ADVISORIES=

When the Volcanic Ash Advisory (VAA) contains estimated (EST) volcanic ash in the observation field

When a volcanic ash cloud cannot be identified on satellite imagery because it is obscure by meteorological cloud or darkness, but reliable observation reports (such as a VONA) confirm its presence, the VAAC will issue a (VAA) using EST in the observation field using the guidance from

the observation reports and ash dispersion modelling. The RMK section should state that the volcanic ash cloud is not identifiable on satellite imagery due to meteorological cloud or darkness, as applicable.
Recommendation – MWO issue a FCST (instead of OBS) SIGMET

Example:
VA ADVISORY
DTG: 20260605/0220Z
VAAC: DARWIN
VOLCANO: ASHVAL 000000
PSN: N4315 E02115
AREA: INDONESIA
SOURCE ELEV: 1325M AMSL
ADVISORY NR: 2026/632
INFO SOURCE: HIMAWARI-9, CVGHM
ERUPTION DETAILS: VA ERUPTION REP FM GND AT 05/0142Z
EST VA DTG: 05/0200Z
EST VA CLD: SFC/FL070 N4315 E02115 – N4345 E02145 - N4330 E02215 – N4245 E02230 – N4230 E02145 - N4315 E02115 MOV E 10KT
FCST VA CLD +6 HR: 05/0800Z NOT AVBL
FCST VA CLD +12 HR: 05/1400Z NOT AVBL
FCST VA CLD +18 HR: 05/2000Z NOT AVBL
RMK: VA NOT IDENTIFIABLE ON CURRENT SATELLITE IMAGERY DUE TO MET CLOUD. DISCRETE ERUPTION REPORTED BY GROUND OBSERVATORY. VA HEIGHT AND FORECAST BASED ON GROUND REPORT AND DISPERSION MODEL GUIDANCE.
NXT ADVISORY: NO LATER THAN 20260605/0820Z=

VA SIGMET (issued by MWO):
YUDD SIGMET 1 VALID 050230/050830 YUSO–
YUDD SHANLON FIR VA ERUPTION MT ASHVAL PSN N4315 E02115 VA CLD FCST AT 0200Z WI N4315 E02115 – N4345 E02145 - N4330 E02215 – N4245 E02230 – N4230 E02145 - N4315 E02115 SFC/070 MOV E 10KT NC=